

TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL  
REGULAR SESSION FEBRUARY 2, 2016

The Tourism Advisory Council met in Regular Session on Tuesday, February 2, 2016 4:00 p.m. in the Derek D. Daniels Conference Room of the Athens Partnership Center with the following members present, to-wit:

Mike Coston  
Chet Patel  
Rae Priestley  
Deanne Boswell  
Virginia Reeder  
Brad Smiley  
Toni Clay

Thanasis Kombos, Community Development Manager

others present: Blake Wilson, Marsha Culberry, Jed Turman, Arturo Patron, and Maddie Carazno; Constituting a quorum at which time the following proceedings were enacted, to-wit:

**ROLL CALL**

Chairman Coston did a roll call of the Tourism Advisory Council members; all members were present.

**DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No action was taken.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. CONSIDER APPROVING MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 3, 2015 REGULAR SESSION
- B. CONSIDER APPROVING MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 12, 2016 SPECIAL SESSION

A motion was made by Member Smiley, seconded by Member Patel, to approve the minutes of the November 3, 2015 Regular Session, and the January 12, 2016 Special Session. The motion carried unanimously.

**HEAR A PRESENTATION FROM CLEVELAND AMORY BLACK BEAUTY RANCH REGARDING NEW VISITOR OPPORTUNITIES**

Maddie Carazno gave a presentation on Black Beauty Ranch. She stated that the ranch is home to 46 different species. She stated that the ranch is beginning a new program and is going to allow memberships. She also stated that at the ranch there are volunteer opportunities available.

DISCUSS DEVELOPING A JOINT EVENT BETWEEN LOCAL WINERIES,  
ARTISTS AND THE HENDERSON COUNTY PERFORMING ARTS STUDIO

Member Priestly stated that she met with the local wineries and they were willing to help with whatever the Board was wanting to do. She stated that an idea would be to have a wine tour like Grapevine and other cities.

Marsha Culberry stated that if the Board is trying to keep tourist overnight then an event could be held around one of the shows at the Henderson County Performing Arts Center.

Thanasis Kombos stated that there should be an event that brings all of the arts together. He stated this event is what he wanted the Board to discuss to see if there is a need to have a co-opted event.

Member Clay stated that Georgetown has a great event on their square, where people had wine glasses walking around in and out of the shops.

Mr. Kombos stated that the City is going to proceed with a RFQ for the design of the Texan Theater. He stated that presenting the revitalized Texan Theater in conjunction with an even of this sort would be a great way to combine them all.

Member Reeder stated the initial idea was to have a two (2) or three (3) day event, with the grand finale would be the performance at Henderson County Performing Arts Center.

Chairman Coston stated that it was paramount to have an overnight event to bring new money in.

Member Reeder stated that there could be a shuttle to take tourists to and from the different events, then the consumption of wine would not be an issue.

Mr. Kombos stated that the Fairpark hinted that the problem was they would stay at other towns because we don't have the inventory.

Member Patel stated that statement wasn't true, people just don't come to the west side of Athens. He stated that it is all a convenience factor.

Member Smiley stated that this could be presented as a package deal, and tickets could be sold that were all inclusive.

Chairman Coston stated that there are writers that will come down to local towns and take a look around at what there is to offer, and they will write an article about the town. This would be an option to invite the writers to come and look at what Athens has to offer, and that would perhaps attract tourists from Dallas and Houston.

UPDATE FROM REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TEXAS ARTS FESTIVAL

Mr. Kombos stated that immediately after the application for the grant from the Texas Commission of Arts was submitted, the City was given notice that it had been withdrew. In order for a city to submit the application there must dedicated staff member that is solely focused on the arts. He stated that the City would not be receiving the grant.

Jed Turman stated that he wished they would have given him an upfront answer about applying for the grant. He stated that he spoke with the organizer of the Red Dirt Music and BBQ Festival. He is working with this organizer to get information about running a festival. He stated that he was advised to not get a 501-C3 for this festival, and to get money from organizations that have deep pockets.

He stated that he will not accept the \$4,000 pledged from the City unless he can get the \$4,000 equally matched. He also wants to get a commitment of 50 artists by March 15<sup>th</sup>. If he cannot get 50 artists by that date, the festival will be canceled.

#### OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO EXPRESS ITEMS OF CONCERN

No action was taken.

#### COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER'S UPDATE

Mr. Kombos stated that quarterly that he wanted to present the current Hotel/Motel Tax Fund reports to the Board. Currently the Fund is \$6,000 above last year at this time.

He also stated that the Texan Forum went well. In future minutes it is his intent to keep the meeting down to an hour or hour and a half.

#### ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS THE 1<sup>st</sup> DAY OF MARCH, 2016

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Mike Coston, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Bonnie Hambrick, City Secretary