

**RTI Board of Directors Minutes
(formerly known as the RTI Steering Committee)
Northwest North Carolina / Southwest Virginia
Regional Tourism Initiative
Hampton Inn, I-77, Exit 93, Dobson, NC
1:00 PM, Friday February 15, 2008**

Jim Harrell welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Board Members	Don Adams, Alleghany County
Present:	Ken Richardson, Alleghany County
	Donnie Turner, Carroll County
	Manus McMillian, Carroll County
	Chuck Riedhammer, City of Galax
	Stanley Smith, Stokes County
	Bryan Steen, Stokes County
	Jim Harrell, Surry County
	Macon Sammons, Surry County
	Eric Williams, Yadkin County
	Jessica Icenhour, RTI Tourism Advisory Committee

Others Present:	Helen Ruth Almond, NC Heritage Tourism
	Tom Holder, NC Heritage Tourism
	Brenda Marrah, Carroll County
	Dr. Dallas Garrett, RTI Consultant
	Chris Knopf, Surry County Tourism
	Barbara Debord, Smyth County Tourism

Minutes

After consideration, the minutes of the January 18, 2008 meeting were declared approved with no corrections offered.

Cascade Highlands Website

The Board discussed the current status of the website and recommended the following changes:

- Remove references to Patrick County, VA;
- Produce a timeline showing when the website is going live;
- Answer the question: How will content that is specific to each member jurisdiction be updated on the website; thru a gatekeeper or who will have access to the site?
- Consider a “trip planner” function for the website.

Susan Medlin submitted a list of potential domain names that could be utilized with the Cascade Highlands website for use with promotional or special events. Chuck Riedhammer motioned to accept and license each of the domain names listed, seconded by Stanley Smith. All present were in favor. Motion carried. If anyone wants to license any additional domain names they should contact Jim Harrell with their requests so that he can pass them on to Susan Medlin.

RTI Committees

Jim Harrell presented a proposal to establish committees that will lists of assets in the region and they apply to each theme the RTI has addressed. The Board decided to add the categories of historic and heritage attractions and museums. The updated spreadsheet will be sent with the minutes prior to the March meeting.

ncvarti.org Website

Chris Knopf reviewed the latest updates to the RTI's business website.

EDA Application

Chris Knopf reviewed changes to the RTI's EDA grant application. EDA recommended that the application be withdrawn and then resubmitted with the following changes and additions:

- Better illustrate the amount of funding member jurisdictions have contributed to the RTI in 2008;
- Change budget structure so that it is clear EDA funding will not be used to employee RTI staff positions;
- Show local staff members who are currently working with RTI programs.

Meeting with Virginia Tourism Corporation

Donnie Turner informed the Board of a meeting between Mike Maynard, himself, the Virginia Tourism Corporation (VTC), and others in Richmond. Outcomes included support of our effort by the VTC, assigning a member of their staff to attend RTI Board meetings, and possible advertising partnerships with VTC.

RTI Funding

The Board discussed the job creation requirement for the RTI's NC Rural Center grant application. Grant applications and associated work will be coordinated between Brenda Marrah and Chris Knopf. Helen Ruth Almond volunteered to assist with any requests to the Golden Leaf Foundation and the Appalachian Regional Commission. The Board discussed reaching out to private grantors such as: Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, Chatham Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Duke Endowment. A number of grant search engines were also discussed.

Director of Tourism and Communications

The Board discussed hiring a full-time employee as well as the following: salary, benefits, and goals and accomplishments.

Business Plan Work Session

Dr. Garrett reviewed the work to date on the Business Plan Implementation process. He requested comments from the Board members to be submitted to him within 14 days. He also requested the following: Articles of Incorporation, a map of the RTI region, a copy of the EDA application, and establishing a finance committee to work on a finance model for the plan.

Other Business

Jim discussed the need for a meeting of the large RTI group in April. The Board agreed to schedule this meeting for April 11th.

Next Meeting

It was the consensus of the RTI Board to meet from 1 PM to 3 PM on Friday, March 7th at the Hampton Inn in Dobson.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 PM.

Respectively submitted,

Chris Knopf
Surry County Tourism