



Patrick County Tourism Advisory Council

Called meeting of September 21, 2023

Present: Bessie Weber, Chair; Kurt Bozenmayer, Co-Chair; Jeanie Clark, Secretary; Wayne Kirkpatrick; Brian Alley; Chris Prutting

Also Present: James Houchins, Tourism Director; Grace Cooper, Assistant Tourism Director; David Stanley, SilverLining Design; Debra Shelor, Meadows of Dan Ruritans

Absent: Mary Dellenback Hill; Denise Stirewalt, Board of Supervisors

The Patrick County Tourism Advisory Council meeting was held on September 21, 2023 in the conference room at P & H Community College.

MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting and the meeting agenda were sent via email and presented. On motion by Wayne Kirkpatrick, seconded by Kurt Bozenmayer and carried, the Council approved the September 21 meeting agenda and the August 17 meeting minutes.

Voting Yes: Bessie Weber; Jeanie Clark; Kurt Bozenmayer; Wayne Kirkpatrick; Chris Prutting; Brian Alley

Voting No: None

Abstaining: None

Absent: Mary Dellenback Hill

PUBLIC COMMENT

Debra Shelor spoke regarding the Meadows of Dan Pancake Days conducted by the Ruritans. Pancake Days began in the 60's and have evolved over time. Last year, they served 4300 people on two Sundays. They have never applied for the grant before; however, this year they wanted to apply. The proceeds from Pancake Days are split between the Meadows of Dan Fire Department and the Ruritans. They will be adding two grills for takeout orders this year. She requested \$15,200, which would help with marketing the event along with capital gains. Kurt questioned the amount of the request. Ms. Shelor indicated they would continue to have the Pancake Days.

Wayne Kirkpatrick followed up on the Cruise-In held in July. He presented the Council with a breakdown of expenses and he returned a check for unspent money back to the Tourism fund.

Wayne also followed up on the Beach Music Festival. The attendance was about the same as last year even though they had expanded the marketing. The weather was perfect. There were 143 paid campers. They had close to 2800 people. Their goal was 3000, with last year having approximately 2725 people in attendance. James hopes to gain knowledge of attendance locations from people purchasing tickets through credit cards. Wayne stated that the banners that David and others created were very nice and well designed.

CHAMBER REPORT

Rebecca Adcock was unable to attend the meeting; however, she sent updates through email. Magazines are here! The Ribbon Cutting for Skyline National Bank was on Aug 18. The Folk Fair was held on August 19. The chamber has worked with the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation to show "Rock Castle Home." They did two showings, and they went well. Business after-hours at Mayberry Trading Post took place on August 22. There was a meeting with Senator Warner at Mabry Mill on August 23 and a meeting with Congressman Griffith. The Chamber will be working on Monsters on Main Street for the last 2 weeks of October. The Stuart Spooktacular will be held October 31. The Chamber has added several new members, including some cleaning businesses that may help with rentals. Rebecca has spent time helping the new Economic Development Director and the new Grant Writer get acclimated into the community.

MARKETING REPORT

David stated that ads have increased lately, and there are several going forward. The banners for Rotary and for Front Porch Fest, Beach Music Festival, and the Fair have been completed. David indicated that some logo mockups with the tagline have been made and can begin to be used. The logos for Parks and Rec and other things with similar branding are happening. He has ordered new decals and brochures and maps. The maps have been updated by West Piedmont. He is working on the entrance signs into the county to place the new slogan "Find Yourself Here." David is working on a graphic for the billboard at AEP on route 58, which will hopefully be ready in November.

MEDIA REPORT

Kim was not able to attend; however, she emailed an information report. She will have a full report at the October meeting. She indicated that August and September were busy months. She has been doing a lot on the Meadows of Dan area including the Folk Festival. She worked with Bull Mountain Arts at Mabry Mill, which turned out well. She has been working with the Hatteras Pearl and Quilted Colors on Main Street. She attended Front Porch Fest. The Tourism department is working with Hubbard 1 Productions with upcoming pals for Main Street Mondays and Sunrise Sundays. Kim is preparing for events coming up in October, including the Spooktacular and events at Doe Run Farm, Fairy Stone Park, Wades Orchard, and more.

