

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -
Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Boardroom
Wednesday, August 10, 2022
Minutes

Present

Chairman Dan Roberts
Vice-Chairman Paresh
Pankhavala
Alderman Sabrina Bengel
Mayor-Elect Jeffery Odham
Commissioner Tom Mark
Gary Johnson
Matthew Paul
Nancy Figiel
Craig Warren, Ex-Officio
Melissa Riggle, Executive
Director

Excused

Commissioner Brenda Wilson

Guest

Judy Avery
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Tammy Rodriguez
Erin Knight
Pam Holder
Cailin Gibson
Brynn Harms
Smoke
Aartri Parmar
Tracy Stuckrath
Gary Curry

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. (A quorum was present.)

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Dan Roberts asked for any questions in-regards to the minutes for the July Board Meeting. Alderman Sabrina Bengel moved to accept all the minutes in the board packet. Mayor-Elect 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 July for hotel stays in June were \$254,813 compared to \$234,089 for the same time last year. That represents an increase of \$20,724. Another record setting month! Highest collection year on record!! Fiscal YTD collections are \$2,339,530 compared to \$1,751,759 the previous year which represents an increase of \$587,770 or 33.5%. There was \$582 in penalties and \$10,521 in late receipts. Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for July 2022 were \$115,329 compared to \$108,796 last year, increase of 6%. Room tax is running ahead by 15.4% of 8.3% of the fiscal year. On the expenditure side you will see the total spent for July was \$41,633 compared to \$29,500 last year. Total expenditures are running just under the budget at 5.6% of 8.3%. Total revenues collected have exceeded our expenditures by \$74,278. Looking at the balance sheet as of July 31, 2022, the cash balance is \$522,013. Adding in the net income through July of \$74,278 to the fund balance gives a total of \$635,723. Alderman Sabrina Bengel made a motion to approve the financials. Matthew Paul seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

A. Budget Ammerndment: Melissa Riggle requested a budget amendment for funds used to sponsor the AENC Convention in the amount of \$20,000 from Room Tax Revenues to 5009 Promotions. Alderman Sabrina Bengel made a motion to approve the amendment and

Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

- V. **STR Report:** Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala shared the STR report. New Bern's YTD numbers for occupancy was 79.3% compared to 84.1% in 2021. ADR was 138.72% compared to 120.67% in 2021 and RevPAR was 110.03% compared to 101.54% last year.

In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 62% compared to 62.2% last year. ADR was 104.25% compared to 98.59% in 2021. RevPAR was 64.59% compared to 61.28% last year.

- VI. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Melissa Riggle shared visitor stats for the month of July which showed a slight decline due to 4th of July traffic and impact from inflation and rising gas prices. We saw 572 walk-ins, 150 walk-ins at the Cub House (weekends), and 285 walk-ins at the Havelock Visitor Center. There were 209 emails, 140 Southern Living Leads and 26 phone calls. | Top places of origin are North Carolina, Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina. Top attractions continue to be, Walking Tours, Tryon Palace, Trolley Tours and Calendar of Events. Dining and Bear Maps have started to show an increase. | Thanks to the collaboration between Erin, Pam and Tammy they were able to create a new form that will allow us to gather the same data in Havelock as we do here in New Bern. | Operational updates: Commercial boat dock area in the Grand Marina behind Doubletree has been cleaned up and set up for use for boat tours. New signs will be installed to welcome marina guests to New Bern, including a QR Code to the downtown page. Foster will be installing a welcome sign at Union Point Park day dock as well. Havelock Visitor Center will be getting new signs as well. New brochure racks to come. **Media Contributions:** VNB did not host any media tours in the last month, but we did have an international digital article published from a tour we had back in May. The writer is from the UK and it focuses on NC locations that have the feel of where the book/movie Where The Crawdads Sing could be. Visit NC took notice of his tour and created an itinerary for their website which includes the Croatan National Forest. In addition, Nicholas Sparks has a new book coming out, and Visit NC has revised their Nicholas Sparks tour and we have seen an uptick in interest. **From the state:** Witt Tuttle was awarded by US Travel Association for State of the Year and NC is in the top 5 most visited states. AENC was a great success, and we are confident that there will be many return trips generated from this event. Blueprint attended the event and took some great digital footage.

