



**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 22, 2020**

I. Call to Order – David Caughron, Chairman of the Board

The Randolph County Tourism Development Authority (Authority) Board of Directors meeting was called to order by David Caughron, Chairman, at 2:00 PM on Wednesday, April 22, 2020, by teleconference.

II. Roll Call of Board Members – Amber M. Skeen, Clerk to the Board

Board Members: David Caughron, Chairman; Rebeca Petty Moffitt, Vice-Chair; Barbara Gallimore, Ross Holt, Luke Hollingsworth, Shawn Patel, Marianne Rowe, and Diane Villa

Board Members Absent: Leslie Brown

Staff Members: Suzanne Dale, Finance Officer; Myra Hoover, Director of Visitor Services & Information; Amber Scarlett, Interim CEO; and Amber Renee Skeen, Clerk to the Board

Guests: Richard Schoenberger, Manor House Graphics

III. Updated on Coronavirus/COVID-19 – Amber Scarlett, Interim CEO

Scarlett updated TDA Board Members that the TDA team has continually participated in industry-related webinars and Zoom meetings with the state of North Carolina and our Piedmont area partners to discuss how we are assisting our travel partners and what the recovery process may look like in the months ahead. The TDA is beginning to hear from public officials about reaching the peak of new cases of COVID-19 in the US and North Carolina, it is important to filter out the white noise in our industry and focus on the factors that will drive consumer response in the proper tone to result in the ultimate travel rebound. Previous travel downturns have been dictated by one prevailing issue – safety concerns following 9/11, spending & unemployment during the economic

downturn in 2008 – the COVID-19 pandemic is different. Three key factors will dictate the willingness for our visitors to travel.

1. Their perception of safety will be key - both in the type of travel and the destinations that are chosen.
2. Economic factors will ultimately drive the comfort level of spending among travelers – some models are suggesting it may take years for our RevPAR levels to return to the pre-COVID-19 days.
3. The wild card in the deck is the factor of the shelter-in-place orders that may ultimately supersede the previous factors. Pent-up demand is real –, especially in our immediate, drive-market travel.

Randolph County is fortunate to be a leisure market with tourism assets that allow visitors to spread out and continue social distancing. While there will be new safety practices in place, I feel optimistic about the recovery efforts we plan to support. The TDA ongoing marketing efforts include softer messaging that reminds our visitors and followers of our tourism brand. Our weekly GET THIS advertisement that promotes area tourism-related events has a different look now. We have a message that invites visitors to experience a Virtual Tour on our website. The TDA has been successful in the past few weeks to co-host a Facebook LIVE event, Saturday Chat N Chill with tourism partners from Asheboro, Seagrove, and Archdale – with upcoming segments to include the remaining areas of the Heart of North Carolina. The TDA has also developed a blog for ONLINE shopping opportunities to support our attractions and distinctive shops, including our Seagrove Pottery community. The TDA has also developed a blog providing information for key dining establishments and their services – curbside, delivery, pick up, and family-style meal deals. These efforts are all being promoted on our social media platforms. Susan with DK Communications has also gathered a quick comparison of our social media activity to surrounding DMOs with the following results.

IV. Update on Letter of Support for Southeast Tourism Society | CARES Act, Amber Scarlett

Scarlett updated TDA Board Members that earlier this month, she signed a letter addressed to Senator Mitch McConnell and the congressional leadership on expanding eligibility for the CARES Act relief programs to tourism offices. Over 160 tourism organizations across the United States joined me in those efforts. Unfortunately, this initiative fell short. The US Senate approved a \$484 billion coronavirus relief package yesterday afternoon that provides an additional \$310 billion for the Paycheck Protection Program and an additional \$60 billion for the small business emergency loan and grant program, as well as funding hospitals and expanded coronavirus testing. This particular measure expanded eligibility to agriculture enterprises of no more than 500 employees (farmers) but not to 501(c) (6)s, or tourism-related quasi-governmental organizations, tourism

offices. The House is set to take up the bill on Thursday and it is expected to pass. She explained how work will begin shortly on a coronavirus 4 package, which will focus on support for state and local governments, which may offer an opportunity to provide more relief to CVBs. Randolph County TDA will continue these efforts to secure more supports to ensure our tourism industry will rebound from this crisis.

SEE ATTACHMENT #1

V. Update on I 73/74 Visitor Centers – Amber Skeen, Director of Office Administration

Skeen updated TDA Board Members that the I 73/74 Visitor Centers are still closed to the public and that they are not sure when the centers will reopen. Myra Hoover has been helping the HNCVB office out during this time.

