

SALISBURY
ROWAN COUNTY
Authentic North Carolina

SALISBURY-ROWAN COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
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Name: Destination Marketing Committee

Date of Meeting: February 4, 2016

Committee Chair: Krista Osterweil

Date of Next Meeting: March 3, 2016

Committee Members Attending: Gretchen Witt, Kelly Alexander, Thad Howell, Krista Osterweil, Michelle Patterson, Vivian Hopkins

Attending Guests, Liaisons, and Officials: Karen Windate (Turn of the Century Bed & Breakfast)

Tourism Staff: Tara Ludwig, Melissa Murguz, Allyson Teague

Not Attending: Justin Dionne, Suzanne Jones

Krista Osterweil called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM.

Approval of the Minutes:

Motion: Gretchen Witt made the motion for the approval of the January 7th, 2016 meeting minutes.

Second: Kelly Alexander

Motion: Approved

Branding and Digital Infrastructure Update

Tara Ludwig informed the committee that branding and digital infrastructure efforts are in full swing. The CVB had a call with Simpleview about the new CRM, which was an overview conversation of people's responsibilities and what types of information the CVB needs to gather in order for Simpleview to move forward. In addition, Steve Chandler with Chandlerthinks, will be at the Power in Partnership breakfast on February 18th. A community-wide survey has been disbursed to gather local opinions for the branding project. Furthermore, a spring photoshoot will

be scheduled with Aristotle to produce more photographs and video as the weather warms up and the spring season takes hold.

Marketing Requests

Ludwig shared five marketing requests with the committee.

1) Community Care Clinic of Rowan County: Community Forum on Health

Requesting overnight accommodations at Across the Pond Bed & Breakfast for a keynote speaker. This would amount to two rooms for one night on February 12th.

Motion: Kelly Alexander made the motion for the approval of the Community Care Clinic of Rowan County request.

Second: Thad Howell

Motion: Approved

2) Piedmont Players: Cabaret

Requesting overnight accommodations for actors and actresses, equaling four hotel rooms for six nights.

Motion: Kelly Alexander made the motion for the approval of the Piedmont Players request.

Second: Gretchen Witt

Motion: Approved

3) Rowan Salisbury Schools: Career Fair Day

The Career Fair is an event to attract more teachers to the area. This year the school system is requesting lodging, equaling ten to fifteen rooms for two nights on Friday and Saturday. In addition, the request includes popcorn and drinks to the career fair candidates.

Motion: Gretchen Witt made the motion for the approval of the Rowan Salisbury Schools request for up to fifteen hotel rooms for two nights, but will not include refreshments.

Second: Vivian Hopkins

Motion: Approved

4) Rowan Museum: George Washington 1791 Visit Celebration

The celebration on May 21st will mark the 225th anniversary of George Washington visiting Salisbury. The request includes lodging for the reenactment performers, up to \$1,000, a hospitality tent, up to \$2,000, and assistance with the banquet, up to \$13,000. There will be 125 tickets sold for the banquet. The committee felt it wouldn't be necessary to supply funding for the banquet since it is an event that will be earning money on its own.

Motion: Gretchen Witt made the motion for the approval of the Rowan Museum request for up to \$3,000 total, including \$1,000 for lodging and \$2,000 for the hospitality tent. In addition the museum has the option to approach the committee for extra lodging funds, if need be.

Second: Michelle Patterson

Motion: Approved

5) North Carolina Transportation Museum: N&W Class J #611 Excursions

The excursions will take place April 7th-12th. The request includes ten hotel rooms for five nights to accommodate crew members and up to \$500 for hospitality food expenses. The NCTM is planning to sell 750 tickets for each night and 137 room nights are already booked in advance.

Motion: Thad Howell made the motion for the approval of the North Carolina Transportation Museum request.

