

Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority (TCTDA)
Board Meeting
March 28, 2024

Minutes

Board Members Present: Dee Dee Perkins, Jessica Whitmire, Lauren Wise, Nory LeBrun, Dionne Hodgeson, Isaac Allen, Larry Chapman, Madeline Magin, Dana Antonuccio

Board Members Absent: None

Staff & Partners: Clark Lovelace, Mollie Gordon, Meagan O'Neal

Members of Public: Paul Ray and Wilson Hooper from City of Brevard

I. Call to Order & Welcome: Board Chair, Dee Dee Perkins, called the meeting to order at 8:30am and noted a quorum.

II. Public Comment: No members of the public chose to comment at this time.

III. Agenda Modifications: Dee Dee made a modification to the agenda. A discussion about Ecusta trail funding also needs to be added to the New Business section. Larry made a motion to accept the agenda with Dee Dee's modifications. With a second from Lauren, the motion unanimously carried.

IV. Consent Agenda: *All items listed below are considered routine and will be enacted by one motion. No separate discussion will be held except on a request of a member of the TCTDA.*

A. Minutes from the February 22, 2024, Board Meeting

B. Minutes from the February 22, 2024, Board Retreat

C. Contracts

D. FY23/24 Partner Funding List

Madeline made a motion to accept the consent agenda as presented. With a second from Nory, the motion unanimously carried.

V. Presentations

A. Financial Reports: Meagan O'Neal presented her monthly financial report and a brief conversation followed regarding occupancy tax collections being down slightly. No action was taken. Isaac moved to approve the financial report as presented. With a second by Jessica, the motion carried.

B. Office/Staff Report: Clark gave an office/staff update presentation. He gave an overview of the state tourism conference, the new accessibility initiative, Adventure Guides and Points of Interest Maps, and USA TODAY's Best Small Town in the South competition. He also provided information about the TCTDA annual budget process.

- C. Ecusta Trail Update and Funding Request:** Wilson Hooper, Brevard City Manager gave an update on the Ecusta Trail and outlined the funding request. The City of Brevard is officially requesting that the TCTDA's \$250,000 pledge for FY24 be used for Phase 2 "100% Design" engineering costs to supplement the FOET's \$750,000 contribution. If Phase 2 costs less than \$1M, the remaining money could be used to sponsor trail signage, a safer route to Downtown Brevard along AVL HWY, or other things at the discretion of the TCTDA. ***Based on board questions, it was decided to have*** the Destination Infrastructure Committee take on ***proactively reviewing*** things related to the Ecusta Trail, including trail system names in the City of Brevard, challenges related to trail infrastructure, etc. and making an official recommendation/statement. A larger discussion will be had later in the meeting.

Larry Chapman had left the meeting early, at approximately 9:00am.

VI. Old Business

A. Board Retreat Review

Dee Dee provided an overview of the Board Retreat and reviewed a slide covering the takeaways from each of the agenda topics. Madeline brought up the need to add an additional staff member, asking if now is the time to do so. Clark shared that he and Dee Dee currently have a part-time employee in the tentative FY25 budget. Jessica made a note to clarify that the importance of signage in the marketing section means wayfinding signage throughout the county. It was decided to include the study on local perceptions of tourism in the upcoming Quarterly Report.

VII. New Business

- A. Transylvania Economic Alliance Appointment:** Dee Dee reminded of the appointment the TCTDA has on the Transylvania Economic Alliance Board. Currently, the TCTDA appointee is Mike Hawkins, but his term is up. He is eligible to serve a second term and Dee Dee made a motion to re-appoint Mike for a second term. Jessica seconded the motion. A discussion followed with an action item noted to have Mike Hawkins attend an upcoming Board Meeting. A vote occurred, with the motion to re-appoint Mike carrying unanimously.
- B. Visitor Center and Office Space Lease Contracts:** Clark gave an update about the Visitor Center and office space lease contracts, covering a slide with key information on all three contracts. The one for Visitor Center operations is with the TCTDA and the two covering the lease of the Visitor Center space and the lease of office space are with the County. The latter two are a bit complicated and with a new Chamber director and long period without a County Finance Director, the utilities, insurance, and taxes that are in addition to monthly rent have not been billed or paid for a little over a year. More to come on that. Following a discussion, Dana made a motion to recommend to the County Commissioners to move forward with the Visitor Center lease as presented so long as it is approved by the attorneys and County manager. Jessica seconded the motion, motion carried. Dana made a motion to recommend to the County Commissioners to move forward with the office space lease as presented so long as it is approved by the attorneys and County manager. Jessica seconded the motion, motion carried.

Madeline made a motion to recommend to approve the Visitor Center operations contract as presented, pending the commissioner approval of the Visitor Center lease. Dana seconded the motion, motion carried.

- C. Ecusta Trail Funding Discussion:** Dee Dee opened the discussion of the Ecusta Trail funding request. Clark mentioned that any expenditure over \$50,000 is subject to a contract. He asked the attorney if we needed anything else to move forward in this case. Lindsey, didn't believe so and indicated that she would double-check. Madline made a motion to approve the request for FY24 Ecusta Trail funding to be used for Phase 2 "100% Design" engineering costs, with any overages being used to address safety concerns at intersections. Jessica seconded the motion, motion carried. Lauren made a motion to proceed with issuing payment of the \$250,000 in the FY24 budget for the Ecusta Trail once the contract is approved. Nory seconded the motion, motion carried. Nory requested that we issue a press release to inform the public that we issued payment for the first \$250,000 in our \$1M pledge towards the Ecusta Trail. Dee Dee requested that Clark pass on to the Ecusta Trail Advisory Committee that making the Ecusta Trail a minimum of 12 feet wide would be preferable, based on a similar trail system in Rutherford County.

VIII. Public Comment: No members of the public were present at this time, no public comment.

IX. Board Member Comments

Jessica mentioned many things happening around the county, Nory brought up the Longcliff community, and Isaac mentioned that the Explore Brevard logo on the I26 billboard looked too small. Isaac also mentioned that the sidewalks in Downtown Brevard were in rough condition and mentioned sweeping the streets and curbs with a street sweeper would enhance the curb appeal of the streets. Dee Dee requested that Lauren, our Brevard City Council representative, relay this concern to the City of Brevard. Lauren noted that deferred maintenance is a large problem as the public works department is overworked. Dana added that the siding on the OP Taylors building is in poor condition and that is a concern for her given the Explore Brevard signage on the building.

Jessica had to leave the meeting early at approximately 10:50 am.

Adjournment: With a motion from Madeline and a second from Isaac, the meeting was adjourned at 10:56 am.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Mollie Gordon.

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/>