

**Steering Committee Minutes
Blue Ridge Heartland
Regional Tourism Initiative
10:30 AM, Friday April 20, 2007
Town and Country Restaurant, King (Stokes Co.), NC**

Dr. Jim Harrell called the meeting to order at 10:45 AM with an invocation by Macon and a word of welcome.

Steering Committee
Members Present:

Jim Harrell, Surry County
Donnie Turner, Carroll County
Stanley Smith, Stokes County
Bryan Steen, Stokes County
Darlene Bullins, Stokes County
Mike Maynard, Grayson County
Linda Cheek (for Gary Page), Wilkes County
Jessica Icenhour, Tourism Advisory Committee
Macon C. Sammons, Jr., Surry County

Others Present:

Jimmy Walker, Stokes County
Chris Mackey, NC Tourism
Helen Ruth Almond, NC Tourism
Tom Holder, NC Tourism
Randy Arno, University of VA, Southside
Susan Medlin, The Vintage Marketing Group
Sheldon Stanley, Surry County MIS

Minutes

The minutes of the March 9, 2007 were declared approved as submitted by the Chair, following inquiry and no changes offered by members.

Website Development

Jessica and Donnie briefed the Steering Committee on the March 30 meeting of the Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC), which focused on website development. Jessica reported the website format has been approved by the TAC and Donnie noted its six themes and provided a list of information needed from member counties (attached) in order to complete website.

Prospectus and Business Plan

Macon and Sheldon distributed copies of the Prospectus and Business Plan, noting that it will be used to help secure grant funding, and to clarify the mission of the RTI.

Incorporation and Bylaws

Randy is checking the status of Articles of Incorporation filing in Virginia and Macon reported the NC filing was completed on April 13. Randy will plan to have a bylaws draft ready in early May.

Newsletter

A sample version of the RTI newsletter was distributed for review of the Steering Committee.

Financial Report

Macon reported that through April expenses total \$24,088, with a balance of \$21,041. FY 08 budget request letters were signed and distributed. Steering Committee members noted that RTI will need to establish a “pay to play” policy sometime during FY 08. Discussion centered on steps taken or to be taken toward inclusion of all participating counties.

Marketing Plan

Jim introduced Susan Medlin of The Vintage Marketing Group. Susan, in addition to running the marketing company, serves as Mayor Pro Tem of Huntersville and is on the regional tourism board in her area. Susan volunteered to move the market planning effort forward by serving as special consultant, placing tasks where appropriate to get the best results at a reasonable cost. Susan emphasized the importance of quality images, photos, logos, websites and text.

Chris Mackey, NC Director of Tourism Programs, also gave an overview of their efforts, initiatives and opportunities available. She noted that effective marketing can be expensive, but also rewarding.

Next Meeting

Linda briefed the Steering Committee on preliminary plans for the next meeting on **Friday, June 1, 2007** at Forest Edge Amphitheatre at W. Kerr Scott Lake in **Wilkes County**. The convening time will be tentatively at **9:30 AM**, to be confirmed after a facilitator is selected to lead a marketing plan workshop meeting.

Respectively submitted,

Macon C. Sammons, Jr.
Assistant Secretary

MCS/th