

Craven County Tourism Development Authority -
Board of Directors Meeting
Chamber of Commerce Boardroom
Wednesday, December 14, 2022
Minutes

Present

Chairman Dan Roberts
Vice-Chairman Paresh
Pankhavala
Sabrina Bengel
Commissioner Tom Mark
Matthew Paul
Gary Johnson
Nancy Figiel
Bill Stafford
Commissioner Brenda Wilson
Craig Warren, Ex-Officio
Melissa Riggle, Executive
Director

Excused

Guest

Judy Avery
Brice Connors
Matt Potts
Tammy Rodriguez
Pam Holder
Cailin Gibson
Melinda Mowry
Carrie Gallagher
Jeff Woods

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 November Board Meeting. Sabrina Bengel 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 November for hotel stays in October were \$206,258 compared to \$192,541 for the same time last year. Online travel companies made up 17.9% of the total collected. Fiscal YTD collections are \$909,398 compared to \$874,660 the previous year which show a 3.9% increase. There was \$0 in penalties and \$517 in late receipts.

Moving on to the financials, room tax revenues for November 2022 were \$65,185 compared to \$60,698 last year, showing 7.1% increase. Room tax is running ahead by 52.2% of 42% of the fiscal year. On the expenditure side you will see the total spent for November was \$65,794 compared to \$19,060 last year. Total expenditures are running in line with the budget at 41.7% of 42%. Total revenues collected have exceeded our expenditures by \$79,941. Looking at the balance sheet as of November 30, 2022, the cash balance is \$584,578 Adding in the net income through November of \$79,941 to the fund balance gives a total of \$641,385 Bill Stafford made a motion to approve the financials. Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala seconded. Motion was approved unanimously.

V. **STR Report:** Vice-Chairman Paresh Pankhavala shared the STR report. New Bern's YTD numbers for occupancy was 70.9% compared to 70.6% in 2021. ADR was 126.24% compared to 112.05% in 2021 and RevPAR was 89.51% compared to 79.08% last year.

In Havelock YTD Occupancy was 53% compared to 52.9% last year. ADR was 90.10% compared to 89.62% in 2021. RevPAR was 47.79% compared to 47.44% last year.

VI. **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT:** Melissa Riggle announced that Tammy Rodriguez was awarded the Tourism Individual Excellence award at the North Carolina Travel Industry Association Leadership Conference last month. She was recognized for what she has done for tourism, not just locally here in Craven County, but statewide as well. | Visitor stats for the month of November we saw 311 walk-ins, 108 walk-ins at the Cub House (weekends), and 141 walk-ins at the Havelock Visitor Center. There were 210 emails, 185 Southern Living Leads and 35 phone calls. | Top places of origin are North Carolina, Virginia, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and New York. Top attractions continue to be, Local Events, Walking Tours, Tryon Palace, Trolley Tours, and Dining. | AirDNA: 268 active rentals, saw a 25% dip last month | Monthly Highlights: Melissa attended the AENC Annual Trade Show in Raleigh, Tammy has been asked to be a part of the RCS fundraising event committee, Melissa has been asked to be a part of Destinations International Advocacy Committee. We have also been invited to join the Congressional Summit in Washington D.C. in July 2023 for the Southeast Tourism Society. | **Group Business:** EDPNC visit planned for May 2023. Civil War Trails will be bringing their board meeting here in the spring of 2023. Over \$82,000 in group sales for the month. **From the state:** In May, we will host a film inspired fam tour with the PR department of Visit NC. VNB & Blueprint won a Platinum Award for our convention marketing & a Gold Award for our group marketing at the NCTIA ceremony.

Marketing: Brice Connors gave an update on The Great Fire brochure and ad content for a very successful event. | Matt Potts gave an update on social media ad campaigns (Google, Facebook, Instagram); Total Impressions: 1,393,748 Total Clicks: 26,942 Total Cost: \$6,511.83. | Ellie: Current events saw an increase of 7% MOM, flights and accommodations saw an increase of 2.5% MOM. | DC web traffic up 783% YOY, Holiday events page saw a 60% YOY increase, and mobile devices accounted for 79% of web traffic **Print:** NC Travel Guide: full-page ad, Our State: full-page holiday ad, Heart of NC Weddings: full page ad **Digital:** | Search engine optimization overhaul includes meta descriptions to help the website run faster (insight score from 73 to 85) | Trail To Tryon: added drone video and imagery to our database. Digital ad reached 200,000 people, generated 8,700 clicks and 220,000 views for our sponsor logos.

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

Pam Holder: November events included Marine Corps Balls, ComicCon, baby shower, and contractor meetings. | November Revenue: \$20,768.35 Statistics: Visitors 141, Event Gusts 2,118, Total Visitors 2,259 Telephone: 15, Email:7, Ellie; 5. | Website statistics: New Visitors 715, Total Visitors 742, Sessions 884, Page Views 1,540.

VIII. **NEW BUSINESS:** No new business.

IX. **OLD BUSINESS:** Melissa Riggle: Employee Handbook: Ross Hartman is reviewing our employee handbook. We were hoping to have a redline version for today, but unfortunately it wasn't ready. Ross has not found any real issues, just making sure it is FMLA accurate.

Trail to Tryon: Judy Avery did a phenomenal job organizing the event. We had a great turnout, and we were able to net over \$2,000 to benefit the American Legion Post 539. We are working on creating a presentation ceremony. Jeff Woods commented on how positive the turn out was and the feedback that they received about the race route and organization was very favorable. One area to work on is volunteer coordination. Next year we will have a volunteer coordinator to manage volunteers. Bring in local high school cheerleaders/bands to help encourage runners. Early advertisement of race to encourage business & residents along the route to cheer on runners as well. Survey that was sent to runners came back with 80% saying they would come back to run again next year. Generated around \$50,000 in direct sales for local businesses. The sports committee will continue to look into other sporting events (bass fishing, pickleball, etc.) to bring in additional markets.

X. MEMBER COMMENTS: Nancy Figiel: Candlelight has been a sellout. Our State did an article and video for Tryon Palace. African American public art event on January 19. History in Bloom with run in January as well. Matthew Paul: Havelock Chamber Military Affairs Committee sponsored a successful food truck dinner. Included a game truck that had screens and PlayStations. There was laser tag. Melinda Mowery: Embers Christmas show will be on Friday December 16, tickets on sale at the Chamber. First time in 10+ years to see as many sellouts in November & December. Brenda Wilson: Wreaths Across America will be at the National Cemetery this Saturday. ECAF is planning Spring Gala on February 24. Havelock will be hosting the Wall That Heals in November. Tammy Rodriguez: Calendar of events updates. Kuma (sushi restaurant) has opened.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Dan Roberts made a motion to adjourn. Sabrina Bengel seconded the motion at 10:34 am.