

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -
Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Boardroom
Wednesday, January 12, 2022
Minutes

Present

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

Excused

Chairman Dan Roberts
Cindy King

Guest

Judy Avery
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Tammy Rodriguez
Tarshi McCoy
Erin Knight
Pam Holder
Gary Curry
Mike

I. CALL TO ORDER-ROLL CALL:

Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala called the Craven County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. and thanked everyone for being there.

II. ROLL CALL: Tammy Rodriguez conducted roll call. A quorum was present.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala asked for any questions in-regards to the minutes for the December Board Meeting. Melissa Riggle stated that there was a small revision that was made in the marketing update. Alderman Sabrina Bengel moved to accept all the minutes in the board packet. Alderman Jeffery Odham 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 December for hotel stays in November were \$146,377 compared to \$113,363 for the same time period last year. That represents an increase of \$33,014 which is 29.12% compared to last year's collections for that month. Second highest month on record! Fiscal YTD collections are \$1,020,993 compared to \$678,628 the previous year which represents an increase of \$342,365 or 50.54%. Of that total online travel companies made up roughly 16.19%. There were no penalties and late payments. Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for December 2021 were \$46,149 compared to \$35,737 last year, increase of 29.12%. Room tax is running ahead by 86% of 50% of the fiscal year. On the expenditure side you will see the total spent for December was \$79,878 compared to \$37,485 last year. Total expenditures are running parallel with the budget at 49.31% of 50%. Total revenues collected have exceeded our expenditures by \$105,148. Looking at the balance sheet as of December 31 the cash balance is \$459,153.70. Adding in the net income through December of \$105,148.31 to the fund balance gives a total of \$566,233. Melissa Riggle reported a budget amendment from room tax in the amount of \$13,949 to be allocated and moved over to part-time salaries. Alderman Sabrina Bengel suggested increasing it to \$15,000 in anticipation of upcoming spring events. Alderman Sabrina Bengel made a motion to amend the budget for the \$15,000. Alderman Jeffrey Odham seconded. Motions was approved unanimously.

- V. **STR Report:** Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavalala shared the STR report. New Bern's YTD numbers for occupancy was 70.2% compared to 60.2% in 2020. ADR was 111.49% compared to 96.59% in 2020 and RevPAR was 78.27% compared to 58.16% last year.

In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 53.4% compared to 49.4% last year. ADR was 83.97% compared to 77.12% in 2020. RevPAR was 44.87% compared to 38.11% last year.

- VI. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Melissa Riggle updated the board on the visitor traffic. The visitor log for December 2021 that showed 371 walk-ins and 136 walk-ins at the Cub House (weekends). There were 188 emails, 502 Southern Living Leads and 32 phone calls. We saw great numbers of visitors for all our December events including New Year's Eve. All Bed & Breakfasts reported a sold-out weekend and the hotels reported 85% occupancy. | Top interests that drive visitors here include Tryon Palace, walking tours, trolley tours. Beary Merry Events and our calendar of events page show a huge driving force for visitor as well. | Airbnb/Vrbo: From December 2020 to December 2021, we have had an increase of 4 new hosts, reinforcing the fact that these rentals will remain to be strong. 146 active rentals. **Large Groups and Events:** We have had 29 leads generated YTD. December had some good contracts. Lost business report shows that the group chose a different city due to lack of hotel rooms. Tarshi and Melissa attended the ANC show in December and spoke with several organizations interested in coming to New Bern in 2023-2024. Reg booked a piece of business off the floor. We will be hosting AENC annual show in July. Their young professionals group takes up donations and donates them to the host city's choice nonprofit organization and we chose PIE. They dropped off donations of school supplies and a check. | Social District committee is meeting for our second time to lay the framework of the districts. | Sports committee met last week with the director of Run the East. Plans for a winter marathon are being worked on. **Press/PR/Media:** Our State Magazine has an article that features Baker's Kitchen this month. **Marketing:** Brice Connors congratulated Tryon Palace for a very successful Candlelight Ceremony, which had record breaking numbers. Nancy Figiel stated that Our State Magazine attended the Candlelight Ceremony and will be doing a feature on it as well. | New Bern is making a national debut in Southern Living Magazine | We will be focusing on Black History in the month of February with full page ads in Cary Magazine, and Our State Magazine. We will be utilizing our Try On Five Points mini-doc as well. We have redesigned our African American Heritage Walking Tours. | Matt Potts gave an update on social media ad campaigns (Google, Facebook, Instagram); Total Impressions: 1,552,259 Total Clicks: 24,650 Total Costs: \$6,498. | Web traffic is up more than 50% YOY in markets including Raleigh, Durham, Charlotte, Greensboro, Winston Salem, Wilmington, Fayetteville, Boston, Norfolk, Chicago, Orlando, Myrtle Beach, and Baltimore. 40% of our web traffic is acquired through paid digital advertisements. Organic search traffic has increased by 61% YOY. | Ellie: Engagement rate: 13% Accommodations redirections increased by 12% MOM, Food and Drink did decrease 6%. | Digital Influencers: Influencer marketing Report Card shows that we reach 96,209 impressions on social media pages (Tik Tok, Instagram, blog pages). | Print ad placements include Cary Magazine: A full-page ad featuring an image that was shot during our fall photo shoot. Heart of NC Weddings: full-page ad. |

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

Pam Holder: Updates and renovations made to the facility included new ceiling cover, new acoustic panels ordered and will be installed in February, and the folding wall will be recovered with coordinating vinyl. December Revenue: \$15,601.27 | Statistics: Visitors 100, Event Guests 1,046, Total Visitors 1,146, Telephone: 14, Email: 6, Elie: 5. | Website statistics: New Visitors 358, Total Visitors 369, Sessions 449, Page Views 1,043.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS: Melissa Riggle: Elks building has been purchased by the Kessler Collection and they plan to create a boutique style hotel with 40 rooms. They are hoping to open in spring of 2024. Sabrina Bangel mentioned how critical and important our visitor center was in providing a friendly and helpful experience that made a huge impression on them. Sabrina also announced that Pepsi will be releasing a new product called Pepsi Nitro, which is a draft style cola. It will be debuting in Las Vegas, LA and New Bern March 23 – 28, 2022. Several events will be planned for the launch promotion.

IX. OLD BUSINESS: no old business.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Tom Mark: updates to the Creekside Park boat dock have been completed. Rocky Run had new equipment installed and smoothed out the area. Plans for a new park in the county are in the works as well. Mike: Jarvis is booked solid for weddings. Nancy Figiel: Our State mentioned that they will be doing an article on B&Bs in New Bern this year. New exhibit opening in January, Twin Rivers Quilt Exhibit, and will run through March. Winter Feast will be held on March 26, the Underground Railroad Symposium will be on March 21. Alderman Jeffery Odham: Doubletree is moving forward on renovations of the annex building. It will be a boutique style hotel under a separate brand. Commissioner Brenda Wilson: Havelock has a new city manager, and he will be sworn in on Tuesday. ECAHF Gala will be held February 25th. Bridge replacement that was damaged during Florence. Tammy Rodriguez: calendar updates

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavalala asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderman Sabrina Bengel made the motion to adjourn, Commissioner Brenda Wilson seconded the motion at 10:02 am.