

Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority (TCTDA)
Board Meeting Agenda Minutes

Advance notice of all meetings has been provided and all TCTDA are open to the public.

A schedule of meetings and minutes can be found at

<https://explorebrevard.com/tct/meeting-schedule-and-minutes/>

August 24, 2023

8:40 am

Call to Order

I. Welcome

A quorum was established with the following members present at the meeting:

Dee Dee Perkins, Aaron Baker, Ali Lien, Madeline Magin, Jessica Whitmire, Isaac Allen

The following TDA Staff members were present at the meeting:

Clark Lovelace, Virginia Watkins, Mollie Gordon

The following people were also present at the meeting:

Jason Cox, Mark Johnson, Lindsay Underwood, Kate Hayes, Liam McKissock, Wilson Hooper, Aaron Bland

Vice Chairman Dee Dee Perkins called the meeting to order at 8:40 am.

II. Public Comment

- a. Vice Chairman Dee Dee Perkins then opened the floor for members of the public to participate in the regularly scheduled section of the meeting open for public comment, however there was none.

III. Agenda Modifications

- a. Vice Chairman Dee Dee Perkins presented the agenda to the Board and gave an overview of the agenda items. The Vice Chairman then requested any questions or other modifications to be made to the agenda. Aaron Baker moved to approve the agenda without modifications, seconded by Isaac Allen. The motion was unanimously approved by the board.

IV. Consent Agenda

- a. Vice Chairman Dee Dee Perkins presented the consent agenda, which are items that are considered minor or routine and are voted on collectively pending any

discussion by board members. Board members are allowed to move any item from the consent agenda to allow for greater discussion and particularized consideration through its own unique motion. The consent agenda included the approval of the minutes from the previous meeting on July 27th, the approval of contracts, and the approval of the FY23/24 Partner Funding List. Ali Lien moved to approve the consent agenda and Aaron Baker seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by the board.

V. Presentations

- a. Bracken Mountain Trail Expansion Funding Request – Wilson Hooper, the Brevard City Manager, and Aaron Bland, Assistant Planning Director for the city of Brevard, gave a brief presentation on the funding request on behalf of the city. Mr. Hooper began with a disclaimer by saying that Howard Grant was the best salesman for this project, but that he and Mr. Bland would do their best to present the facts of the request. The request involves the city owned hiking and biking path near the Brevard Music Center, known as the Bracken Preserve. The property the city owns is about 300 acres. The Bracken Preserve has become increasingly popular as more residents and visitors find out about the trail, so much so that it has become difficult to find parking at the trail due to the increased visitation at the trail. One ongoing concern with the preserve is the issue of accessibility. The trail is known for being very difficult due to its steep ascent. The city would like to make the trail system more accessible for users of all ages and ability and has therefore come up with an actionable plan to increase accessibility. The city has located a property adjacent to the preserve that they would like to purchase and build an adjoining trail that is much easier to traverse. The property is 34 acres and is owned by Conserving Carolina, which means that the property will remain in a forested state in perpetuity regardless of whether the city purchases the land or not. The property is \$330,000 and the city has raised \$300,000 so far for its purchase. The city is requesting the remainder of the purchase amount from the TDA in addition to some extra funds for building and maintaining the trail system. The request from the city totals \$49,999. The city hopes to build 4 miles of new trails for the public to use, additional space for parking, trails that all people can use, and access to the Art Loeb Trail within the Pisgah National Forest. The city also hopes to host more events there such as Bracken Fest 2.0, and other mountain biking events at the property. Mr. Hooper explains that if the TDA grants the request, they would be promoted as a significant sponsor and would be entitled to certain benefits, including the ability to include TDA messaging on a newly constructed kiosk. After the conclusion of the presentation, Madeline Magin asked about the bottleneck portion of the trail system and whether that land was going to be

donated or not to the preserve. Mr. Hooper indicated that he was very confident that it would be.

