Tryon Tourism Board
(Tryon Tourism Development Authority)
Minutes
May 6, 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; and Allan Casavant

MEMBERS ABSENT: John Vining, Vice-Chairman; and Melanie Jackson

STAFF PRESENT: Meg Rogers, Secretary

Approve Minutes from April 1, 2024
Minutes from the April 1, 2024 regular meeting were reviewed. Crowell made a motion to approve the April 1, 2024 regular meeting minutes as presented. Casavant seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 3 to 0.

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

Tryon Tourism Development Fund FY 2023-24 Revenues as of April 30, 2024 totaled $17,461.93 (49.19%). Tourism Development Fund FY 2023-2024 expenditures as of April 30, 2024 totaled $27,313.50 (76.94%). Fund balance as of April 30, 2024 was $ 54,879.83.

Probable reasons for decline in occupancy tax revenues were discussed briefly and included the temporary closure of Pine Crest Inn, slowdown in rentals in May & June, and need for more pet-friendly rental options.

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

FY 23-24 Budget Amendment
A FY 2023-24 Budget Amendment that reduced budgeted Occupancy Tax Revenues by $2500 to better reflect projected annual total as of June 30 2024 was reviewed. Appropriation from Fund Balance was increased by $2500 in the revenue section to balance the amended budget. Casavant made a motion to approve the proposed FY2023-24 Budget Amendment as presented. Crowell seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 3 to 0.

Draft FY 2024-25 Tourism Development Budget
A draft budget for FY 2024-25 was reviewed. Budgeted revenues would be 100% occupancy taxes at a projected amount of $20,000. Budgeted expenditures would include Salaries Wages, Regular-$5,950, 401K Fringe-$110, FICA Expense-$455, Retirement Expenses-$825, Health Insurance-$1,260, Website Design-$10,200, Event Marketing (aka Advertising Grant Program)-$0, Social Media-$1,200, EV Charging Station at Depot-$0 for a total expenditure budget of $20,000. Crowell made a motion to

approve the draft FY 2024-25 Tourism Development Budget as presented. Casavant seconded the motion. Motion was approved by a vote of 3 to 0.

Saluda Grade Trail Update

Commissioner Bill Crowell reported little progress so far and the project committee was still working on raising money. Crowell stated that the Saluda Grade Trail property in North Carolina would be owned by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), not Conserving Carolina. Saluda Grade Trail parking was discussed briefly. Suggestions included widening McCown Street to add more parking adjacent to the trail, adding parking spaces on the wide areas of New Market Road near downtown, and adding parking spaces on Depot Street. Casavant spoke about the success of Hendersonville NC bike parks as a possible model for handling visitors to the new rail trail.

Website & Social Media

Tracey Daniels was not present and there was no report.

SWOT Analysis Update – Work Plan Discussion

Casavant identified an opportunity for marketing the future Saluda Grade Trail to visitors from the Charlotte area where cycling was very popular.

Members had heard comments from local organizations who were expressing concerns with Tryon's new procedures and fees for community events using Town of Tryon services and charging a fee equal to a percentage of the profits from the event. The Chamber of Commerce had stated that they would move the Annual Music Festival at Harmon Field to FENCE if the new fees were enacted.

The Authority members discussed the need for a comprehensive 5-year parking plan for the Town of Tryon in advance of the future Saluda Grade Trail. Chairman Mason-Freeman offered to draft a letter from the Authority to the Tryon Board of Commissioners asking that a board of 6 to 7 members be created by August 2024 to develop a 5-year plan for parking development in Tryon. The letter would request that two of the members on that new parking plan board be selected from among the active members of the Tryon Tourism Development Authority. Crowell and Casavant would be willing to serve on the new parking plan board. Chairman Mason-Freeman would send draft to Secretary Rogers for formatting & printing and, after signature by the Chairman, delivery to the Tryon Board of Commissioners.

Projected use for the Town of Tryon maintenance building property on Palmer Street was discussed. Casavant suggested that a hotel with 65 to 100 rooms would provide tourism revenue as well as economic boost for downtown businesses. Tryon Mayor Alan Peoples had suggested development of the property into condominiums to encourage living, working, playing and shopping within the center of Tryon. Casavant was developing an event center on Pacolet Street that could work synergistically with future hotel rooms in downtown to promote tourism and economic development.

Member Reappointments

Secretary Rogers informed the Authority that the current terms of members, John Vining and Melanie Jackson would end on June 30, 2024. Rogers would contact Vining and Jackson to find out if they would like to be reappointed for another two-year term beginning July 1, 2024. Commissioner Bill Crowell's one-year term would also end on June 30, 2024 and Crowell indicated he would request to be

reappointed for a one-year term beginning July 1, 2024. With Jeff Fissel's resignation as of March 28, 2024, there was also an empty seat that needed to be filled for the remainder of his term expiring June 30, 2025.

Confirm Date for Next Regular Meeting

The next regular meeting of the Tryon Tourism Development Authority was confirmed for Monday, June 3, 2024 at 4:30 pm at Tryon Town Hall, McCown Room.

Adjourn

Mason-Freeman adjourned the meeting at 5:35 pm.

Prepared by

Meg Rogers
Secretary

Approved:

Marie Mason-Freeman
Chairman