Tryon Tourism Board
(Tryon Tourism Development Authority)
Minutes
June 3, 2024
4:30 P.M.

Chairman Mason-Freeman called the meeting to order at 4:40 pm at the Tryon Town Hall with three members present.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Maria Mason-Freeman, Chairman; Bill Crowell, Tryon BOC Rep; Melanie Jackson; and Allan Casavant (arrived 4:50 pm)

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Vining, Vice-Chairman

STAFF PRESENT: Meg Rogers, Secretary

Approve Minutes from May 6, 2024
Minutes from the May 6, 2024 regular meeting were reviewed. Crowell made a motion to approve the May 6, 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented. Jackson seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 3 to 0.

Approve Minutes from Special Meeting on May 29, 2024
Minutes from the May 29, 2024 special meeting were reviewed. Crowell made a motion to approve the May 29, 2024 special meeting minutes as presented. Jackson seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 3 to 0.

Approve Financial Report for May2024
The Tryon Tourism Development Fund FY 2023-24 financial report for May 2024 was reviewed.

Tryon Tourism Development Fund FY 2023-24 Revenues as of May 31, 2024 totaled $19,951.81 (56.20%). Tourism Development Fund FY 2023-2024 expenditures as of May 31, 2024 totaled $28,737.80 (80.95%). Fund balance as of May 31, 2024 was $ 55,872.98.

It was noted that the occupancy tax revenues received in May were higher than previous month. Jackson reported increased bookings through Yonder. Asheville market was busier than the Tryon market.

Jackson made a motion to approve the financial report for May 2024 as presented. Crowell seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 3 to 0.

Approve Audit Contract for FY 2023-2024
The draft audit contract for the Tourism Development Fund for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 was reviewed by the members. Crowell made a motion to approve the Audit Contract for FY 2023-2024 as proposed. Jackson seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 3 to 0.

Saluda Grade Trail Update
Commissioner Bill Crowell reported the project was still proceeding and providing encouragement for the local citizens to stay excited. South Carolia, Greenville County and Spartanburg County had already committed funding for the portion of the Saluda Grade Trail in South Carolina from Inman through

Landrum to the state line. The North Carolina Legislature and North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) were negotiating with Norfolk Southern. Rail trail projects in western NC were eagerly awaited. The Ecusta Trail in Hendersonville was in process and, even though not yet finished, had bikers already using the completed sections.

Morris Statue # Sign

Gutierrez reported that the Tryon Planning & Adjustment Board had approved an amendment to the Town of Tryon zoning ordinance prohibiting signs around Morris the Tryon Horse statue in downtown Tryon. This location was a prime spot for residents and visitors to take photos. Gutierrez proposed placing a small plaque or sign near Morris encouraging photographer to add a hashtag link when they post their photos on social media. The sign should have a clever saying to encourage a conversation. Tracey Daniels reported that the Tryon Together community project had done something similar years ago to encourage social media exchanges. Chairman Mason-Freeman asked if this was promotion of tourism or downtown Tryon? Casavant suggested creation of a mural of Morris where visitors could "feed an apple to Morris" in digital photos. With signage prohibited at Morris, the hashtag sign could be mounted on a nearby bench or affixed to the wheeled carriage base on which Morris stands. Gutierrez would bring samples of similar hashtag signs to the July Tourism Authority meeting. Chairman Mason-Freeman asked about a Morris themed scavenger hunt. Daniels reported that an April Fools scavenger hunt in downtown Tryon had been well received with a prize of a wooden Morris ornament. Jackson and Crowell stated that the Nina Simone mural on North Trade Street had a hashtag element connecting to the NC Musician Mural Trail. Daniels had reached out to other towns on the NC Musician Mural Trail list to encourage social media cross-promotion with little response. Mason-Freeman, Vining and Jackson were in favor of adding a hashtag sign/plaque at Morris' location.

