

**Town of Franklin Tourism Development Authority Meeting**

**August 12, 2013**

Present: Chair Candy Presley, Josh Drake, Mike Grubermann, Vickie Springer and Summer Woodard (designated by Warren Cabe.)

Absent: Matt Bateman, Cheryl Pullium and Leland Rykse.

Guests: John Henning Jr.

Chair Candy Presley called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**Mike Grubermann made a motion to excuse Matt Bateman, Cheryl Pullium and Leland Rykse from the meeting. Josh Drake seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Approval of Minutes**

The July 8, 2013 meeting minutes were reviewed.

**Josh Drake made a motion to approve the July 8, 2013 minutes as presented. Mike Grubermann seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Financial Report**

Summer Woodard presented the financial report (please see attachment.)

**Mike Grubermann made a motion to accept the financial report as presented. Josh Drake seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Sub-Committee Reports**

**Finance/Budget Chair**

Mike Grubermann: No report

**Policy and Rules of Procedure Chair**

Vickie Springer: No report

**Application Review Chair**

Summer Woodard: No report

**August 12, 2013 meeting continued,**

**New Business**

**Funding request for Pumpkin Fest**

Summer Woodard presented the funding request on behalf of Town of Franklin Main Street Executive Linda Schlott for Pumpkin Fest. This will be the 17<sup>th</sup> annual Pumpkin Fest. Pumpkin Fest is a two (2) day event. On Friday October 25, 2013 the Highlands Road merchants will have a hay ride and trick or treating for children. On Saturday October 26, 2013 in downtown Franklin there will be the famous pumpkin roll, games for kids, live music, craft and food vendors, pie eating contest, costume contest and a parade. For the first time there will be inflatable's at Pumpkin Fest to provide more activities for kids. Main Street will be closed off for the festival. Pumpkin Fest grows each year. Last, year over 650 pumpkins were rolled down Frog Town Hill. Zip codes are collected each year. Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Florida, Tennessee, New York and New Hampshire were a few of the zip codes collected last year. The winner of the 2012 pumpkin roll was from New Hampshire. Last, year the Franklin Main Street program controlled the sale of drinks. The Main Street program had a Pepsi trailer and sold drinks. Food vendors were not allowed to sell drinks. This was a successful fundraiser for the Main Street program. This year the Franklin Main Street program is requesting \$1,500.00 for Pumpkin Fest. Last, year the Franklin Main Street program requested \$2,000.00 for Pumpkin Fest. The Franklin Main Street program is also requesting two (2) electronic billboards to promote Pumpkin Fest.

Candy Presley- Does the TDA have two (2) electronic billboards available?

Summer Woodard- Yes. I spoke with Jessica Mason at Premiere Marketing and she informed me that the TDA has two (2) billboards open that could be used to promote Pumpkin Fest. This is at no additional cost to the TDA board.

Vickie Springer- I like the fact this group is trying different fund raising efforts and is asking for less funding than in previous years.

Mike Grubermann- This is a big event. A lot of people come to this event.

Josh Drake- Are lodging facilities booked on this weekend?

Mike Grubermann- Yes. At my bed and breakfast we have people call and reserve rooms for this weekend.

Candy Presley- October is one of the busiest months.

Josh Drake- Do people come to Town for Pumpkin Fest?

Vickie Springer- Yes. I have a lot of people call each year and ask when Pumpkin Fest is. My rentals are always full on the weekend of Pumpkin Fest.

Candy Presley- Are there anymore questions in regards to Pumpkin Fest? There being no more questions I would like to remind the board that we will vote on the funding request for Pumpkin Fest at the September TDA board meeting.

**August 12, 2013 meeting continued,**

**Update on Website Hosting for TDA Websites**

Summer Woodard stated that she had solicited bids for hosting and maintenance of the TDA websites. The TDA only received one (1) bid for hosting and maintenance of the TDA websites. This bid was from SiteDart Web Services. SiteDart is part of Dnet Internet Services. Two (2) other companies were given the opportunity to bid. Smoky Mountain Systems and Tony Angel Media stated they did not wish to bid. SiteDart's proposal states the following: Host the site on a robust hosting platform to ensure accessibility and availability during peak traffic. Have at your disposal a team of graphic designers and programmers to make updates to the website as needed. In the end, SiteDart Hosting will provide the Franklin Tourism Development Authority with a website and web presence solution that best suits the Franklin Tourism Development Authority goals and needs. SiteDart hosting recommended the silver hosting plan for the Franklin Tourism Development Authority. This plan consist of two (2) hosted domains, twenty (20) GB disk space and fifty (50) mail accounts with spam protection. The plan also includes maintenance block hours. The total cost for the silver hosting plan would be \$431.00 for one (1) year.

Josh Drake- Does this price include hosting two (2) domains?

Summer Woodard- Yes. The TDA board needs to decide if they would like to keep shopanddinefranklinnc.com or combine all information into one (1) website discoverfranklinnc.com.

Candy Presley- I think the board should consider combining the websites.

**Josh Drake made a motion to combine the shopanddinefranklinnc.com website with the discoverfranklinnc.com website; the discoverfranklinnc.com website will become the main website for the Tourism Development Authority. Mike Grubermann seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

Summer Woodard- The board also needs to make a motion to accept the website hosting from SiteDart hosting if the board wishes to use their services for website maintenance and hosting.

