

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -
Board of Directors Meeting
New Bern Visitor Center Boardroom
Wednesday, October 13, 2021
Minutes

Present

Chairman Dan Roberts
Vice-Chairman Paresh
Pankhavala
Alderman Sabrina Bengel
Alderman Jeffery Odham
Commissioner Brenda Wilson
Commissioner Tom Mark
Gary Johnson
Cindy King
Nancy Figiel
Craig Warren, Ex-Officio
Melissa Riggle, Executive
Director

Guest

Judy Avery
Pam Holder
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Tammy Rodriguez
Tarshi McCoy
Gary Curry
Melinda Mowry
John Blackwelder
Michael Gleason
Erin Knight
Michelle Lynn

I. CALL TO ORDER-ROLL CALL:

Chairman Dan Roberts called the Craven County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and thanked everyone for being there.

II. ROLL CALL: Tammy Rodriguez conducted roll call.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Dan Roberts asked for any questions in-regards to the minutes for the September Board Meeting. Alderman Jeffery Odham moved to accept all the minutes in the board packet. Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT: Craig Warren started with the Occupancy Tax Collection Report noting taxes collected in the month of September for hotel stays in August were \$217,145 compared to \$160,798 for the same period last year. That represents an increase of \$56,347 which is 35.04% compared to last year's collections for that month. Another record-breaking month! Fiscal YTD collections are \$474,093 compared to \$310,343 the previous year which represents an increase of \$163,750 or 52.76%. Of that total online travel companies made up roughly 17%. No penalties collected. Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for September 2021 were \$68,454 compared to \$50,691 last year, increase of 35%. Room tax is running ahead by 51.6% of 25% of the fiscal year. On the expenditure side you will see the total spent for September was \$67,225 compared to \$27,418 last year. Total expenditures YTD are inline of the budgets through 25% of the year. Looking at the balance sheet as of September 30 the cash balance is \$478,184. Adding in the net income through September of \$88,999.20 to the fund balance gives a total of \$550,084. Chairman Dan Roberts asked for a motion to move; Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala motioned to approve; Alderman Sabrina Bengel seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

- V. **STR Report:** Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavalala shared the STR report. New Bern's YTD numbers for occupancy was 71.4% compared to 58.9% in 2020. ADR was 109.52% compared to 97.31% in 2020 and RevPAR was 78.23% compared to 57.36% last year.

In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 55.9% compared to 51.0% last year. ADR was 83.72% compared to 78.87% in 2020. RevPAR was 46.78% compared to 40.25% last year.

- VI. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Melissa Riggle updated the board on the visitor traffic. The visitor log for September 2021 that showed 455 walk-ins and 50 walk-ins at the Cub House (weekends). There were 199 emails, 701 Southern Living Leads and 38 phone calls. | Visitor center improvements: new signage has been added to the entrance. Additional updates to the building to come. QR Codes to have been installed at the downtown intersections and parking lots. Additional QR Codes are being added at the downtown businesses. Discussion of installing a downtown walking map in bear plaza and possibly five points area. Civil War Signage Trails: 8 in market, next Wednesday a new historical marker will be installed at the Atmore-Oliver/Historical Society location. Plans to do a promotion for these once a few more are updated. **Large Groups and Events:** Tarshi and Melissa attended MPI Conference in Raleigh. Craven County has been recognized by Convention South as best meeting places: Havelock, Riverfront Convention Center and New Bern. **Press/PR/Media:** Cary Magazine: Weekend Getaway to New Bern featured in their October issue. Main & Broad: Christmas special to be out in November. Nancy Thapa: Digital influencer in town. Two more digital influencers coming later this month as well. **News from the State:** The state has released the county tourism numbers, 31.9% decrease in 2020. We are still mid-range in state ranking.

Marketing: Brice Connors announced our return to the NCTIA awards. New Bern earned 2 awards: Platinum award for leisure campaign and a gold award for best group marketing campaign (Try On Wedding Bells). | Fall photo shoot to highlight Martin Marietta Park, Mayte Sweets, Five Points landmarks. Two new mini docs to display: Try On Five Points and Try On the Beer District| Matt Potts gave an update on social media ad campaigns (Google, Facebook, Instagram); Total Impressions: 1,257,182 Total Clicks: 21,107 Total Costs: \$5,999.43. | New web users from Charlotte have increased 71%, Where to Stay has increased by 35% YOY, Outdoor Fun has entered the top 10 most visited webpages and increased 40% YOY | Ellie: Where to stay saw an increase of 4%, Shopping saw a 7% increase, Flights saw a decrease of 3% month over month | Print ad placements include Southern Living: half-page "Try On New Bern" ad, Convention South: Full page ad and editorial, Cary Magazine: 8-page travel story centered around New Bern. Heart of NC Weddings: full-page ad. Next month we will have some exciting holiday ads.

VII. **HAVELOCK TOURISM & EVENT CENTER DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Pam Holder stated that Cherry Point Air Show brought in some traffic. Still seeing several meetings, conferences and parties being scheduled. September Revenue: \$16,320.74 | Statistics: Visitors 242, Event Gusts 1,035, Total Visitors 1,277. Website statistics: New Visitors 420, Total Visitors 428, Sessions 499, Page Views 1,007.

- VIII. **NEW BUSINESS:** Alderman Sabrina Bengel: Social districts are being researched to allow patrons to walk around with a glass of beer or wine (must be plastic). Defined time and area have not been identified yet.

Charging stations: located in the Red Lot, Fast chargers (30 minutes), except for Tesla (trying to get an adaptor) Tesla charging stations at Smithfield's on MLK. Additional charging locations: Aerie, Hanna House. Hotels will have them in the future. Add info on website.

Melissa Riggle: Creating a new committee for Sports Leisure & Tourism. Paddleboarders, Cyclists, Triathlons, etc.

IX. MEMBER COMMENTS:

Cindy King: progress is still ongoing with the new hotel. Projected completion hopefully spring 2022, depending on construction material availability. Vice-chairman Paresh Pankhavala: Holiday Inn Express is now Clarion Pointe. Nancy Figiel: US Fleet Forces band October 15, All Hallows October 23, End of November will start Holiday Tours. Commissioner Brenda Wilson: construction on Woodhaven Bridge, better access for UPS. Tammy Rodriguez: Calendar updates Gary Curry: Corporate travel has slowed down. Harvey is in tear down process. Erin Knight: working on a social message to the public to Be Patient, Be Kind. Chamber's 50-year golden party in December, Artisan Fair in March, Salute to Veterans in May.

X. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Dan Roberts made a motion to adjourn. Alderman Sabrina Bengel seconded the motion at 10:29 am.