



Thomasville Tourism Commission Minutes
Tuesday April 26th, 2022 8:30am
Ball Park Community Center
7003 Ballpark Road, Thomasville, NC

Present: Christy Jones, Dana Lomba, Andrew Clement, Cameron Marsden, Leslie Watts, Payton Williams, JJ Ring, Justin Finch, Tommy Ballard, Gloria Brinkley

Absent: Tim Simpson

Call to Order:

Christy called the meeting to 8:40am

Adopt Agenda:

Justin made a motion to adopt agenda, second by Dana. Motion passed unanimously.

Public Comments:

N/A

Approve Previous Minutes:

Dana made motion to approve previous minutes, seconded by Justin. Motion passes unanimously

Approve Financials:

Tommy said previous financials are pretty standard. So far this year, we have collected approximately \$88,000 from the city occupancy tax. The projected revenue for the year will be \$176,000 which is 15-20 thousand above where we have been in the past. Tommy pointed to a bar graph that broke out annual revenue since 2008-2009 fiscal year. It has been a steady trend upward since 2010-2011. Tommy noted that we should be getting another check from the city for occupancy tax towards the end of this month.

Tommy reminded the commission that revenue received in July of August of this fiscal year is counted towards the previous fiscal year. Tommy hopes that we might see an increase in occupancy tax with Hughes Park programming and bringing families to the community for athletic events. Tommy mentioned that April is not complete since the month is not over but the financials are updated through the end of March. There have been no major unexpected expenses throughout the year. On the financial side we are right where we need to be.

Tommy reminded the commission that any budget amendments must be made in person and cannot be done virtually.

Payton asked why it takes so long to receive checks from the city. Tommy explained that some of the hotels report the information to the city late and the city waits for all the occupancy tax to come in for a quarter prior to sending the check to Tourism.

Andrew made a motion to approve the March Financials, Payton seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Review of City Requirements:

Christy reviewed some of commission requirements such as, posting agenda prior to meeting times, can't transact any business virtually, minutes are reported to the city, and a few other requirements.

Budget Amendments:

- Hughes Park ongoing grant
- Hughes Park Kiosk
 - Cameron said we could take the Kiosk money out of the advertising line item.
- Salaries/Computer
 - Cameron said there wasn't enough money in capital outlay for the purchase of a computer and that there would need to be a budget amendment.
- Billboard
 - Cameron has been approached about a billboard by Sunrise in Thomasville. The cost would be around \$10,000. Cameron said we can post anything we want and change it when we want since the billboard is digital. Andrew said that he thought the price is right and noted that he knows other people that have had a lot of success with billboards.

Tommy asked Cameron if she expected us to exceed our expense budget for the remainder of the year. Cameron said that there are no other major expected expenses. Tommy said that we don't need a budget amendment for the Hughes Park Grant and kiosk. There was a lot of discussion around.

Christy recommended we change the word "grant" within our budget line item. As the word grant is causing issues. It was recommended that it be changed to Community Investment line item.

Cameron is going to check with Martin Starnes about the best practice in adding a line item for the cost of the billboard. The board approved for Cameron to engage with the owner of the billboard and sign the contract starting May 1st and we will pay monthly. The decision was made to table the discussion about how to pull the funding for the billboard expense (if needed).

Payton made a motion to increase the capital outlay account by \$1500 for the purchase of computer equipment and to add a line item of "appropriated fund balance" under revenue in the amount of \$1500, seconded by JJ Ring, motion passed unanimously.

Director and Marketing Report:

- Finch House Music Series
 - Cameron mentioned that the Tourism Commission sponsored the music series at \$1000.
 - Andrew explained why he and Tommy Hodges put this event on. He described the event and what all they had planned for the series. He invited the board to the sponsor event.
- Black Business Expo
 - Tourism is sponsoring this event on June 18th from 3pm-7pm.
- Upcoming events
- Farm Tour
 - Davidson County Farm Tour
 - Cameron asked the commission what level we want to sponsor. Tommy said we normally do \$500 and recommended we stick with that amount for the sponsorship.

Hotel inquiry update (2 Minutes) – Cameron/Tommy

Tommy noted that the Tourism Commission is a 501-c6. The hotel feasibility study stated that our occupancy tax revenue was lower than they expected it should be. Tourism contracted with the City and Martin Starnes to check on the hotels to make sure that the hotels are reporting the correct amount of tax revenue. Martin Starnes went in and checked the books over the course of a few months at the Quality Inn. The report from Martin Starnes found no issues with the hotel they checked. Cameron said that best practice when there might be a concern about reporting issues is to do one check on agreed-upon procedures per year.

Year in Review (10 Minutes) – Cameron

Cameron reviewed the accomplishments of the past year. She highlighted the following:

- Hotel Feasibility Study
- Perfect Day in Thomasville YouTube video.
- Cameron reviewed the numerous ads across the various outlets
- Tourism painted the caboose
- Installed a new Civil War sign
- Funded mural on City Hall
- Funded the painting of the big Chair.
- Window decorating contest
- Cameron mentioned that she works with City personnel to be notified of new businesses so that she can contact them to let the new business know what Tourism can do to help them
- Promoting Hotels, event venues, and events.
- Sponsorships with Finch House, Hi-Toms, Memorial Day Parade, MLK event, Miss Thomasville, among many others.
- Tourism hosted Everybody's Night, Thomasville Christmas Parade, Chair City Car Show

- Continued to promote merchandise sales
- Average 20 visitors/month.
- Continued weekly giveaways.
- Social Media
 - 7,000 followers
 - 60% out of town followers, 40% from Thomasville
- Summer window decorating contest

Strategic Planning Conversation

Dana recommended Tourism focus more on Thomasville as a whole, instead of having such a narrow focus on downtown Thomasville. There was discussion about various businesses around the community and strategies to find new advertising partners.

The commission named several upcoming events that Tourism could advertise/promote.

Dana recommended adding more events like everybody's night.

2022 – 2023 Budget Review/Approval

Cameron noted changes to the budget from previous year including:

Advertising marketing up to \$30,000 to include Hughes Park yearly sponsorship \$2,500

Gas/heat prices increased \$800 - \$1,200

Up grants to \$5,000 to support more businesses and events – talk about advertising/marketing being used for grants/sponsorships/ Community Investments

Special events up from \$7,800 to \$10,000

Phone stipend: \$720 a year - \$30/month full time, \$15/ month part time – increase?

Tommy recommended changing occupancy tax to \$159,000 and take the difference and add it to contingency. This makes total revenue \$180,000.

The board decided to table the vote on the budget until next month.

Adjournment

Payton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by JJ. Motion passed unanimously.

Next meeting is May 24th 8:30 Ball Park Community Center