

TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOURISM DEVELOPEMNT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

SEPTEMBER 14, 2026

Present: Members: Chair Tim Crabtree, Steve Crabtree, Heather Childress, Heather Dombroskie, Daniel Lawton, and Rob Reale (joined via phone).

Absent: Town Manager Amie Owens, Guy Gooder, Hannah Edwards and Colin McGinnis

Others present: Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk
Robbie Tompa, Councilman
Mia Overton, The Franklin Press
Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications
Kellie Burns, 828 Treasure Quest Organizer
Alisha Ashe, Kids Place Executive Director
Representative for the Plein Air Art Festival

1. Call to Order- Chair Tim Crabtree

The meeting was called to order at 5:31 p.m.

2. Approval of the August 10, 2026 Meeting Minutes

Member Heather Dombroskie made a motion, seconded by Member Daniel Lawton to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2026 meeting, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 6 -0.

3. Financial Reports- ending July 31, 2026

Chair Tim Crabtree presented the Financial Report through the end of July 2026. The total collections for July were \$17,922.97 (4th highest July on record and above the 10-year average). Total expenses, thus far, for current FY 2026/2027 are \$20,124.88 leaving a balance of -\$2,201.91 and \$182,855.75 remains in fund balance. The report is incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A.

Member Steve Crabtree made a motion, seconded by Member Heather Dombroskie to approve the financial reports ending July 31, 2026, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

4. New Business

A.) Follow Up Report from 80's Flashback Weekend

George Young, Tracy Griffin and Dave Linn were in attendance. George Young gave the follow up report. He noted that they had ramped up their marketing efforts this year through streaming TV and Billboards (4 – Clayton, Sylva, Maggie Valley & Murphy). Tracy Griffin discussed a few of the expense items and the survey on where event visitors were from. A total of \$42,000 was donated to Shriners Children's Hospital in Greenville.

B.) Vote on Application – KIDS Place – 828 Treasure Quest – Saturday, October 10, 2026 – Requested amount \$2,500

Member Heather Dombroskie stated that this was a great event and there was a great turn out last year. Member Rob Reale confirmed that the TDC had also funded \$2,500.

Member Heather Dombroskie made a motion, seconded by Member Steve Crabtree to approve the funding request of \$2,500 for KIDS Place 828 Treasure Quest event, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 6 -0.

C.) Vote on Application – Macon County Farmer’s Market – Saturday’s – May through November 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. – Requested amount \$5,000

Member Heather Dombroskie noted that she was a Macon County Farmer’s Market Board Member and would recuse herself from voting on this event, but could answer any questions. Member Steve Crabtree inquired on total number of visitors. It was noted in the application packet that foot traffic each Saturday was over 400.

Member Heather Childress made a motion, seconded by Member Rob Reale to approve the funding request of \$5,000 for the Macon County Farmer’s Market, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 5 -0 (Member Heather Dombroskie recused herself due to being on the Farmer’s Market Board).

D.) Vote on Application – Outdoor 76 – The Naturalist 25/50K – Saturday, October 3, 2026 – Requested amount \$1,600

Member Heather Dombroskie made a motion, seconded by Member Daniel Lawton to approve the funding request of \$1,600 for Outdoor 76’s The Naturalist 20/50K event, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 6 -0.

E.) Vote on Application – Plein Air Art Festival - October 22-24, 2026 – Requested amount \$1,600

Chair Tim Crabtree noted that the Plein Air Art Festival is a new event. Member Heather Childress stated that she was in support of the event, but in looking at budget for the event over half of the requested amount was for prize money. It was also asked where the event would take place. The event organizer stated they were going to focus on downtown, but the artist would be in various areas.

Member Heather Dombroskie made a motion, seconded by Member Daniel Lawton to approve the funding request of \$1,600 for the Plein Air Art Festival, as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 6 -0.

Chair Tim Crabtree stated that in the future the TDA Board would like to see the event utilize more funds toward event marketing.

5. **Items from the Board**

A.) Monthly Marketing Report- Stewart Communications

- Social Media Post and Ads

- 19 Social Media post and 4 Paid Ads
- Facebook – 58 new followers
- Instagram – 41 new followers
- Website
 - More than 13,000 users
 - Top Pages for views
 - Home Page & Things to do
 - Top Pages for engagement
 - Bucket List Blog & Things to Do
- Google Searches (2.62K Clicks & 216K Impressions)
- Email/Newsletter Performance
 - 24 % Open rate & 6% Click rate
- Media Relations
 - Active Pitches – PumpkinFest, The Naturalist, Fall
- Next Steps
 - Fall Campaign (Videos, My 10 Reason to Visit Franklin, NC, PumpkinFest promotions, Fall Activities)
 - General Promotions – Naturalist, Follower Sweepstakes, Deliver Travel Guide, Build Media Relations b-roll assets, 828 Treasure Quest)
 - Website – Added new downloadable Travel Guide

B.) Report from TDA Subcommittee

Chair Tim Crabtree asked to table this discussion until the October meeting when more TDA Board member were in attendance.

6. Announcements

A.) The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on Monday, October 12, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

7. Adjourn

Member Heather Dombroskie made a motion, seconded by Member Rob Reale to adjourn the meeting at 6:07 p.m. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 6-0.

Tim Crabtree, Chair

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk