

TOWN OF FRANKLIN TOURISM DEVELOPEMNT AUTHORITY

MEETING MINUTES

FEBRUARY 12, 2024

Present: Chair Connie Grubermann, Members Hannah Edwards, Angela Martin, Josh Drake, Kevin Covell, Guy Gooder, Rob Reale, Tim Crabtree, Matt Holland and Amie Owens.

Others present: Mia Overton, The Franklin Press
Dan Finnerty, Macon Sense
Carly Moser, Drake Enterprises Limited
Councilman Robbie Tompa

1. Call to Order- Chair Connie Grubermann

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Marketing Report – Carly Moser

Carly Moser, Drake Enterprises Limited, provided a quarterly update related to the marketing for the TDA. She noted that the averages for click throughs and email openings were still high. She acknowledged that the Snapchat attempt had not been successful and was pulled due to no benefit seen. She and Eric Haggart have been working on the social media platforms and will be focusing on highlighting local businesses as part of promotion efforts. Ms. Moser noted that she could build a calendar of events if information could be received weekly on Tuesday by 3:00 p.m. This is an added service that she will be providing.

Ms. Moser provided some preliminary quotes for marketing for the upcoming 2024/2025 budget. The TDA Board will begin discussing and developing the budget at the March and April meetings.

3. Approval of the January 8, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Member Tim Crabtree made a motion, seconded by Member Kevin Covell to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2024 meeting as presented. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10-0.

4. Financial Reports- ending December 2023

Town Manager Amie Owens presented the Financial Report through the end of December 2023. She noted that the month of December 2023 was slightly lower than the previous December and included a late payment for November, but was still higher than previous years. The occupancy tax collected for December was \$12,879.95. Total expenses thus far \$154,366.15 leaving the balance of negative \$56,582.16 and \$163,600.18 remains in TDA Fund Balance. The reports are incorporated into these minutes as Exhibit A.

Member Josh Drake made a motion, seconded by Member Tim Crabtree to approve the financial report ending December 2023. Motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10-0.

5. New Business

A.) Vote on Applications

- 1.) Request for TDA support from Macon County Transit for funding of the Appalachian Trail Shuttle Service. The requested amount is \$6,000.

Darlene Asher, Macon County Transit Director, presented this item at the January meeting. Shuttle service is offered for hikers 3 days a week, from March to May. They hire an additional seasonal driver for this route. Last year they gave rides to 1,079 hikers. The TDA provided \$2,000 in support last year.

Member Josh Drake made a motion, seconded by Member Angela Martin to approve funding of \$2,000 for Macon County Transit. The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10 – 0.

- 2.) Request for TDA support from Franklin Appalachian Trail Community Council (FATCC) for funding of the Appalachian Trail Celebration. The requested amount is \$1,700.

Natasha Sebring, FATCC/Treasurer, presented this item at the January meeting. The Appalachian Trail Celebration will be held from March 19 – April 22. The funds will be used to assist with advertisement, large signature board, banner across Main Street, and wrist bands.

Member Josh Drake made a motion, seconded by Member Tim Crabtree to approve funding of \$1,700 for the Appalachian Trail Celebration. The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10 – 0.

- 3.) Request for TDA support from Folk Heritage Association of Macon County for funding of the Sowing the Seeds of the Future sculpture unveiling and celebration. The requested amount is \$1,500.

Theresa Ramsey, Mary Polanski, Claire Suminski presented this item at the January meeting. The FHAMC/Women’s History Trail needs help with advertisement for the sculpture unveiling celebration at 11:00 a.m. on March 23, 2024. They would also like to involve the Downtown Merchants.

Member Guy Gooder made a motion, seconded by Member Angela Martin to approve funding of \$1,500 for the Sowing the Seeds of the Future sculpture unveiling and celebration. The motion carried by vote of 9- 1; Member Josh Drake voted no to the request.

6. Items from the Board

A.) Draft Bylaws Update

Members Hannah Edwards, Kevin Covell, Town Manager Amie Owens and Chair Connie Grubermann met on Tuesday, January 23 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss the revision of the TDA bylaws. Ms. Owens noted that the major changes included:

Board of Aldermen to Town Council throughout the document

Section 2.4 Reserve Fund to reflect current processes

Article 3 - Membership to move to July 1 to June 30 terms for ease in appointments

Article 4 – Officers of the Board – clarifying current positions and when elections should occur

Article 5 – Meetings – addition of remote participation allowed

The group discussed the proposed changes and clarified wording under Article 3 Membership that the first line should read: *Members of the Board must be a resident of Franklin or own, operate or have interest in a business or entity in the Town of Franklin.*

As is required by the bylaws, members have received the information on proposed changes on February 12, and the changes can be voted upon by the Board at the March meeting.

B.) Budget Discussion

Ms. Owens noted that Budget Discussion would begin at the March meeting and noted that for two years, fund balance has been used as a means of increasing marketing efforts. These efforts have been successful, but this is not sustainable.

7. **Announcements**

A.) The next regular scheduled TDA meeting will be held on Monday, March 11, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Hall Board Room.

B.) Councilman Robbie Tompa introduced himself to the group and noted that he may be attending meetings in the future.

8. **Adjourn**

Member Tim Crabtree made a motion, seconded by Member Josh Drake to adjourn the meeting at 6:19 p.m. The motion carried unanimously by a vote of 10-0.

Connie Grubermann, Chairperson

Amie Owens, Town Manager, Acting Clerk