Second: Michelle Patterson

Motion: Approved

New Projects & Happenings

Ludwig updated the group on the CVB's upcoming projects. To begin, the CVB met with the NCTM to discuss entering into a pilot program together to expand existing overnight packages and create new packages and incentives for out-of-town guests. Based on the success of Polar Express and Day out with Thomas packages, the pilot program can help to expand the offerings in hopes of attaining a greater number of overnight visitors at a quicker pace.

Karen Windate requested that the CVB staff provide up-to-date information on events and packages with smaller properties in order to share the newest happenings and offers with guests. Kelly Alexander suggested to visit the Facebook page regularly and make sure to sign up for any available e-newsletters.

Rutherford County tourism is leading the effort to maintain the North Carolina Gold Trail to connect all gold locations throughout the state. Gold Hill approached the CVB to be a part of the effort with a membership of \$500. A brochure is currently in the development stages.

New Sarum Brewing Company approached the CVB for assistance with the grand opening on April 14th. The CVB agreed to sponsor the event and include the trolley program to help push the new brewery and other upcoming tours. Ludwig is in the process of developing an overnight package for the grand opening as well in order to draw in out-of-town visitors. The event will include live music and food trucks.

Furthermore, Ludwig asked that the CVB be allowed to make decisions on smaller packages and support requests in order to grant approval for up to ten room nights, depending on the available budget. The committee agreed on this request.

Ludwig shared a tentative schedule for Bloom & Barrels. Last year the Harvest Tour generated two sold out trolleys with one trolley completely full of overnight stays. This year the CVB would like to create a weekend experience for visitors and generate two trolleys full of overnight stays. CVB staff will be visiting Douglas Vineyards tomorrow to meet the group and inquire about participation in this year's event. In addition, meeting with other wineries will take place next week. The goal is to possibly expand the activities offered at each location. Some ideas for activities are a tasting and cheese seminar, beverage boot camp, and a wine and chocolate tasting. One difference this year is that guests will not be allowed to bring coolers, but drinks are allowed on the trolley as long as the beverages are purchased from a visited vineyard.

Marketing Report

Ludwig presented a PowerPoint to the committee with an updated marketing report. Ludwig and Murguz have been working to move the trolley program into an attraction on its own. Potential new tours are being looked at in order to expand the overall offerings and create more of a trolley series. Bloom and Barrels, Harvest Tour, Wickedly Witty, Scrooge, and Brews and Tunes are all tours on the schedule for May through October of 2016. A Murder Mystery tour and Sleepy Hollow tour are examples of new tours being explored.

For partnership marketing the CVB wrapped up two packages, including one with Lee Street Theater and Wine about Winter with Downtown Salisbury, Inc. In addition, an Easter Bunny Express package is being created with the NCTM. The new package for the #611 Excursions at the NCTM follows a different model where a visitor will receive a t-shirt and hat for one overnight stay, a t-shirt and hat and \$50 gift card for the NCTM gift shop for two overnight stays, etc. Furthermore, Ludwig shared a new article published in Charlotte Magazine, which was geared toward the arts and new breweries in downtown. There was also an ad published highlighting New Sarum Brewing Company.

The CVB is continuing to work with Jenn Selby at Rowan Cabarrus Community College to prepare for the Fine Arts Conference this month. Also, the AACA is preparing for a visit this summer and the hotels are already receiving calls to book rooms for out-of-town guests. Ludwig met with Scenic North Carolina about a small conference to take place in Salisbury, which was brought to the CVB by Mayor Karen Alexander. In addition, Ludwig received an e-mail from the Little League group, which will bring in three new tournaments to the area. This new group business will bring in many room nights for Salisbury and Rowan County.

For January the CVB's digital marketing reach included 57,564 for social media, 37,410 for e-mail, and 18,636 for website. This resulted in an approximate grand total of 113,610 for digital

reach. Ludwig felt the drop in the website reach is due to the winter months and it being a slower time overall.

There were no questions. The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted by:
Allyson Teague, SRCCVB Office Assistant