

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -
Board of Directors Meeting
Visitor Center Boardroom
Wednesday, September 8, 2021
Minutes

Present

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

Excused

Gary Johnson

Guest

Judy Avery
Pam Holder
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Tammy Rodriguez
Tarshi McCoy
Garry Curry
Tracy Stuckrath
Melinda Mowery
Carrie Gallagher
John Blackwelder
Trevor Dunnell

I. CALL TO ORDER-ROLL CALL:

Chairman Dan Roberts called the Craven County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting to order at 9:02 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 August Board Meeting. Alderman Jeffery Odham asked for a correction to be made to the Travis Tritt tickets sold to be adjusted from 12,000 to 1,200. Alderman Jeffery Odham moved to accept all the minutes in the board packet. Alderman Sabrina Bengel 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 August for hotel stays in July were \$256,948 compared to \$149,545 for the same time last year. That represents an increase of \$107,403, which is 71.8% compared to last year's collections for that month. Setting another highest record month. Fiscal YTD collections are \$256,948 compared to \$149,545 the previous year which represents an increase of \$171,993 or 10.9%. Of that total online travel companies made up roughly 13%. There were late receipts of \$162 and \$24 penalties paid. Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for August 2021 were \$81,002.83 compared to \$60,174.69 last year, increase of 34.6%. Room tax is running ahead by 37.9% of 16% of the fiscal year. On the expenditure side you will see the total spent for August was \$72,546.22 compared to \$97,204.89 last year. Total expenditures YTD are just below at 15.3% of the budgets through 16% of the year. Overture of \$79,288. Looking at the balance sheet as of August 31 the cash balance is \$468,234. Adding in the net income through August of \$87,769 to the fund balance gives a total of \$548,854. Chairman Dan Roberts asked for a motion to move; Alderman Sabrina Bangel motioned to approve; Cindy King 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% compared to 57.2% in 2020. ADR was 107.23% compared to 96.72% in 2020 and RevPAR was 76.13% compared to 55.36% last year.

In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 55.2% compared to 50% last year. ADR was 82.85% compared to 78.39% in 2020. RevPAR was 45.77% compared to 39.18% last year.

VI. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Melissa Riggle updated the board on the visitor traffic. The visitor log for September 2021 that showed 437 walk-ins and 220 walk-ins at the Cub House (weekends). There were 373 emails and 35 phone calls. | Air DNA: 142 active rentals (approx. 200 rooms), daily rate \$186 (Airbnb: 71%, VRBO: 16%, both: 13%) | QR Codes will be added to the black, red and gold parking lots and the downtown businesses asked to have one created to display in their businesses. Sports NC: we now have a partner profile page that allows sporting directors to submit requests directly to us. East Coast Greenway: signs are in place for the cycling trail that goes from Maine to Florida. Installation was completed ahead of Bike MS. New page has been created on our website. | **Large Groups and Events:** Meeting Professional International 2-day convention in Raleigh with about 120 attendees. Ideal Living: will not be holding conventions for the duration of the year. Convention Center report: shows all upcoming events hosted. Lead Conversion Reports show filled and lost groups. Most lost business is due to lack of hotel accommodations within walking distance to convention center. Use of lost business could be used to bring new hotels to the area. **News from the State:** October 8-10 we will be hosting a travel influencer from NY. October 19 VNB will participate in the In-State Media Mission for 2021. **Press/PR/Media:** Our State: City Between 2 Rivers, Spectacular Magazine: located in Durham and has a primarily black demographic following. She highlighted the five points area restaurants and black business owners (Chef Smoke, Broad Street Takeout, Sampson & Son, Country Biscuit). | Podcast: Bear City Impact, Gary Curry, and ___ which will be posted on the website for all to listen to. **Marketing:** Brice Connors gave an update on another record-breaking month of achievements. AccuWeather: target northern markets during snow, freezing rain, temps below 32 degrees. Matt Potts gave an update on social media ad campaigns (Google, Facebook, Instagram); Total Impressions: 1.15 million Total Clicks: 22,000 First month that we could compete with ourselves month over month. Calendar page saw an increase of 249%. New web users from SC have increased 126% year over year. Ellie: flights saw an increase of 5% month over month. We will be hosting a digital influencer who will be flying in from Charlotte and documenting the flight into NB. Weddings have seen a surge of 3% month over month. | Print ad placements in September include full page ads in Our State, Cary Magazine, Heart of NC Weddings & Convention South. Additional advertorial with Convention South will highlight venues, hotels and our downtown. | Melissa & Tammy will be attending the NCTIA Tourism Conference September 30 in Winston-Salem. | Mini-Doc 2.0: Try On Five Points, Try On The Beer District are in post-production and will be ready to view at the next meeting. | Website enhancements: added search feature and new graphics and photography. | Purchased a QR Code Software to utilize in the downtown area as well as print ads to track advertisement spending. A new African American Heritage Trail guide has been designed. Plans to make all walking tours digital. | Digital Influencers: There will be 3 influencers coming to our market.

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

Pam Holder stated that they been quite busy. Salute to the Vets (approx. 300 guests), ECAHF Movie Night (approx. 300 guests), Craven Count GOP Reagan Day (more than 300 guests). Upcoming events: Several meetings and training events, birthday parties, and a wedding. Cherry Point Air Show September 25-26. The biplane was lowered for its annual hoist inspection and passed with flying

colors. August Revenue: \$22,493.59 Statistics: Visitors 248, Event Gusts 1,530, Total Visitors 1,778. Ellie: 4

VIII. NEW BUSINESS: Melissa Riggle: update on the Community College Hospitality Training Program, should be up and running by the end of the year. Front desk, management, housekeeping, bartending certificate programs. Gary Curry offered to do 1-day on-the-job training for last day of program.

IX. OLD BUSINESS: Commissioner Tom Mark commented that the report Tarshi provides Melissa with provides sufficient information. Further talk to determine if any additional information will be needed.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS:

Nancy Figiel: JT Barber exhibit on display; 170 people attended the opening including the reunion class. 421 people attended the Live and Local event. Groundbreaking today for the new garden cottage. Outlander on Sept 18, Garden Lecture Sept 18, All Hallows October 23, Garden Lovers 8-10, Lesser Stairs Tour. Pam Holder: photo shoot was set up to get some new updated images for websites and social media. Tammy Rodriguez: Calendar event updates. Alderman Sabrina Bangel: Several big events coming to the downtown area, great opportunity to get out and support the local downtown businesses. Chairman Dan Roberts: Front entrance looks nice with the addition of the benches and flowers. Carrie Gallagher: Historical Society Ghost Walk October 28-30. Trevor Dunnell: just joined the Sun Journal as the local government journalist. Gary Curry: suggested having a member on the CIA committee. He also commented on how well the executive director, staff and TDA Board are doing to promote tourism to New Bern. Tracy Stuckrath: Will be hosting Herbia Farms on her talk show Eating at a Meeting to discuss growing edible mushrooms. She was awarded as one of the top 20 meeting trendsetters in the industry.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Dan Roberts asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderman Sabrina Bengel made the motion to adjourn, Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhvala seconded the motion at 10:35 am.