

# **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/>*

**July 27th, 2023**

**8:32 am**

### **Call to Order**

#### **I. Welcome**

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

Layton Parker, Dee Dee Perkins, Larry Chapman, Jessica Whitmire, Isaac Allen, Madeline Magin, Ali Lien, Dana Antonuccio

The following TDA Staff members were present at the meeting:

Clark Lovelace, Virginia Watkins, Gracie Sheffield

The following people were also present at the meeting:

Jason Cox, Patrick Scott, Liam McKissock, Karen Tessier, Blair Shenal, Gerald Yunker

Chairman Layton Parker called the meeting to order at 8:31 am.

#### **II. Public Comment**

- a. Chairman Layton Parker 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. Chairman Parker presented the agenda to the Board and gave an overview of the agenda items. The Chairman then requested any questions or other modifications to be made to the agenda. Jessica Whitmire moved to approve the agenda without modifications, seconded by Larry Chapman. The motion was unanimously approved by the board.

#### **IV. Consent Agenda**

- a. Chairman Parker 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, contracts, and the approval of the FY23/24 Partner Funding List. Larry Chapman moved to

approve the consent agenda and Isaac Allen seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by the board.

## **V. Presentations**

- a. Financial Report - NCACC Management Fellow Liam McKissock gave a brief presentation on the financial information relating to the TCTDA. A short conversation began after the presentation ended. Isaac Allen made a motion to approve the financial report and Jessica Whitmire seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved by the board.
- b. Office/Staff Report – TDA Director Clark Lovelace gave a report on his staff and the business going on at his office. He first provided comment on the financials and the financial state of the TCTDA. First, he noted that the organization is in good financial position. He then shared that with the recent large grants approved by the organization, Brevard Streetscape and the Southern Highlands Reserve, plus the FY23/24 budget including \$250,000 toward the Ecusta Trail with the intention of spending down the fund balance to a desired level, plus the recent drop in occupancy tax proceeds, we may need to think about reductions to expenditures to ensure that the TCTDA does not go below the desired fund balance level. This may be marketing or non-marketing expenditures and may be this year or future years, or maybe even unnecessary if revenues increase in the long run. For now, this is just something to keep our eyes on. Mr. Lovelace also covered the upcoming Outdoor Economy Conference, offering tickets to board members, inquiring about a good waterfall expert to assist with the waterfall section of the upcoming Adventure Guide, an anticipated request from the City of Brevard regarding Bracken Mountain, and a farewell to Gracie Sheffield, who is moving on from her position from the TCTDA. Ms. Sheffield then briefly spoke.
- c. Marketing Update – Karen Tessier from Market Connections (MC) gave a brief update and presentation on the marketing strategies undergone the MC team. She discussed an overview of what was coming up in the next quarter. Ms. Tessier described a push to advertise for mid-week extended stay opportunities and opportunities for markets within a drivable geographic area from Transylvania County. She also discussed the upcoming push to advertise for stays during the fall and holiday season and efforts to capture Brevard's iconic brand imagery. There were also some new advertising campaigns that seek to advance new brand positions, such as wellness, romance, group outings, adventure, and couples/family activities. Ms. Tessier also described a refreshed digital campaign and stated that tv advertisements were running in seven different markets. Limited print advertisements were making their way in key publications and new efforts were being made to reach out on social media platforms. A discussion around the use of billboards began as the board now has 5 of them around the area advertising the county.

## **VI. Old Business**

- a. There was no old business to discuss on the agenda. Chairman Layton Parker, however, did give a brief update on the future of the visitor center and the contractual relationship

between the TDA and the Chamber of Commerce. The volunteer task force reached out to the chamber and it appears that both parties desire continuation of a similar visitor center operations agreement for an additional two years beyond the current contract, which ends on June 30, 2024. A couple of adjustments need to be worked out. More to come in the not-too-distant future.

## **VII. New Business**

- a. Ecusta Trail Funding – This item of new business revolves around a previous funding decision by the board to provide \$1M in local matching funds if the City of Brevard receives a grant of \$10M or more for the development of the Ecusta Trail. Chairman Layton Parker noted that the City of Brevard recently received two grants over \$10M, and board members, the City of Brevard, and others, are asking what that means with TCTDA funding. Following discussion, including input from attorney Partick Scott, it was determined that appropriate next steps would be for Mr. Scott and Mr. Lovelace to connect and reach out to the City of Brevard to request a letter releasing the TCTDA from its current financial obligation. Next, they would prepare a motion for Board approval that covers \$1M in TCTDA funds to be spent on any expenditures related to the development or maintenance of the Ecusta Trail to be paid over multiple years at the discretion of the Board. Once that is completed, the Board would then consider appropriate expenditures for the current fiscal year.

## **VIII. Public Comment**

- a. Layton Parker opened the floor again for any members of the public that wished to comment on the business of the board. A man named Gerald Junker inquired about the minutes from previous meetings and quarterly reports on the TCTDA website. Clark Lovelace indicated that he would follow up.

## **IX. Board Member Comments**

- a. Clark Lovelace reminded the Board that two Board positions will be opening up at the end of the year, Layton Parker (accommodations), and Ali Lien (member-at-large). The Board will need to select a recommendation at the October meeting and typically review those who have applied at the September meeting. He also reminded that the City and County positions are typically annual appointments made by those bodies in December.
- b. Dana Antonuccio heard from some members of the public that the streetscape project was a major success and that they really appreciated the changes to downtown Brevard.
- c. Madeline Magin discussed a recent event at Upcountry Brewing, in which a drag show that was planned at the venue was cancelled due to death threats levied by an individual over Facebook. Ms. Magin said the venue was working on raising money to support a local LGBTQ nonprofit.

**Adjournment**

Jessica Whitmire moved to adjourn the meeting and Dana Antonuccio seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously by the board and the meeting adjourned at 10:29am.

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.*