Tryon Tourism Board
(Tryon Tourism Development Authority)
Minutes
December 4, 2023
4:30 P.M.

Chairman Mason-Freeman called the meeting to order at 4:34 pm at the Tryon Town Hall with three members present.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Maria Mason-Freeman, Chairman; Bill Crowell, Tryon BOC Rep; and Allan Casavant

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Vining, Vice-Chairman; and Jeff Fissel

STAFF PRESENT: Meg Rogers, Secretary; and Michelle Newman, TDDA Downtown Director

Approve Minutes from November 6, 2023
Minutes from the November 6, 2023 regular meeting were reviewed.. Crowell made a motion to approve the November 6, 2023 regular meeting minutes as presented. Mason-Freeman seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 3 to 0.

Approve Financial Report for November 2023
The Tryon Tourism Development Fund FY 2023-24 financial report for November 2023 was reviewed.

Tryon Tourism Development Fund Total Revenues as of November 30, 2023 were $9,697.90 (27.32%). FY 2023-2024 Tourism Development Fund expenditures as of November 30, 2023 totaled $13,753.80 (38.74%). Fund balance as of November 30, 2023 was $ 61,098.80.

Newman stated that occupancy tax collections for October 2023 rentals (submitted to the Town of Tryon in November 2023) were substantially lower than the same month in past years. Newman recommended seeking marketing partnerships if collections stayed low.

Crowell made a motion to approve the financial report for November 2023 as presented. Casavant seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 3 to 0.

Signage for the Electric Charging Station
Daniels reported that new signs for the electric vehicle charging station at the Tryon Depot Plaza had arrived today. The charging stations in Tryon were the ordinary type. Supercharger rapid charging stations were too expensive at this time.

Saluda Grade Trail Update
Newman reported that Tryon Downtown Development Association (TDDA) Design Committee was working on a master plan for downtown Tryon. Dean Trakas and Denny Crowe were on the Design Committee. The plan would include elements to prepare for the Saluda Grade Trail. The Tryon Board of Commissioners had recently created a Town of Tryon Steering Committee to prepare for the Saluda Grade Trail and most of the members of the committee had been appointed. Meetings of this new committee would begin after the final members were appointed.

The need for centrally located public restrooms was noted by Crowell and Casavant. Casavant offered space for public restrooms at his property at the intersection of New Market Road and South Trade Street. Possibility of locating public restrooms at the Tryon Depot after the current lease term ends was discussed. Casavant recommended downtown appearance improvements to give the downtown business corridor a more consistent colorful fresh look as well as changes to improve foot traffic flow along sidewalks on Trade Street. Casavant also recommended addition of another streetlight near Nina Simone Plaza. Difficulties were noted in maintaining communication between related committees – TDDA, Tryon Tourism Development Authority, Tryon Board of Commissioners, Tryon Planning & Adjustment Board, etc. TDDA had been encouraging improved appearance through its facade grant program. The Tourism Authority was encouraged to support TDDA's efforts in downtown design and appearance.

Issues with downtown business employees parking on Trade Street and reducing parking availability for customers were discussed briefly. Casavant advised instituting 3-hour parking limits along Trade Street and Pacolet Street to encourage employees to park on side streets instead.

Website & Social Media

Tracey Daniels presented her report.

Website

- **Added to website (photos, address, FB page links...) for the following:**
  Jay & Co (Relax/spa)
  Carriage Estate Sales

Social Media Status Report-ExploreTryon Facebook Page (Updates below for last 30 days)

- 5-8 posts per week; tourism focused,
- 5 new followers in past 30 days
- Average post reach 4,528
- Post engagement 929 (likes, shares, comments, etc) up 42% and 181 clicks to website
- Most liked posts –
  * November 22 TDDA cross post on holiday downtown events
  * November 2 – Ann Nedhi red leaves/tree post
  * Happy Thanksgiving from ExploreTryon post

Miscellaneous

- Answered incoming questions
- Researched information on changing design of event calendar
- County Tourism meeting for 12/12/2023 was cancelled. Next meeting scheduled for 3/12/2024.

Daniels had spoken with Tryon Arts & Crafts Executive Director Will Barclift regarding the approved Tourism Advertising Grant for 2024 FuseFest. Daniels reported that Tryon Tourism's QR Code needed to be updated and she needed permission to distribute. Authority members expressed concerns regarding recent security risk issues related to QR codes. Chairman Mason-Freeman stated she would like to see weekly updated events lists similar to the First Peak weekly event e-newsletter. New restaurants in Tryon like Rhema Soul and food trucks operating in the immediate area were using Facebook to update their daily menus. Daniels was asked to put links to these Facebook pages on

ExploreTryon Facebook page and on the ExploreTryon website restaurant listings. Casavant provided a brief update on his development plans for the former Bank of America building on Pacolet Street. Casavant was working with Duke Energy to move Pacolet Street power lines underground.

SWOT Analysis Update – Work Plan Discussion

Newman reported on upcoming events. Tryon Fire Department 2023 Annual Christmas Parade was scheduled for Wednesday, December 13, 2023 at 5 pm. TDDA Tryon Midnight & Ball Drop would be held at the Tryon Clock Tower on December 31, 2023. Skip & Denny Crowe were working on another Trot Into Tryon Airstream Rally for Tryon in 2024. Mason-Freeman asked who did booking for Tryon Summer Tracks and was referred to Peter Eisenbrown.

Ongoing concerns regarding downtown appearance and business operating hours were discussed briefly. Newman hoped that TDDA would continue its monthly networking coffee gatherings. Newman and urged the Authority members to participate in networking events. Chairman Mason Freeman recommended influencing by example to initiate downtown improvements and encourage cooperation. Newman invited Tourism Authority members to attend TDDA Board meetings that were held on the third Thursday of each month at 4 pm.

Other

Michelle Newman resignation as TDDA Town of Tryon Downtown Director – Newman announced her resignation as TDDA Town of Tryon Downtown Director effective December 31, 2023. There were no new prospects for the position at this time. The Authority members thanked Newman for her hard work and assistance to the Tryon Tourism Development Authority and were sad that she was leaving.

Confirm Date for Next Regular Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Tryon Tourism Development Authority was confirmed for Monday, January 8, 2024 at 4:30 pm at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Room.

Adjourn

Mason-Freeman made a motion to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 5:22 pm.

Prepared by

Meg Rogers

Meg Rogers
Secretary

Approved:

Marie Mason-Freeman
Chairman