



**Rock Hill Accommodations Tax/Tourism Commission
Wednesday, October 16, 2019
Visit York County Office, 130 E. Main Street, Rock Hill – 9 AM**

Minutes

PRESENT: Connie Delaney, Letonia Gladden, Wayne Holmes, Jason LaBarge, Sharad Patel, Betty Plumb

ABSENT: Perry Sutton

STAFF: Laurie Helms, Wendy Hill, David Linder

WELCOME: Chair, Connie Delaney, opened the meeting at 9:00 AM.

MINUTES: The September 20, 2019, minutes were approved as presented.

VISIT YORK COUNTY PRESENTATION – Billy Dunlap

Visit York County is a recipient of Rock Hill's Accommodations Tax (ATAX) Grant Funding. At the Tourism Commission's request, President and Chief Executive Officer, Billy Dunlap, gave a presentation on how the CVB (Convention & Visitors Bureau) operates and how they may apply the usage of ATAX monies from Rock Hill in meeting their goals.

First, Mr. Dunlap clarifies that Visit York County is governed, solely, by a Board of Directors, not by York County, a common misconception. Mr. Dunlap states the focus of the CVB is to drive the economy of tourism through marketing and promotion of all five municipalities that make up York County – Rock Hill, Fort Mill, Tega Cay, Clover, and York.

Although funding is received from all five municipalities, either through accommodations tax and/or hospitality tax (HTAX), the CVB is now working with a sizeable reduction in HTAX funding from the County in the year 2019 (\$300,000) and another decrease of the same in 2020. Fifty-two percent of their total funding comes from York County government.

Currently, 40% of their budget goes to marketing leisure travel for the York County area. Through information gained from sports meetings and conferences, surveys indicated sports tourism should be a predominate focus in the area. With Rock Hill

being the sports tourism niche that it is, the CVB intends to partner with Rock Hill to assist, financially, with a number of events (such as certain Discoveries Soccer (now Charlotte Independence Soccer Club) events and a number of upcoming Rock Hill Sports & Event Center events).

Mr. Dunlap states there is a 25% growth in new hotels coming to the area, and visitation must be increased to fill them. It will take marketing and promotion through grant funding assistance to meet that need. Without it or with a great reduction in it, there will be a ripple effect on hotels, restaurants and attractions – all of who add to tourism dollars through ATAX and HTAX collections gained from their customers. Those collections are important to the industry and to the CVB to further tourism promotion needs for all in York County.

STAFF

HIGHLIGHT: Miranda Sims, Office Assistant – PRT Central

Miranda is, generally, PRT's first point of contact. She enters payroll for all Central PRT employees, all Recreation Division employees, seasonal employees, park monitors and Outdoor Center employees. She handles the rental process for Confederate Park and Glencairn Garden spaces; prepares monthly and risk management reports, safety meeting agendas and minutes and registrations for both youth and adult seasonal sports programs.

DEPARTMENT

UPDATE:

Tourism Related Construction Projects – David Linder

- Construction continues at the Rock Hill Sports and Event Center.
- Plans are to have the center fully staffed in November.

Monthly Report

- In commissioner packets

Tourism Coordinator's Report - Wendy Hill

- All annual reports to the SC Tourism Expenditure Review Committee were finalized and emailed on September 25, 2019.
- Two Economic Impact Surveys conducted in September (the Rock Hill BMX – World Cup (including additional events: Gripped Festival, Carolina Cup, Mountain Trail Bike Race and Criterium) and Giordana Velodrome's Collegiate Track Nationals) are pending economic impact studies due to the need to confirm rider participation data.
- Top Gun Flag Football at Manchester Meadows on the October 4-6 weekend is pending review.

Host Hotel Program:

- Meetings took place with new sales directors/general managers at LaQuinta, Staybridge Suites and TRU by Hilton – to discuss the Host Hotel Program.
- Worked with hotels to secure responses for housing requirements for 2020 events

at the Rock Hill Sports & Event Center: USA Volleyball Palmetto Region, USA Volleyball A2; Player Omega.

- Planning and coordination for the Annual Hotel Breakfast (event date: 10/18)
- Collecting 2020 Host Hotel Agreements and fees

Other:

- Attended the Visit York County Annual Tourism meeting – 9/26
- Attended the City of Rock Hill Boards & Commissions Dinner – 10/10

OLD BUSINESS:

ATAX GRANT – Communication Discussion – Laurie Helms

Laurie confirms that the grant application process is made known through press releases, city website and PRT pages, city social media and through York County Partners in Tourism meetings. The City's new e-newsletter service will also be used this year. She will discuss making the application available online with the City's Information Technology (IT) Group.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

- The Tourism Commission will not meet in November. They are invited to attend the annual PRT Holiday Luncheon – November 21 at noon - at the Rock Hill Sports & Event Center. RSVPs should be made to 803-329-5620.
- Commissioners voted, unanimously, to cancel the December Commission meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting concluded at 9:50 AM. Our next meeting date will be Wednesday, January 15 at 9 AM. Location TBD (possibly Camp Canaan).

Submitted by: Wendy Hill, ATAX & Tourism Commission Liaison October 29, 2019