

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -
Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Boardroom
Wednesday, July 13, 2022
Minutes

Present

Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala
Alderman Sabrina Bengel
Commissioner Brenda Wilson
Alderman Jeffery Odham
Gary Johnson
Matthew Paul
Melissa Riggle, Executive Director

Excused

Chairman Dan Roberts
Commissioner Tom Mark
Nancy Figiel
Craig Warren, Ex-Officio

Guest

Judy Avery
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Tammy Rodriguez
Erin Knight
Pam Holder
Matthew Paul
Cailin Gibson
Brynn Harms

I. CALL TO ORDER-ROLL CALL:

Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala called the Craven County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting to order at 8:59 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 June Board Meeting. Alderman Sabrina Bengel moved to accept all the minutes in the board packet. Matthew Paul seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. FINANCIAL REPORT: Melissa Riggle started with the Occupancy Tax Collection Report noting taxes collected in the month of June for hotel stays in May were \$224,981 compared to \$204,433 for the same time last year. That represents an increase of \$6,478. Another record setting month! Fiscal YTD collections are \$2,804,718 compared to \$1,517,672 the previous year which represents an increase of \$567,046 or 37.4%. There was \$24 in penalties. Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for June 2022 were \$70,925 compared to \$64,447 last year, increase of 10.1%. Room tax is running ahead by 128.7% of 100% of the fiscal year. On the expenditure side you will see the total spent for June was \$52,747 compared to \$116,888 last year. Total expenditures are running just under the budget at 96.4% of 100%. Total revenues collected have exceeded our expenditures by \$112,758. Looking at the balance sheet as of June 30, 2022, the cash balance is \$435,190. Adding in the net income through June of \$112,758 to the fund balance gives a total of \$573,843. Alderman Sabrina Bengel made a motion to approve the financials. Matthew Paul seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

V. **STR Report:** Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala shared the STR report. New Bern's YTD numbers for occupancy was 68.4% compared to 65.8% in 2021. ADR was 116.81% compared to 97.64% in 2021 and RevPAR was 79.85% compared to 64.23% last year.

In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 50.9% compared to 49.4% last year. ADR was 86.79% compared to 80.39% in 2021. RevPAR was 44.18% compared to 39.68% last year.

VI. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Melissa Riggle shared the new visitor guide. We will be integrating a new economic impact calculator from Destinations International into our CRM operating system. We had a great collaborative meeting with Pam and Erin from Havelock to discuss a modified visitor tracking method to capture the same type of data as the main visitor center and cub house. We are working with our CMR team to create a way for this information to be processed automatically. In addition, we will be adding some new signs and displays for the visitor information. | June 14, we traveled to Raleigh for the AENC Legislative Reception. | MPI Conventions this weekend in Durham

The visitor log for June showed 647 walk-ins, 102 walk-ins at the Cub House (weekends), and 271 walk-ins at the Havelock Visitor Center. There were 277 emails, 377 Southern Living Leads and 34 phone calls. | Top places of origin are North Carolina, Virginia, Florida, Pennsylvania, and New York. Top attractions continue to be, Tryon Palace, Trolley Tours and Walking Tours. | **Media Contributions:** VNB has hosted 4 media/fam tours including a set of Swiss journalists that are in town today. Afar Magazine: featured in their digital publication, | Digital influencer Shay made a return to New Bern to highlight Juneteenth | Getting on Travel: 50 Plus travel magazine writers were here in May and the article just came out. **Local Projects and Partnerships:** Civil War markers: review of Greenwood Cemetery Civil War Trail Marker has been started and are working with Carol Becton

Marketing: Brice Connors announced that final negotiations are in place with vendor partners such as Our State, Southern Living, Cary magazine, Heart of NC Weddings, and Convention South. | Matt Potts gave an update on social media ad campaigns (Google, Facebook, Instagram); Total Impressions: 1,371,133, Total Clicks: 27,551, Total Cost: \$6,256. | Traffic in the NOVA market has increased by more than 407% YOY. Maintained a website bounce rate of 6%. Placement in all 50 states. CPC for search traffic \$0.31, CTR for search traffic 26.02%, CPC for display traffic \$0.24, and CTR for display traffic of 1.09%. | Ellie redirect for Things to do was up nearly 10%. And Bed and Breakfasts lead the way in accommodation redirects. | Print: Southern Living: two-page spread, Northern Virginia Magazine, we secured a prime placement on their website with a narrative guide. Digital: logo design for Trail to Tryon, digital advertising campaign | Dog friendly itinerary has been added to our website. | Digital Influencers: We just hosted an influencer family from VA, they stayed in an Airbnb rental and highlighted great family friendly activities. Things to come; ways to highlight Havelock, possible aviation plane guide, new Nicholas Sparks tour that includes Croatan National Forest and Havelock as well as New Bern.

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

Pam Holder: Had 2 visitors who were descendants of Sir Havelock stop into the visitor center. Facility Updates: needlepoint bipolar ionization system installed to the HVAC system to filter out harmful pathogens. ECAHF Camp July 25-29 | June Revenue: \$16,506.33 | Statistics: Visitors 271, Event Gusts 1,075, Total Visitors 1,346 Telephone: 35, Email: 22, Ellie: 3. | Website statistics: New

Visitors 511, Total Visitors 524, Sessions 617, Page Views 1,230. Havelock Chamber of Commerce launched a new app for the city.

- VIII. NEW BUSINESS:** Melissa Riggle: announced that the DoubleTree is going under contract for new ownership and could close as soon as September. | We are partnering with American Legion Post 539 for our Trail to Tryon Half Marathon.
- IX. OLD BUSINESS:** AENC Convention coming to market July 24. Will be in town for 3 days. People are coming in a day early to take advantage of our boat tours, trolley tour and Tryon Palace. | Update on the New Bern Grand Marina and boat tours; held a meeting with Grand Marina and Doubletree and came to an agreement that dock Z can be used as a day doc and boat tour pickup location. New signs will be created to welcome visitors to New Bern's waterfront.
- X. MEMBER COMMENTS:** Gary Curry: Spring Hill and Hampton just had electric car charges installed. There is one downtown, and the Cub House has been offered a donated charger from one of the hospitality partners. | Brynn Harms is the new Director of Sales for Spring Hill Suites. | Melissa Riggle: prayers to our restaurant community on the loss of Jordan McDaniels and injuries to his brother Jaheem. They were part of Captain Ratty's, Country Biscuit, and Baker's Kitchen families.
- XI. ADJOURNMENT:**
Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhvala asked for a motion to adjourn. Alderman Sabrina Bengl made the motion to adjourn, Matthew Paul seconded the motion at 10:01 am.