Marketing: Brice Connors gave an update on upcoming projects which include additional web updates, digital asset production, Havelock photoshoot, production of both print and digital marketing collaterals, Trail to Tryon. | Matt Potts gave an update on social media ad campaigns (Google, Facebook, Instagram); Total Impressions: 1,371,133, Total Clicks: 33,080, Total Cost: \$7,690. | Things to do was up 131% YOY. Traffic from Raleigh market is up 28% YOY. Search engine optimization has decreased load speed by one second. | Ellie: Accommodations saw an increase of 2.5% and retirement saw a decrease of 4.2% MOM | Print: Southern Living: two-page spread, Our State: full-page ad, Heart of NC Weddings: full page ad. Digital: logo design for Trail to Tryon, digital advertising campaign | Dog friendly itinerary has been added to our website. | Digital Influencers: Marissa out of DC will be coming to NB this month to help create some online content and buzz for the upcoming Trail to Tryon event in November.

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

Pam Holder: ECAHF Camp was July 25-29. More than 300 visitors attended the Down East Con's Model Show. Facility Updates: new signage for the brochure area coming, new commercial dishwasher has been ordered, new banquet chairs will be ordered for the event hall, door frames will be painted in August. Aug 12 is the Family Fly-in and movie, | July Revenue: \$17,704 | Statistics: Visitors 285, Event Gusts 1,305, Total Visitors 1,590 Telephone: 40, Email: 26, Ellie; 6. | Website statistics: New Visitors 882, Total Visitors 900, Sessions 1,063, Page Views 1,915.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS: Chairman Dan Roberts: the convention center has voted to change their name from the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center to Riverfront Convention Center of Craven County. Alderman Sabrina Bengel made a motion to discuss requesting a letter to be drafted asking the commissioners not to make the name change. Matthew Paul seconded the motion. After discussion, Alderman Sabrina Bengel made a motion for a resolution, stating that the TDA does not support a name change of the convention center at this time. Chairman Dan Roberts asked for a vote to approve the resolution. It was approved with 7 ayes and 1 nay (Commissioner Tom Mark). Mayor-Elect Jeffery Odham: The airport received almost \$100,000 grant and will be doing several upgrades and enhancements to the airport.

IX. OLD BUSINESS: Judy Avery: Trail to Tryon update, Weyerhaeuser will be our title sponsor. 47 racers have signed up already. Runner celebration will be held at the History Center and will include food trucks, beer tent, photo booths, DJ, hatchet throwing, games kid activities and more.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS: Chairman Dan Roberts: Thank you Mayor-elect Jeffery Odham for your time on the board and good luck with your new position. Cherry Point had a change of command. Colonel Huber is staying in New Bern and Colonel Burt will be taking over command. Mayor-elect Jeffery Odham: thanked the board for allowing him to serve. Commissioner Tom Mark: ribbon cutting in Bridgeton for the new ABC store and warehouse. Brice Connors: suggested sending a letter/gift to Witt Tuttle to congratulate him on his award. Nancy Figiel: Family Fun Day and Fife & Drum event coming up this weekend. Stanley-Spade Duel on September 3, Tryon Palace Lawn Party on September 10, will include food, games, music. Fire of Freedom play on September 23. There are a lot of renovations going on at the palace and history center. Barnhill cottage will be opening end of August/beginning of September. Pam Holder: bring your kids to the Family Fly-In on Friday. Tammy Rodriguez: calendar of events updates. Matthew Paul: Havelock App, Change of Command, Chili Festival in September.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Dan Roberts asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderman Sabrina Bengl made the motion to adjourn, Matthew Paul seconded the motion at 10:32 am.