



**Rock Hill Accommodations Tax/Tourism Commission  
Wednesday, February 19, 2020  
Center for the Arts, 131 E. Main Street, Rock Hill, SC  
Minutes**

**PRESENT:** Connie Delaney, Letonia Gladden, Antonio Mickel, Sharad Patel, Betty Plumb

**ABSENT:** Wayne Holmes, Jason LaBarge

**STAFF:** Wendy Hill, David Linder

**VISITOR:** Adam Moses (former Inside Rock Hill participant)

**WELCOME:** Chair, Connie Delaney, opened the meeting at 9 AM and introduced new Commissioner, Antonio Mickel.

**MINUTES:** The January 15, 2020, meeting minutes were approved as presented.

**STAFF HIGHLIGHT: Katie Varnadore, Office Administrator – Rock Hill Sports & Event Center**

Katie interned at Cherry Park for two summers while attending college. After graduation, she worked part time as a Concessions Supervisor before moving downtown to City Hall as PRT's Front Desk Office Assistant. She is now the Office Administrator at the new Sports & Event Center. While she is the first point of contact at the facility, her duties go well beyond greeting customers and registration. She assists with many things – from concessions to site supervising on weekends.

**2020-2021 ATAX GRANT APPLICANT PRESENTATION – Arts Council of York County**

Debra Heintz, Executive Director, made a presentation to the Tourism Commission to define the Arts Council's role in tourism. Organized in 1978, the Center for the Arts has resided in its current location for the past 24 years. Its mission is to create programming that encourages education, economic development and arts advocacy through unique art experiences that help make York County a regional art destination with numerous avenues for art exploration - such as the Underexposed Film Festival of York County, Blues & Jazz, Ag and Art Tour (with SC being the largest free farm and art tour in the United States), literary and art competitions for all ages, art classes, musical events and eight galleries in Rock Hill that are managed by the Arts Council. With a number of art studios in the city, there are nearly 60 artists working in the downtown area. The arts are growing in Rock Hill as is evident with the South Carolina Arts Commission naming downtown Rock Hill as the first state-recognized cultural district in South Carolina in 2015. A study conducted in 2016

determined the arts in SC is a \$27 million industry, supporting 846 full time equivalent jobs and generating \$2 million in local and state government revenue. In 2019, there were 128,144 attendees from 176 cities, 34 states and five countries visiting various art venues and events in Rock Hill and York County. The Arts Council will be applying for Accommodations Tax Grant Funding in the 2020-2021 Grant Cycle.

## **DEPARTMENT**

### **UPDATE:**

#### **Tourism Related Construction Projects** – David Linder

- The Rock Hill Sports & Event Center is still in punch list phase but very close to completion. The Grand Opening of the facility is set for March 19.

#### **Monthly Report**

- Emailed and in Commissioners packets

- Lifelong Learning, offered by the City of Rock Hill, was discussed as an educational program for adults age 50 and over. There are a variety of two to eight week courses covering a wide range of topics. Yearly memberships are \$50. Commissioner Plumb is participating and spoke well of the presentations she has recently attended. The course calendar and descriptions can be found at

<https://www.cityofrockhill.com/departments/parks-recreation-tourism/programs/lifelonglearning>

#### **Tourism Coordinator's Report** - Wendy Hill

##### **Accommodations Tax:**

- 2018-2019 Grant Cycle: Remaining 65% funds plus interest accrued – in the amount of \$7,433 - were reallocated to the 30% Marketing and Promotion Fund at the recommendation of the Tourism Commission (September 2019) and approval from City Council on February 10, 2020.

- 2019-2020 Grant Cycle: To date, five reimbursements have been made with all applicants receiving their full grant amounts:

Visit York County (Convention & Visitors Bureau) - \$112,610

ChristmasVille – \$ 17,125

City of Rock Hill 2019 UCI BMX SX World Cup - \$38,530

Old Town Ice Rink - \$ 1,952

US Disc Golf Championship - \$ 9,557

-2020-2021 Grant Cycle:

There have been 17 applicants who have fulfilled their required meeting with PRT Staff/Commissioners as of February 18. The Sports Commission and PRT will schedule their meetings soon.

- All applications are due on Friday, March 6, 2020, by 5 PM (or postmarked by same).

##### **Economic Impact:**

- Two studies have been completed – both for events held at the Rock Hill Sports & Event Center:

Carolina One Volleyball – January 3-6 with an estimated event impact of \$ 732,114  
Twister Gymnastics – January 24-26 with an estimated event impact of \$ 94,238.

Hotels:

- TRU by Hilton opened, officially, on February 13.

Tourism:

- Attended York County Partners in Tourism meeting:

Warehouses on White Street – February 12

- Next Partners in Tourism meeting – Wednesday, March 11 at 3:30 PM at the new Cambria Hotel in Fort Mill, SC. Guest Speaker, Michael Reddington - a Certified Forensic Interviewer - will discuss “Disciplined Listening.”

- Commissioners are encouraged to attend these monthly meetings.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Election of Officers**

Connie Delaney has been re-elected as Chair and Betty Plumb re-elected as Vice-Chair for the 2020 calendar year.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**2020-2021 ATAX Discussion**

- ATAX Application Packets received on March 6 should be delivered to Commissioners or ready for pickup no later than March 13.

**Application Scoring**

- Scoring Sheets have been revised. Commissioner responses should answer the questions posed in each of the five categories: Tourism Promotion, Benefit to the City, Growth Potential, Overnight Impact, Economic Impact.

- It is very important that each Commissioner complete all scoring prior to the March 18 Tourism Commission meeting.

**Application Review Dates**

- Wednesday, March 18 – 8 AM to 10 AM – Manchester Meadows Conference Room

- Wednesday, March 25 – 8 AM to 10 AM – City Hall, Room 373

- Wednesday, April 1 – 8 AM to 10 AM – City Hall, Room 373

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS:**

- Volunteer Appreciation Dinner – March 10 – Sports & Event Center

- Sports & Event Center Grand Opening – March 19

**ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting concluded at 10:00 AM.