

TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOURISM DEVELOPEMNT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

October 14, 2024

Present: Chairperson Connie Grubermann, Members: Town Manager Amie Owens, Hannah Edwards, Tim Crabtree, Rob Reale, Kevin Covell, Guy Gooder and Angela Martin (arrived at 5:32).

Absent: Members Matt Holland and Josh Drake.

Others present: Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk
Robbie Tompa, Town Council Member
Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications
Mia Overton, The Franklin Press
Jim Adkins, Scottish Tartan Museum

1. Call to Order- Chair Connie Grubermann

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Approval of the September 9, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Member Kevin Covell made a motion, seconded by Member Hannah Edwards to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2024 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

3. Financial Reports- ending August 31, 2024

Town Manager Amie Owens presented the Financial Report through the end of August 2024. She noted that the amount of occupancy tax collected was \$14,874.97. Total expenses thus far \$21,972.97 leaving the balance of \$158,037.13 and \$169,359.10 remains in TDA Fund Balance. The report is incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A.

Member Hannah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Kevin Covell to approve the financial report ending August 31, 2024. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 7-0.

4. New Business

A.) Vote on Application

Horse Tails Farm, Inc. submitted an application for funding of their Pet Adoptions at Pumpkinfest on October, 19 2024. The requested amount is \$2,500.

Member Guy Gooder questioned if this event fit the criteria for TDA funding.

Member Guy Gooder made a motion, seconded by Member Tim Crabtree to skip this request for funding, as it is not related to tourism. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

B.) Vote of Application

Streets of Franklin submitted an application for funding of the Monster Mash event that will be held on October, 26 2024 in Downtown Franklin. The requested amount is \$1,000.

Member Angela Martin made a motion, seconded by Member Guy Gooder to approve the funding request of \$1,000 for Monster Mash on Main as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

C.) Application for Consideration

The Town of Franklin submitted an application for funding in the amount of \$13,000 for banner replacements throughout town. The current banners are old and faded. They were purchased in 2017 and installed in 2018. There are 62 banners that need to be replaced. This item will be voted on at the November meeting.

The Town will also submit an application for funding to the TDC.

D.) Application for Consideration

Jim Adkins, Scottish Tartan Museum Owner, submitted an application for funding. The request is for \$10,000 to help with advertising in multiple publications and at various festivals and events. Mr. Adkins noted that the Franklin Scottish Tartan Museum is the only one outside of Scotland and that there were 12,969 visitors last year. This item will be voted on at the November meeting.

Mr. Adkins was also encouraged to submit an application for funding to the TDC.

5. Items from the Board

A.) Marketing Report- Stewart Communications

Morgan Stewart, Stewart Communications, gave the marketing update:

- Due to the impact of Hurricane Helene in WNC many businesses have seen cancelations
- Reached out to NC Senator Kevin Corbin & NC Representative Karl Gillespie to help the far west counties
- Looking for grants to fund tourism marketing and grants to assist small business for the loss of business
- Advertising to let people know some parks and attractions in WNC are open
- Stewart Communications is accelerating the new TDA website push to aid in these efforts
- Experience Franklin Facebook page has launched
 - Media relations are pushing PumpkinFest and Monster Mash events
- New TDA website has a video on the homepage that covers a little bit of everything
- The TDA Board agreed to stop advertising while rebranding
 - Tourist are still seeing Franklin
- There will be a redirect from the Discover Franklin website and links will be added/repared

B.) Discussion

Board Member conduct discussion about Member Josh Drake was held. Chairperson Connie Grubermann noted that the current Tourism Development Authority Rules of Procedure state in Article 3 Section 2- Termination and Transfer of Membership: The appointing authority (Town of Franklin Town Council) may remove a member at the recommendation of the majority of the TDA Members.

Member Hannah Edwards said that as a Board they should be able to move along professionally. Member Angela Martin agreed the Board should go forward in a productive way. Discussion was held about speaking with Member Josh Drake, when he was present at a meeting, and letting him defend himself.

Additional discussion was held on the marketing information that was withheld from Drake Enterprises Limited to Stewart Communications, when the TDA Board voted to change marketing companies.

Member Guy Gooder made a motion, seconded by Member Rob Reale to make a recommendation to the Franklin Town Council to remove Josh Drake as a TDA Board Member. The motion carried by a vote of 6-1. Town Manager Amie Owens voted in opposition and Member Tim Crabtree abstained.

Chairperson Grubermann will forward the recommendation to the Town Council and requested Town Manager Owens to forward information to Josh Drake of the action taken by the Board.

7. Announcements

A.) The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 12, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

B.) The Annual Audit Report will be presented at the November 12, 2024 meeting

8. Adjourn

Member Hanah Edwards made a motion, seconded by Member Tim Crabtree to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 p.m. The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 8-0.

Connie Grubermann, Chairperson

Nicole Bradley, Town Clerk