

Steering Committee Minutes
Regional Tourism Initiative
5:30 PM, Tuesday September 11, 2007
The Depot Restaurant, Dobson, NC

Dr. Jim Harrell called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Steering Committee Members Present:	Stanley Smith, Stokes County Bryan Steen, Stokes County Jim Harrell, Surry County Macon Sammons, Jr., Surry County Kim Phillips, Yadkin County Eric Williams, Yadkin County
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Others Present:	Helen Ruth Almond, NC Tourism Tom Holder, Heritage Tourism Dennis Thompson, Consultant Susan Medlin, The Vintage Marketing Group
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Minutes

The minutes of August 23 meeting were accepted and, with no changes, were declared approved.

Marketing

Susan led a lively review and a productive discussion of lead names and the committee, after lengthy reflection, continued to support “The Cascade Highlands” to replace Blue Ridge Heartlands.

It was noted that the name must work for all marketing groups including prospective tourists, local leaders and owners and operator of local tourism attractions.

Discussion then centered on logos that would work well and could be used to convey and compliment the name. Discussion centered around 3 prospects developed by Vintage Marketing staff. After lengthy discussion, Susan was asked to make minor modifications (to the trees) in the preferred logo and bring it back to the next meeting.

Website

The Steering Committee felt moving ahead on integration of the marketing name and logo with the website recently developed is a priority. Although the Steering Committee lacked a quorum to allocate funds, it was agreed that Susan and Mandy Nester of Professional Network will be asked to collaborate and develop estimates of the cost of doing this. Macon said this could not wait until the October meeting, and Jim said within reasonable limits, he would consider authorizing work to proceed until the October 17 meeting, when Steering Committee authorization can be obtained. Steering Committee members present agreed.

Host Organization

Dennis introduced the possibility of creating a host organization within RTI, as other regional tourism groups have done. He briefly cited the experience of 4 such groups: High Country

Hosts, Smoky Mountain Hosts, Blue Ridge Hosts and the Blue Ridge Travel Association of Virginia. It was noted that this is one of chief means of generating private revenue to support regional tourism. Helen Ruth agreed to help RTI learn more about host organizations through looking at the experience of other such group, or with a panel discussion. Jim deferred this subject to a later meeting when additional Steering Committee members are present.

Membership Meeting

The Steering Committee discussed scheduling a general membership meeting perhaps in November, but no decision was made. January was also mentioned as a possibility, when the redesigned website and marketing plan might be ready for presentation.

Financial Report

Macon distributed the financial report showing receipts of \$56,908.05 (including the 6/30/07 balance forward of \$11,908.05), expenses of \$11,101.76, giving a cash balance of \$45,806.29.

Grant Search

Macon confirmed that grant search letters have been sent to the Rural Center, Golden Leaf, ARC and the NC Tourism Office. The grant search transmittal letter and the prospectus has also been sent to Dallas Garrett and Donnie for distribution to selected Virginia grantor agencies, but it is not known whether these have gone out yet. There was also mention by Jim and others to make application to foundations such as Chatham and Reynolds family foundation and any other steering committee member may suggest.

Next Meeting

It was generally agreed that the next meeting will be tentatively set for 1:00 PM on Friday, October 19 in the Jonesville area, with Wednesday October 17 as a second choice, pending the wishes of the steering committee members. The exact location will be determined later.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 9 PM.

Respectively submitted,

Macon C. Sammons, Jr.
Assistant Secretary

MCS/th