

SPECIAL SESSION

JULY 21, 2016

The Tourism Advisory Council met in Special Session on Thursday, July 21, 2016, 3:00 p.m. in the Derek D. Daniels Conference Room of the Athens Partnership Center, 201 W. Corsicana St., Athens, Texas with the following members present, to-wit:

Chet Patel  
Rae Priestley  
Deanne Boswell  
Virginia Reeder  
Brad Smiley

Thanasis Kombos, Community Development Manager  
Jessica Savage, Finance & Compliance Specialist

others present: Bob Myers, Sarah Jane Brown, Betty Hollowell, Trevor Mohller, Cody Robson and Scott Storey;

with the following member absent; Toni Clay and Mike Coston

constituting a quorum at which time the following proceedings were enacted, to-wit:

DISCUSS/CONSIDER RECOMMENDING FY 2017 HOTEL OCCUPANCY  
TAX PROJECTS

- 1) Bob Myers, Chairman of Henderson County Regional Fair Park, discussed the proposal to purchase and replace 26 horse stalls for the requested funding amount of thirty thousand four hundred and fifty-five dollars (\$30,455.00).
- 2) Trevor Mohller, with the Athens Teenage Baseball Association (ATBA), discussed the proposal to place a bid for the City of Athens to host the Dixie State U Tournaments to include the younger age groups that would bring an average of 35 teams for the requested funding amount of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000.00).
- 3) Sarah Jane Brown, Vice President of the Historical Society Museum, discussed the proposal to rid the termite problem at the building for the requested funding amount of four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00).
- 4) Thanasis Kombos, Community Development Manager, presented two (2) additional applications that were submitted;
  - a) Fiddlers' Fest which has requested the funding amount of seven hundred and seventy-five dollars (\$775.00) for hotel rooms. Mr. Kombos stated that the City funded the request last year from the Tourism operating budget and he is recommending that the City do the same this fiscal year.

- b) Hotel & Convention Center of Athens Texas, which is planning the renovation of the former Quality Inn, intends to develop a convention center at that location and has requested funding in the amount of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000.00). Mr. Kombos stated that the use of hotel occupancy tax dollars for this project would likely qualify under the law but at this point it is not a project that he recommends the City allocate funds. Mr. Kombos further stated that the City would prefer to see the company that wants to reopen the facility make a commitment to managing and operating the facility, including the convention center space, and then return next year with a request for funding.

Mr. Kombos stated that he recommends funding all of the projects excluding the hotel renovation project;

- 1) One half (1/2) of the requested amount for Henderson County Regional Fair Park in the amount of fifteen thousand two hundred and fifty dollars (\$15,250.00).
- 2) One half (1/2) of the requested amount for the Athens Teenage Baseball Association (ATBA) in the amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00).
- 3) The full amount for the Fiddlers' Fest in the amount of seven hundred and seventy-five dollars (\$775.00).
- 4) The full amount for the Historical Society Museum in the amount of four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00).

Chet Patel stated that he would comp the hotel rooms for the Fiddlers' Fest to allow the seven hundred and seventy-five dollars (\$775.00) to be divided between the Henderson County Fair Park and the Athens Teenage Baseball Association (ATBA).

A motion was made by Brad Smiley, seconded by Rae Priestley to approve the funding for Henderson County Fair Park in the amount of fifteen thousand six hundred thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents (\$15,637.50), Athens Teenage Baseball Association (ATBA) in the amount of ten thousand three hundred eighty-seven dollars and fifty cents (\$10,387.50) and the Historical Society Museum in the amount of four thousand dollars (\$4,000.00).

The motion carried unanimously

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

Cody Robson spoke about a project that he started called The Free Earth Project and stated that they sell organic produce to farmer's markets, different restaurants and establishments.

There was no further discussion

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COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER'S UPDATE

Mr. Kombos stated that the City is still in the final stages of the approval for the Cultural Resources Coordinator position and as soon as the Budget Development process is finished the position should be posted.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 2<sup>ND</sup> DAY OF AUGUST, 2016.

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Chet Patel, Vice Chairman

ATTEST:

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Bonnie Hambrick, City Secretary