Music on the Plaza

Gutierrez asked for the Tourism Authority's support for monthly music on the plaza project to add live musicians at the monthly TDDA 4th Friday events. Gutierrez asked for $300 per month beginning in July 2024. Daniels supported Gutierrez saying that music downtown off the sidewalk brought more traffic downtown than the Summer Tracks concerts in Rogers Park. In the past, street performers had used sound equipment provided by Tim Daniels. Having available sound equipment for in place for performers to use at the plaza would reduce the charge for performers since bands would not need to provide their own. Local Junior Appalachian Music (PAC JAM) performed for the May24, 2024 4th Friday event. For the June 28, 2024 4th Friday event, PAC JAM received funding from a Polk County Community Foundation grant that would pay for the Tryon Fine Arts Center Summer Camp PAC JAM ensemble to perform. Most local bands charged around $500+ for these performances, so the requested funding would only cover part of the cost. Tracey Daniels recommended seeking out fresh new bands. Jackson suggested that live bands would not be appropriate for the winter months for 4th Friday events, therefore funding would only be needed for July to November and March to June in FY 2024-2025 or 9 months of the year. It was suggested to approve funding for five months from July to November 2024 funded from fund balance, since this expense was not included in the approved budget for FY 2024-2025. Signage at the performance site noting the ExploreTryon.com sponsorship was also recommended. Daniels suggested making the sponsor sign for the musicians with addition of Morris and hashtag info. Jackson made a motion to appropriate from fund balance to spend $300 per month for five months, July to November 2024, for music on the plaza for Tryon 4th Friday events. Vining seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0. Gutierrez asked Authority members to send suggestions for performers/bands.

Website & Social Media

Tracey Daniels presented her report for June 3 2024.

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

- 5-8 posts per week; tourism focused
- 4 new likes (organic),
  - 11 new followers (fewer than prior months)
- Average post reach 3,200
- Post engagement: up from 792 to 1,041 (likes, shares, comments, etc.)
  - 145 clicks to website
- Most liked posts
  - Global Food Festival
  - Restaurant Post (First Peak w/link to updated hours/locations)
  - Pearson's Falls
  - 4th Friday

Website Update

- Worked on SEO for business listings & wording updates
- Received two quotes for budget website (see below)
- Added Huckleberry's location, info, details/Chef Sharone info
- Changed Trade Street Creamery name to new name-Trade Street Diner – updated info
- Updated Marengo information/description and menu items
- Updated Jay & Co

Miscellaneous

- Signed up for Tourism/Business as Destination course on June 24, 2024 to represent Explore Tryon
- Answered incoming questions via e-mail
- An exact reprint of the 10,000 rack cards would cost approximately $1,500 and she needed a PO for this purchase
- Quotes for new website (combining ExploreTryon and Town of Tryon – residents/visitors)
  - Big Boom - $14,500
  - Websy Daisy - $5,000-$6000

Daniels suggested that the low bid was too low and the bidder would not provide the website quality and functionality desired for the combined website but the Big Boom quote seemed high.

SWOT Analysis Update – Work Plan Discussion

Casavant stated his concerns that the new process for reviewing and determining staff service fees and percentage of ticket sales revenues for events at Harmon Field and Town of Tryon venues was driving events away from Tryon. The Carolina Foothills Chamber of Commerce had moved their annual music festival and food drive event from Harmon Field to Foothills Equestrian Nature Center (FENCE). Casavant stated that he understood that FENCE was not charging the Chamber a fee to hold this event at FENCE.

At the Tryon Board of Commissioners (BOC) meeting in May, there was no discussion of the Tourism Authority's letter requesting that the BOC create a parking development committee and appoint two of the Authority members to serve on the new committee. The Authority asked secretary Rogers to check on why the letter was not on the Tryon BOC's agenda for the May meeting. Casavant stated that he had heard that the Tryon Downtown Development Authority (TDDA) and the Town of Tryon had formed a joint committee that was working on a number of issues that included parking issues. Daniels would check with Town Manager Fatland to see if a Tourism Authority member could be appointed to serve on that joint committee. Casavant suggested that the Town of Tryon should purchase property to add more parking downtown.

The Authority members asked for clarification on what was budgeted for advertising and events in the new FY 2024-2025 budget so that the budget could be amended, if needed, to include spending for events and advertising funded from fund balance, if necessary.

Confirm Date for Next Regular Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Tryon Tourism Development Authority was scheduled for Monday, July 1, 2024 at 4:30 pm at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Room. Mason-Freeman would not be available on that date. Crowell made a motion that the July meeting be cancelled. Jackson seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 4 to 0. The next meeting would be on Monday, August 5, 2024.

Adjourn

Mason-Freeman adjourned the meeting at 5:50 pm.

Prepared by

Meg Rogers

Meg Rogers
Secretary

Approved:

Chairman