- b. Financial Report – Kate Hayes gave a brief presentation on the financial activities of the TDA. The presentation covered a summary of activities from the last fiscal year and a description of the expenditures of the first month of this new fiscal year. A motion to accept the financial report as presented was unanimously passed.
- c. Office / Staff Report – Clark Lovelace gave a report on the activities of his office and staff. Mr. Lovelace first gave a welcome and introduction to Mollie Gordon, who is the newest member of his staff. Ms. Gordon will be replacing Gracie Sheffield as the Marketing and Communications Specialist. Mr. Lovelace began discussing the year-end activities surrounding his office, such as the annual report that is about to be finished. Mr. Lovelace discussed the Outdoor Economy Conference and how the TDA will be well represented at the events through its various marketing campaigns and outreach programs. Mr. Lovelace briefly mentioned the approved changes by the City of Brevard involving the limiting of new short-term rentals and the creation of a social district. Virginia Watkins is working on partner marketing opportunities and subsequent updates to the adventure guide. The Marketing Committee recommended a networking social opportunity in early October for all TDA partners to unveil these new opportunities. Work toward a new website continues with an RFP having been sent out with seven firms indicating that they will be submitting a proposal. When looking at the activities of Transylvania Always, Mr. Lovelace explains that the Leave It Better videos are now out, and that the TA committee is discussing expansion into other safety messaging like river safety. On the Destination Infrastructure side of things, Mr. Lovelace explains that the committee is making signage and bike rack recommendations to the City of Brevard's downtown master plan committee.

VI. Old Business

- a. Ecusta Trail Funding – Mr. Lovelace reviewed the instructions made by the board at the last meeting, indicating that he is proceeding accordingly. He met with legal counsel to review what is needed from the City of Brevard to release the TDA from its pledge and subsequently shared this information with City of Brevard staff. They are working through the complicated issues related to receiving two similar grant awards and will be in touch. Once this is done, a new pledge with fewer restrictions will be shared with the board. As a final step, consideration for Ecusta Trail funds in FY23 will be discussed.

VII. New Business

- a. Bracken Mountain Trail Expansion Funding Request – Under the advisement of counsel, the board first discusses the need to recuse any members with any linkages to the project.
 - i. Ali Lien made a motion to recuse Aaron Baker from voting on the Bracken Mountain Trail Expansion Funding Request because of his membership on the Brevard City Council, and Issac Allen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
 - ii. Jessica Whitmire made a motion to recuse Madeline Magin from voting on the Bracken Mountain Trail Expansion Funding Request due to her previous financial support for the project as an individual donator, and Isaac Allen seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
- b. With two members of board recused from voting on the funding request, the remaining board members had a discussion on the merits of the request. Ali Lien was supportive of the initial \$30,000 to close the property transaction but questioned whether the additional \$19,999 was valid or not. Dee Dee Perkins explained that the TDA had precedent in supporting trail creation in the past when it supported a request from Conserving Carolina. There was discussion over which funding stream within the TDA’s budget the funding amount would come from, and the members concluded that the money should come equally from Destination Infrastructure and Transylvania Always. Jessica Whitmire made a motion to approve the funding request of \$49,999 split between Destination Infrastructure and Transylvania Always expense categories with the understanding that TDA will have access to kiosk space at the Preserve, and Ali Lien seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

VIII. Public Comment

- a. Vice Chairman Dee Dee Perkins opened the floor again for any members of the public that wished to comment on the business of the board.

Aaron Bland thanked the TDA for their support of the Bracken Mountain Trail Expansion funding request.

There was no other request for public comment.

IX. Board Member Comments

- a) Vice Chairman Dee Dee Perkins asked Aaron Baker to give the board a brief update on the social district ordinance. Aaron Baker described how the ordinance passed and that the logistics of signage will be going up shortly. Mr. Baker thinks the introduction of this change will be slow and the change will not be noticeable to residents until special events occur in downtown Brevard. He

asked about the role of the TDA in communicating this message to visitors and a discussion ensued as to whether to include information on the ordinance in the upcoming get out guide.

- b) Aaron Baker also discussed the changes to short-term rentals in the city and described how the change was very moderate and make sense from a practical standpoint.
- c) Aaron Baker also described a few other projects going on throughout the city. NCDOT is about to repave main street. There is scheduled work to happen on the estatoe trail near the skate park. There will be some creek restoration happening near Silverstein Park. The TYSA youth soccer association is redoing the City's soccer field to make it a turf field.

Adjournment

Dee Dee Perkins moved to adjourn the meeting and the meeting adjourned at 10:01am.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Liam McKissock

TCTDA Mission Statement – *To generate and enhance tourism opportunities in Transylvania County through strategic promotion coordinated with tourism-related businesses and local government, and to contribute to a vibrant, sustainable economy.*