VI. E-Vote Request – Furlough Definition – Amber Skeen

Skeen updated TDA Board Members that eight out of nine Board Members had voted, and all were in favor of the new furlough definition. She let me know when the TDA Board meet in person again they would ratify the vote.

SEE ATTACHMENTS #2

VII. Update on the HNCVB Staff – Amber Skeen

Skeen updated the TDA Board Members that with the Board approving the furlough definition the Personnel Committee had decided to furlough LuLane Long and Sarah Testerman, as of April 15, 2020. The Personnel Committee had voted to furlough them 30 days at a time. The Executive Committee reserves the right to extend this time.

VIII. Update on the Visitor Centers Staff – Amber Skeen

Skeen updated the TDA Board Members that she surveyed each part-time employee at the I-73/74 Visitor Centers and that approximately half of the staff would be willing to come back to work, the remainder did not know when they would feel comfort in returning. Myra has been working with the Welcome Centers to see what their plan is on reopening the State Welcome Centers.

IX. Update on Cutback for the Current Budget 19/20 Contracts & Services – Amber Skeen

Skeen updated the TDA Board Members that she and Amber Scarlett had been working with WZOO/ WKXR Radio, The Courier-Tribune, and McKenzie Properties to reduce some of the

monthly expenses. WZOO/WKXR Radio both agreed to waive May and June payment on their contracts. The Courier-Tribune agreed to adjust the advertising sizes and frequency resulting in reduction of half the agreed upon cost. McKenzie Properties granted deferment of May and June rent upon the request and will add those monthly payments to the end of the contract.

X. Updated on Letter for Support for the Town of Ramseur's NC Park & Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) – Amber Scarlett

Scarlett updated TDA Board that Mary Joan Pugh with the Trails & Natural Heritage Coordinator emailed her a request asking for the TDA Board for support on the Deep River Trail and Blueway. This project involves the acquisition of 27 acres for trail development, the extension of the existing Rail Trail, the establishment of a trailhead near the downtown area, and publicly accessible portage around the Ramseur Dam for the Deep River State Trail Blueway. The project will add to the efforts of Ramseur as well as Franklinville and Randleman on the development of the greenway and blueway sections of the Deep River State Trail. These outdoor recreation opportunities contribute to the healthy lifestyles of all who live, work, and visit the Heart of North Carolina. Scarlett signed a letter on behalf of the Randolph County TDA on April 10, 2020.

SEE ATTACHMENT #3

XI. Finance Reporting – Suzanne Dale, Finance Officer

- **Finance Report for Month-Ending March 31, 2020**

Dale reviewed the year-to-date report on the revenues and expenditures, and analysis of net collections of occupancy tax for the month ending March 31, 2020.

SEE ATTACHMENT #4

XII. Hotel Data Reporting – Amber Scarlett

- **Hotel Data Report for Month-Ending March 31, 2020**

Scarlett presented the Hotel Data Report for month-ending March 31, 2020.

SEE ATTACHMENT #5

- **First-Quarter Hotel Data Report**

Scarlett presented the first-quarter hotel data report ending March 31, 2020.

SEE ATTACHMENT #6

XIII. I-73/74 Visitor Centers Data Reporting – Myra Hoover, Director of Visitor Services & Information

- **Attendance Data Comparison & Guest Registrant Reports for Month-Ending March 31, 2020**

Hoover presented Visitor Centers Data Report for month-ending March 31, 2020.
SEE ATTACHMENTS # 7 & 8

- **First-Quarter Attendance Data Report**

Hoover presented the first-quarter attendance data report ending March 31, 2020.
SEE ATTACHMENT #9

XIV. Public Relations Reporting – Amber Scarlett

Scarlett presented the Public Relations Report for month-ending March 31, 2020.
SEE ATTACHMENT #10

XV. Board Updates

Diane Villa with the North Carolina Zoo updated Board Members that the North Carolina Zoo has their virtual tour site is up and is running great.

Richard Schoenberger with Manor House Graphics updated Board Members that he has been working with Amber Scarlett on getting the Get This ad updated with the new virtual tour and new Seagrove Pottery information.

Shawn Patel with Comfort Inn and Suites updated Board members that the hotels still have some traffic.

XVI. Adjourn – David Caughron

David Caughron adjourned today's meeting at 2:53 PM.

**NORTH CAROLINA
RANDOLPH COUNTY**



David Caughron, Chairman of the Board



Amber M. Skeen, Clerk to the Board