

BEECH MOUNTAIN TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

July 28, 2010

Call to Order: Chairman Charlie Burleson called the regular meeting to order at 9:35 AM in the Town Hall Council Chambers. Present were Candi Catoe, Calder Smoot, Gil Adams and Fred Barth. Also present were Peggy Coscia, Chamber Office Manager, John Troxler, Chamber Assistant Office Manager, Jim Brooks, President of The Chamber of Commerce, Judy Decker, Chamber of Commerce, Woody Stoudemier, Gotham Marketing Relations and Vern Holland of Holland Realty.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Burleson said he had not received a copy of the minutes of the June 30, 2010 meeting yet and as soon as he receives the minutes he will forward it on to the board members

Financial Report: Mr. Burleson reviewed the occupancy tax received report. On the occupancy tax gross receipts we are \$102,201 under last year's collections. The April and May collections reflect delinquencies and penalties collected. Mr. Burleson has asked the town's finance officer to asterisk those so we know the exact delinquent collections. In June, twenty three letters were sent out to homeowners who have their properties advertised asking them to abide by the occupancy tax law. Mr. Burleson asked if there were any questions, with none he asked for a motion to accept the financial report for the year. Gil Adams made a motion to accept and Candi Catoe seconded. All in favor. The financial report for the year was accepted. John Troxler asked if he could address the board about a financial issue. Mr. Burleson recognized Mr. Troxler. Mr. Troxler said he would like to reflect back on the April 28, 2010 meeting of which Mary Frisbee asked the TDA to help with the Banner House in Banner Elk. The request was \$1,500. Mr. Troxler said he feels it would be a benefit to donate to the Banner House. Jim Brooks said it would be a good approach to show that Beech Mountain is a good neighbor. After discussion Mr. Smoot said the board needs to decide on an amount TDA can afford for community donations. Mr. Adams said a lot of people request money and the board will need to revisit this situation under other business.

Gotham Marketing Relations Report: Mr. Stoudemier gave an update on the website and he asked if anyone had any major objections to it. One reason we have been delayed in putting the website up is that Mr. Burleson made good recommendations which has been added. We added a spectator sports page, a theater page, festivals page and several surrounding community activities. Mr. Stoudemire said that we are also running ads in golf magazines in Georgia and Florida and the website is getting hits from the ads. 76% of the visitors are new that have never been to the site before. Mr. Stoudemier reviewed the new website page by showing the board what had been done. Mr. Burleson commented that the dining on Beech Mountain needs to be on the site and we need to go ahead and get live. After discussion Mr. Burleson asked if anyone had questions for Mr. Stoudemier. Mr. Burleson thanked Mr. Stoudemire and said he wants to work with him on getting an e-letter out.

Mr. Burleson recognized Vern Holland and asked if he would like to address the board. Mr. Holland told how Beech Mountain started and what Beech Mountain is all about. He said a lot of people know about Boone but don't know Beech Mountain. We need to get with the Club and get back to the image of what we have up here and what we're doing on Beech Mountain. Some place along it was changed to Beech Mountain Club and we need to go to the Club and see how we can better make a relationship between the Club and the town. Mr. Holland said he thinks Ski Beech is on track and he said the TDA has good interest and some money to get a committee together and come up with an image to sell Beech Mountain. Mr. Holland said the town, the Club and the ski resort need to get together and go the same way to promote Beech Mountain. Ms. Coscia said that she sees this as a good position for a TDA director to do what Mr. Holland is talking about to show what Beech Mountain is all about. Mr. Burleson agreed with Mr. Holland and he said he thinks our homeowners would be our best source of business and maybe send a post card explaining the TDA and how Beech Mountain is equipped to handle small groups and maybe passing this on to their friends and associates. Ms. Catoe suggested advertising for occasions such as weddings or bar mitzvahs. Mr. Holland said people do not know the history and Beech Mountain is the forefront of bringing people to the area. Mr. Burleson thanked Mr. Holland for his presentation. Mr. Brooks said he went to the Club and talked them about the stay and play package and the Club wouldn't allow any advertisement in the past. Mr. Burleson said hopefully this year will be a spring board and it will do better next year. Mr. Burleson went back to the comment Ms. Coscia made about a TDA director. Mr. Burleson said he is looking for someone who has the interest of the mountain at heart and this would be a job, not a volunteer position. A situation happened where Mr. Stoudemire did the leg work with the Club and lodging partners on advertising, he shouldn't have to do this. The TDA needed to do the leg work and that is the need for a TDA director. With that said Mr. Burleson moved on to the next item on the agenda.