**Vickie Springer made a motion to accept the website maintenance and hosting silver proposal from SiteDart hosting with Dnet Internet Services for \$431.00 for one (1) year. Josh Drake seconded. The motion passed unanimously.**

**Update on Facebook and Google Ad Words**

Summer Woodard informed the board that Jessica Mason with Premiere Marketing would like to make a revision to the Google Ad Words budget. Ms. Mason is suggesting rebuilding the Tourism Development Authority's website discoverfranklinnc.com on a platform that is more blog and content friendly. This is just for consideration. If the board is interested Ms. Mason is willing to come to the September board meeting and elaborate further.

Mike Grubermann- I would like have Ms. Mason come to the September board meeting.

Vickie Springer- I would be interested to hear more about this proposal.

Candy Presley- Ms. Woodard would you ask Ms. Mason to come and present her proposal to the board at the September meeting?

### **August 12, 2013 meeting continued,**

Summer Woodard- Yes. I will ask Ms. Mason to come to the September board meeting.

Candy Presley- How is Facebook and Google Ad Words doing?

Summer Woodard- As of July 15, 2013 the Discover Franklin NC Facebook page has 494 fans. On July 23, 2013 the Discover Franklin NC Facebook page likes were 507. After, ads were placed the Facebook likes went to up 721 as of August 1, 2013. Jessica Mason with Premiere Marketing informed me that as of July 25, 2013 a brand new Ad Words account was created. The following ads are running (please see attachment.) I will have another report for the board at the September meeting in regards to Facebook and Google Ad Words.

### **Update on Electronic Billboard Campaign**

Summer Woodard gave an update on the electronic billboard campaign in Atlanta, Georgia. The first run of electronic billboards went up July 15, 2013. On July 16, 2013 Premiere Marketing went to Atlanta, Georgia to view the electronic billboards (please see attachment). Lamar Outdoor advertising is giving the TDA five (5) bonus billboards at no additional cost.

Candy Presley- The billboards look good.

Mike Grubermann- I am glad Premiere Marketing went and checked out the locations of the billboards. So far the billboards look good.

Vickie Springer- All the billboards seem to be in high traffic locations. I am pleased so far with the billboards.

Candy Presley- Does anyone have any questions in regards to the billboards? There, being no further discussion from the board we will move on to the next agenda item.

### **Update on Tourism Development Commission Meeting**

Summer Woodard stated that the Tourism Development Commission (TDC) met Thursday July 18, 2013. The board voted to postpone discussion on joint funding for the Smoky Mountain Fine and Performing Arts until their next TDC meeting August 22, 2013.

Candy Presley- Ms. Woodard please keep the TDA board posted on what happens at the August 22, 2013 TDC board meeting.

Summer Woodard- I will report back to the TDA board at the September meeting.

### **Items from the Board**

Josh Drake- At some point I would like to discuss the amount of money the TDA has in reserve. I think the board needs a reserve, but I do not believe the board needs more than \$25,000.00 in the reserve. I truly believe the board needs some money in reserve to get through the winter months when room occupancy tax is down. The board currently has \$100,000.00 in reserve. I believe \$100,000.00 is a high amount for a reserve.

**August 12, 2013 meeting continued,**

Candy Presley- I agree. This is something the board needs to look at further. The board did set a cap of \$100,000.00 a couple months ago.

Mike Grubermann- Originally, in 2008 the TDA board voted to set aside twenty five (25) percent of their annual income in reserve. Now that there is a large amount set aside, the board may want to look at lowering the reserve amount. The board does not need to stock pile money.

Josh Drake- Mr. Henning what does the TDA board need to do legally to decrease the reserve amount?

John Henning Jr- The TDA bylaws would need to be amended. I can bring a draft of the proposed amendment to the next TDA board meeting. I need to get a consensus from the board if they would like me to move forward with drafting an amendment in regards the reserve amount.

Candy Presley- How does the board feel about Mr. Henning drafting an amendment in regards to lowering the reserve amount?

Mike Grubermann- I am in favor of looking at this further.

Vickie Springer- I am too.

Josh Drake- I would like Mr. Henning to move forward.

Summer Woodard- I would like to discuss this further at the September board meeting.

Candy Presley- Everyone seems to be in favor of looking at this further. Mr. Henning will you draft an amendment to the TDA bylaws and present this at the September meeting?

John Henning Jr- Yes. I will have something to present to the board at the September meeting.

Josh Drake- I would also like to see one (1) website that directs tourist to one (1) central location. The TDA, TDC and Chamber of Commerce all have separate websites.

Candy Presley- I agree. However, I believe this would be hard to do.

Mike Grubermann- This something that the TDA could look at in the future with the TDC and other entities.

Candy Presley- Does anyone else have anything they would like to say? There being no further discussion from the board we will move on to the next agenda item.

**Announcements**

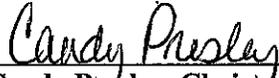
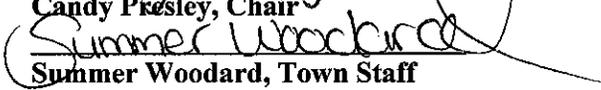
Candy Presley- The next regularly scheduled TDA board meeting will be Monday September 16, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board room. I am requesting this change in date. Normally, the TDA meets the second Monday of each month. However, several board members have informed me that they will not be able to attend the September 9, 2013 TDA board meeting. I am requesting to change the date of the regularly scheduled TDA board meeting to Monday September 16, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall board room.

August 12, 2013 meeting continued,

Mike Grubermann made a motion to set the next regularly scheduled TDA board meeting for Monday September 16, 2013 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall board room. Josh Drake seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn

At 6:15 p.m. motion was made by Josh Drake, seconded by Mike Grubermann to adjourn. Motion passed unanimously.

  
Candy Presley, Chair  
  
Summer Woodard, Town Staff