



**Rock Hill Accommodations Tax/Tourism Commission
Wednesday, January 20, 2021
Virtual Meeting
Minutes**

PRESENT: Connie Delaney, Wayne Holmes, Sharad Patel, Betty Plumb, Arvin Salvacion
ABSENT: Letonia Gladden, Antonio Mickel
STAFF: Wendy Hill, Laurie Helms, David Linder

WELCOME: Chair, Connie Delaney, opened the meeting at 9:02 AM.

INTRODUCTION: NEW MEMBER

Connie introduced our newest member, Arvin Salvacion – Front Office Manager with Staybridge Suites Rock Hill. Arvin was appointed to a term expiring December 10, 2023. He replaces Jason LaBarge as an Accommodations member.

MINUTES: The December 9, 2020, minutes were approved as presented

STAFF HIGHLIGHT: Sarah Key, Seasonal Events Coordinator

Sarah came to PRT in November 2020 from the Rock Hill Economic and Urban Development Department. She has worked in the downtown area for five years – coordinating events like ChristmasVille, monthly Farmers Markets, the Holiday Ice Rink, Food Truck Fridays, concerts and other Old Town associated events. She will continue to coordinate events of this nature with PRT.

DEPARTMENT UPDATE:

Tourism Related Construction Projects – David Linder

- Construction projects at River Park are in the punch list phase (expanded parking lot and road improvements.)
- Building construction, sidewalk and site utility work continue at Miracle Park.
- The Cambria Hotel at the Sports and Event Center location is scheduled to open in February.
- The annual direct economic impact event estimation for the calendar year 2020 was \$57 million – due, in part, to events that PRT was able to gain from those turned down by other states as a result of Covid-19. The new indoor Sports and Event Center - under Covid protocol and implemented changes necessary for facilities to open for events - was able to operate most of the year – closing for a short period of time – mid-March through the end of June.

Monthly Report

- Will be emailed when received.

Tourism Coordinator's Report – Wendy Hill

Accommodations Tax Grants – 2020-2021

- Visit York County received a partial reimbursement in November 2020. They may request further reimbursements through June 30, 2021.
- The Sports Commission's amended application to fund the September 2020 Labor Day Nationals was approved in August 2020 by City Council. The full reimbursement for this project was completed January 19, 2021.

Accommodations Tax Grants – 2021-2022

- The 2% State Accommodations Tax collected for the first three quarters of calendar year 2020 has been much less than in 2019. The expectation is the same for the fourth quarter collection which should be received by the City in February. The decline in collections leads to a sizeable decrease in 65% funding that will be available to tourism projects for the upcoming 2021-2022 grant cycle.

Economic Impact 2021

- As of January 10, three event estimations are complete:
Carolina 1 Volleyball at \$589,451; AAU Volleyball at \$742,010 (both at the Sports & Event Center) and Charlotte Independence Soccer Club at \$95,766 at Manchester Meadows

TOURISM COMMISSION:

Committee Positions

Connie Delaney and Betty Plumb were reappointed by Tourism Commission vote to Chair and Vice-Chair positions, respectively.

Bylaws, Attendance, Meetings

- Commissioners were to review documentation prior to the meeting. Connie reminded all that serving is a commitment and that no more than three consecutive absences will be acceptable per the Tourism Commission bylaws.
- Meetings will continue to occur on the third Wednesday of each month at 9 AM, via Zoom, unless otherwise communicated. Connie has stated that as final discussions take place regarding grant recommendations for the 2021-2022 cycle, in-person meetings are preferred.

Responsibility

- Connie reminded everyone that the Tourism Commission's responsibility is to make recommendations, only, for projects requesting ATAX Grant Funding. Commissioners will score applicant projects on specific criteria and as outlined by SC State ATAX law, but City Council has ultimate approval and may make changes to those recommendations.
- David added that the hotel nights taking place in the City are those that add to the ATAX collection that provides the grant dollars that may assist tourism events and venue projects within the City.

SC ATAX LAW

Wendy reminded everyone to thoroughly review Title 6, Chapter 4 of the South Carolina Code of Laws on Accommodations Tax use. The Tourism Expenditure Review Committee's website has been recently updated. Past policies are included where the committee attempted to provide clarification on parts of the statute in the past; however, it is also stated the oversight committee has been advised and counseled that the only guidance and clarification is under the statute, itself (Title 6, Chapter 4).

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

2021-2022 ATAX Applicant Meetings

- For the benefit of our newest Commissioners, we will continue with individual applicant meetings, via Zoom, in February. Meeting notices will be sent out as applicants schedule. Commissioners are encouraged to attend as many as possible.

Other Items

- Laurie shared links regarding a community vaccination clinic for Covid-19 and updates for the City of Rock Hill:

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/SCROCKHILL/bulletins/2ba75c7>

www.cityofrockhill.com/stayconnected.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting concluded at 9:40 AM.

Submitted by: Wendy Hill, ATAX & Tourism Commission Liaison

January 20, 2021