

TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL  
SPECIAL SESSION

JANUARY 12, 2016

The Tourism Advisory Council met in Special Session on Tuesday, January 12, 2016, 4:00 p.m. in the Derek D. Daniels Conference Room of the Athens Partnership Center with the following members present, to-wit:

Chet Patel  
Deanne Boswell  
Virginia Reeder  
Toni Clay

Philip Rodriguez, City Manager  
Bonnie Hambrick, City Secretary  
Thanasis Kombos, Community Development Manager

Other present: Blake Wilson, and Jed Turman;

ROLL CALL

City Secretary, Bonnie Hambrick, did a roll call of the Tourism Advisory Council members; Rae Priestly, Mike Coston, and Brad Smiley were absent.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No action was taken.

CONSENT AGENDA:

A) CONSIDER APPROVING MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 3, 2015 REGULAR SESSION

Member Clay stated that she has not been receiving emails to her Tourism email address, with Ms. Reeder also stating that she could not open hers as well.

Member Boswell made a motion, seconded by Member Clay, to table approving the minutes of the November 3, 2015 Regular Session Minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSS TOURISM PROJECTS FOR 2016

Thanasis Kombos, Community Development Manager, introduced himself to the Members. He stated that the office of Sherri Skeeters had not been filled, and if there were any questions they could contact him.

Vice Chairman Patel asked if the position was going to be refilled, with Mr. Kombos stating that Staff was going to reassess the position to determine where the need was going to be in the department.

Member Reeder stated that she has spoken with Marsha at the Henderson County Performing Arts Center, and she stated that this employee informed her of some upcoming events that the board would be able to work several small events into one big weekend event. These events would be a great way to advertise for a reason to come to Athens as part of their vacation. The idea is to have a series of plays at the Performing Arts Center by someone that is well known locally. Member Reeder stated that this would be a great time to combine Member Priestley's idea with the local vineyards and wineries. She stated that due to the closing of an Art Gallery in Ben Wheeler, it has brought some attention to the Athens area. She stated she would even like to see an Art Walk to coincide with the plays and wineries events.

Member Boswell what is happening with the Texan Theater. City Manager, Philip Rodriguez, stated that there is actually going to be a Public Forum on January 20, 2016 at the Cain Center discussing the Texan Theater.

Member Clay asked if there was a certain direction that the Texan Theater project was going, or was it still in an all ideas phase. Mr. Kombos stated that there is a meeting with an architect to go onsite at the Texan to see what would be possible at the location.

Mr. Rodriguez stated that the inside of the theater has been completely been cleaned out. He also stated that Staff is going to meet with a structural engineer to assess the condition of the walls.

Member Reeder stated that every twelve weeks the gallery has an event. She asked who she needed to inform of the events to get the information on the Tourism Website, with Mr. Kombos stating that Pat Teems is actually maintaining the calendar on the website.

There was lengthy discussion on the topic of Heritage Culture, which included Fuller Park, the old hotel, and Downtown Athens.

Jed Turman introduced himself, and stated that he loved Athens. Mr. Turman asked the Tourism Advisory Council to help him sponsor the Texas Arts Festival. He stated that he was applying for a grant from the Texas Commission of the Arts, but it has to be sponsored by a non-profit organization or a local government body. The grant is a 50/50 match, meaning that in order to receive the \$4,000.00 that was promised to Mr. Turman by Jim Bob McMillan, the City must match \$4,000.00.

The Tourism Advisory Council was in consensus of supporting Mr. Turman in the Texas Arts Festival in April.

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OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO EXPRESS ITEMS OF CONCERN

No action was taken.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS THE 2<sup>nd</sup> DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2016.

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Mike Coston, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Bonnie Hambrick, City Secretary