FINANCE/TOURISM REPORT

James presented a report for monies that have been spent through sponsorships. He indicated that about 14% has been spent of what has been allocated. He stated that the line items are good and that the overflow continues to exist. The new County Administrator will take office in October,

and James hopes to have conversations that will help to make the reports easier to understand. James hopes he and Bessie will be able to attend a Board Retreat. He is checking into other grant opportunities, some of which are matching grants where the County must fund a portion of the cost. He is hoping to group the tourism industry in the county. He indicated \$73,400 remains for sponsorships and \$40,000 for small business grants. Kurt presented a report from January - September of sponsorships and amounts. He indicated that several of the items were large items, and he still has some budget issues with the County. Kurt would like to have another meeting with Lori to discuss the budget. He stated that the numbers from the Transient Occupancy Tax and report do not match up. James clarified by stating the funds are in the general fund.

On August 22 James and Grace attended the business after-hours at Mayberry trading Post. They met with Mark Warner and the BRP staff for a meet and greet update on August 23. On August 24, James met with Friends of SWVA and their new Marketing group.

James met with Lisa Price Hughes to discuss the Rural Rustic Road Program. It is a program to get rural roads paved quicker than usual. This is ongoing, but due to the timing of the request, another meeting will be held. Grace set up at Front Porch Fest.

James began a new campaign with Media 360, a primary marketing agent for VTC, to do digital marketing. Feedback will help see clicks and how to conduct target marketing properly. The Fair was a success, and James thanked everyone who helped.

James attended the VADMO conference, which discussed the innovation of agrotourism. VA250 is going well. We will partner with the Reynolds Homestead on upcoming projects for the event.

Grace and James have set the date and will revive the Covered Bridge Festival. The date is slated for June 15th from 10am-2pm, which will lead up to Bushel & Barrels at Reynolds Homestead. Next week, James and Grace will attend the IBMA, working alongside the VTC and several Blue Ridge Highlands Region counties.

October is gearing up with Festivals each Saturday. The county will be promoted at the Mt. Airy Autumn Leaves Festival and the Blue Ridge Folklife Festival in Ferrum. Ongoing projects include The Moonshine Heritage Trail.

A new project is reviving the Virginia Motorsports Museum and Hall of Fame, which has huge potential for the county.

On motion by Kurt Bozenmayer, seconded by Chris Prutting, the Council voted to approve \$2,261.13 for marketing expenses for the Sunflower Maze at Doe Run Farm.

Voting Yes: Bessie Weber; Jeanie Clark; Kurt Bozenmayer; Wayne Kirkpatrick; Chris Prutting; Brian Alley

Voting No: None

Abstaining: None

Absent: Mary Dellenback Hill

On motion by Kurt Bozenmayer, seconded by Wayne Kirkpatrick, the Council voted to approve \$15,200 for marketing expenses for MOD Ruritans and MOD Fire Department for Pancake Days.

Voting Yes: Bessie Weber; Jeanie Clark; Kurt Bozenmayer; Wayne Kirkpatrick; Chris Prutting; Brian Alley

Voting No: None

Abstaining: None

Absent: Mary Dellenback Hill

NEW BUSINESS

James is planning to hold a retreat to see what options are available. He would like to gain input from other smaller DMO's to think of options for the county. Bessie asked about having the meeting in January since it seems to be a less busy time.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council agreed to adjourn until October 19th, 2023 at 6:00 pm at the P&H Community room for a Special Called Meeting. The format will be determined at a later date.

On motion by Wayne Kirkpatrick, seconded by Chris Prutting, the Tourism Advisory Council voted to adjourn.

Voting Yes: Bessie Weber; Jeanie Clark; Kurt Bozenmayer; Wayne Kirkpatrick; Brian Alley; Chris Prutting

Voting No: None

Abstaining: None

Absent: Mary Dellenback Hill