Chamber of Commerce Report: Mr. Troxler gave the monthly report. This month the chamber served 371 people in the visitor's center. We sold 700 tickets to the pig roast this year, we were down about 30% from last year, however the event did pretty much break even. He said he thinks it is a great community event for the July 4th celebration. The dog show was down about 30% on the numbers; it did make a profit and was divided with Friends for Life, approximately \$400 each. The street dance was a great success, a good family event and the next street dance will be August 21st. About 70 people are expected at the barn dance on July 31st. The mile high kite festival is coming up September 5th. Autumn at Oz will be October 2nd and 3rd and so far we have sold 98 tickets with the e-ticket sales. Mr. Troxler said Beech Mountain businesses can link to the website for the e-ticket sales. Mr. Troxler said hiking and biking is a popular topic and this keeps the front desk at the chamber very busy. The chamber is working on a four seasons postcard which the chamber will be purchasing and will be available for sale to any of the businesses that might want them. There was discussion about the pig roast and how to promote it better and how not having the fireworks played a big part in people not coming up for the event. Mr. Stoudemier suggested doing more signage, day and time, etc. Mr. Brooks said the chamber is going to write a letter to the town and explain to them that the fire department will not be doing fireworks any more because no one wants to take on the responsibility to do it. Mr. Barth asked what the cost is to do the fireworks. Mr. Brooks said that in the past it cost about \$4,000 and to pay someone now with the new pyrotechnic guidelines it would cost about \$8,000. There was a lengthy discussion about how to better promote the pig roast and that maybe it could be done on a different weekend since there are so many 4th of July activities in surrounding communities. Ms. Coscia said that the town, the chamber and the TDA need to put money together and have fireworks. Mr. Burleson asked if there was anymore discussion, with none he moved on to the next item.

Discussion Regarding the TDA Director: Mr. Troxler commented that bringing in a TDA director would bring a \$26,000 reduction to the chamber budget. He said he thinks that one area that needs to be looked at is how the chamber is going to staff the office, can one person as a TDA director handle all the traffic that comes in. Ms. Decker said she does not think the chamber needs to be dissolved and that the chamber is a very important part of the town. Mr. Barth said that the TDA should have an office. Ms. Decker asked if we have enough work for a TDA director. Mr. Stoudemier said Beech Mountain need a centralized communications person as a diplomat and someone to send to other towns or Clubs to promote Beech Mountain. Ms. Coscia said you cannot handle all the coordination of events with one person. Ms. Decker said we need to move with this, the ball is in the TDA's park and Mr. Troxler is hanging in limbo. Mr. Barth said he thinks now is the opportunity to move on with a TDA director and we need to promote events that will put heads in beds. After discussion Mr. Barth made a motion to go ahead with the plan and ask the town to advertise for a TDA coordinator. Mr. Smoot said we need to refine the position. The motion died for lack of a second. Mr. Burleson made a

motion for Mr. Barth to go before the town council and request help to coordinate the pay as a part time or a full time position. Ms. Catoe seconded. All in favor. The motion passed. After a long discussion about volunteers to help with the events and whether to man the visitor center six days a week, Mr. Burleson moved on to the next item on the agenda.

Other: Mr. Adams said he would like for the board to consider the budget and how to divide between the requests that are made for donations. The Avery County Chamber of Commerce has requested \$1,000 which has been given out of last years budget, the Banner Elk Heritage Foundation has requested \$1,500, Doug Owen with his bike races has requested \$3,000 and Pirate Productions (biking) has requested \$4,500. Mr. Adams said he thinks TDA should donate something for cycling events. Discussion about funds available and giving a donation to Doug Owen. Mr. Smoot asked what the total amount of money is in the TDA budget to use for events. Discussion about the budget, Mr. Adams made a motion to give Doug Owen \$1,500 for his biking event. Mr. Burleson seconded. All in favor. The motion passed. Discussion about how this would benefit the businesses on Beech Mountain. Mr. Barth said he thinks we should have a set figure for event donations and he made the motion that the total amount to be given for events be set at \$7,000. Ms. Catoe seconded. All in favor. The motion passed. Next Mr. Burleson said the Banner Elk Heritage Foundation is requesting \$1,500 and asked for thoughts on this situation. Discussion. Mr. Smoot made a motion to give \$250 to the Heritage Foundation. Ms. Catoe seconded. All in favor, the motion passed. Mr. Troxler will ask for an invoice from the Heritage Foundation to be given to the finance officer.

Next Mr. Burleson asked if the TDA wants to renew with High Country Host for \$562. After discussion about the benefits of belonging to High Country Host, Mr. Burleson made a motion to renew with High Country Host for \$562. Mr. Smoot seconded. All in favor. The motion passed.

Mr. Stoudemier presented invoices from Gotham Marketing Relations for ads, \$1,035 for the Florida ad and \$797 for the Georgia ad. Mr. Burleson made a motion to approve the Gotham Marketing Relations invoices. Mr. Adams seconded. All in favor. The motion passed.

Mr. Burleson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Smoot made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mr. Adams seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on August 25, 2010 at 9:30 AM.