

Steering Committee Minutes
Northwest North Carolina / Southwest Virginia
Regional Tourism Initiative
8:30 AM, Friday January 19, 2007
Holiday Inn Express, Jonesville, NC

Dr. Jim Harrell called the meeting to order with an invocation and a word of welcome.

Steering Committee
Members Present:

Don Adams, Alleghany County
Donnie Turner, Carroll County
Chuck Riedhammer, City of Galax
Stanley Smith, Stokes County
Darlene Bullins, Stokes County
Zach Henderson, Wilkes County
Gary Page, Wilkes County
Mike Maynard, Grayson County
Eric Williams, Yadkin County
Jim Harrell, Surry County
Macon C. Sammons, Surry County

Others Present:

Dan McMillan, Ashe County
Pat Mitchell, Ashe County
Debbie Robinson, Blue Ridge Music Center
Barbara DeBord, Smyth County
Sam Hill, Stokes County
Ron Morgan, Stokes County
Kim Bates, Yadkin County
Marti Spillman Utter, Yadkin County
Lenna Hobson, Yadkin County
Dennis Thompson, Consultant

Minutes

On motion by Zach, second by Donnie, the December 1, 2006 minutes were approved as submitted.

Prospectus and Business Plan

Dennis distributed copies of the prospectus and business plan. Jim asked everyone to review it as adoption by the Steering Committee is anticipated at the next meeting.

Assets and Attractions Inventory

Dennis has drafted a format for the regional assets and attractions inventory, using Alleghany and Carroll County information to develop the format. Teresa Hester in the Surry County Manager's office is now working on getting the rest of the inventory data organized and formatted.

Website

Contract negotiations with Professional Networks of Galax have been completed and website development has begun. The draft website is expected to be available in late March. Surry County MIS office will receive technical and contract items and Donnie and Jessica Icenhour will be the lead contacts concerning any field data or other issues. The Tourism Advisory Committee will be convened at the appropriate times to review and guide website development.

Survey Research

Dennis has collected available marketing survey research from both public and private sources, to support development of the marketing plan. This information will be on hand when needed.

Marketing Plan

Jim summarized the marketing plan approaches. He indicated that he and Donnie and others will explore these options, which include use of public or private sector marketing specialists, local Extension Specialists and Dennis, as consultant before making a recommendation and report to the Steering Committee at the next meeting.

Resource Development

Don, Mike and Zach will meet with Jim, Donnie and Macon to explore ways to augment local funds. Jim suggested that direct contacts be made with the governors of VA and NC. Mike suggested that Congressional Representatives Rick Boucher and Virginia Foxx be included in this process.

Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Steering Committee will be held at the Crossroads Institute in Galax at 11 AM on Friday, March 9, 2007. Donnie will make arrangements.

Commissioners and Supervisors Meeting

Jim suggested a meeting of County Commissioners and Supervisors in March. Dennis suggested late March or early April so the website draft might be available. Mike noted that Commissioners and Supervisors will want to see the funding plan as well as the marketing plan approach. Jim offered for Surry County to host this meeting, unless another County would volunteer to do it.

FY 08 Budget

A question was asked regarding the FY 08 local funding request. Jim and Macon noted that this has not been discussed yet. On motion by Zach, seconded by Stanley, it was agreed that the request for FY 08 will remain at \$7,500 per County, but that the Steering Committee and the Resource Development Committee will examine whether the current amount and allocation is appropriate for FY 08.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 AM to begin the brainstorming workshop on branding and image, to be conducted by Stacy Tomas of NC State and local Extension Specialists.

Respectively submitted,

Macon C. Sammons, Jr.
Assistant Secretary

MCS/th