



NORTH CAROLINA TRAVEL & TOURISM BOARD MEETING MINUTES

N.C. Travel & Tourism Board Meeting, February 28, 2023, 10:30 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Kimberly Albritton, Rolf Blizzard, Sen. Dave Craven, Dennis Edwards, Art Fisher, Shannon Gilligan, James Meacham, Rep. Charles Miller, Lynn Minges, Lee Nettles, Andrew Schmidt, Vivek Tandon, Greg Walter

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Beley, Christopher Chung, Sen. Bobby Hanig, Steven Pasquantonio, Rep. Ray Pickett, Sec. Mabelle Sanders

LIAISONS, STAFF AND GUESTS PRESENT: Katie Bailey, Natalie Clark, Ashton English, Scott Gilmore, Bryan Gupton, Brooks Luquire, Margo Metzger, Scott Peacock, Kathy Prickett, Marlise Taylor, Debbie Tullos, Wit Tuttell, Heidi Walters, Graham Whitaker

Rolf Blizzard, chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:30 am. The meeting was held in-person and remotely.

WELCOME/COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

Roll call was taken of board members present. Blizzard reminded members of the Ethics Statement, in accordance with Executive Order No. 35. Blizzard asked for approval of the November meeting minutes. Greg Walter made the motion to approve, seconded by Lynn Minges; the minutes were unanimously approved.

INDUSTRY PARTNER UPDATE

Denny Edwards, NC Travel & Tourism Coalition – Group is closely watching legislation, specifically school start calendar, sports wagering. Working with NCRLA regarding workforce development issues.

Lynn Minges, NC Restaurant & Lodging Association – Gave update on its “Stars of the Industry” awards, held Feb. 27. Launching a marketing campaign to entice workers back to the industry. Also launching a training program to offer courses/credentials/certifications for industry and want-to-be-in-the-industry workers. Working with legislators to clarify “hotel guest rules”; monitoring school start calendar; and working on ABC reform and transparency issues.

Andrew Schmidt, NC Travel Industry Association – Provided update on Tourism Education Foundation Learning Lab in Charlotte with hopes to increase the number of labs across the state. Upcoming job fair at Charlotte Motor Speedway on March 30. Monitoring school start calendar legislation, sports tourism grants.

James Meacham, Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina – Nothing to report, other than concerns already mentioned by others.

Graham Whitaker, NC Hospitality Alliance – Monitoring school start calendar and occupancy tax legislation.

NC Sports Leadership Council – No report provided.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Sen. Dave Craven said work is moving at a good pace. Gaming bill and school calendar are being discussed. Work also being done on Medicaid expansion and Compassionate Care Act. Blizzard commented he appreciated Sen. Phil Berger’s previous comments regarding enforcing the school start calendar bill.

EDPNC UPDATE

No report provided.

VISIT NC UPDATE

Marlise Taylor presented some of the latest research, including lodging reports and visitation trends. Margo Metzger noted “group media tours are back.” Also working with Moonshine & Motorsports, tagging NCDNCR but expanding itineraries. Interest in “set jetting” – media wanting to see film/TV sites. She also noted recent media successes. Wit Tuttell provided FilmNC update, noting 2022 was one of the best years in spending since the rebate program ended. Heidi Walters noted international travel is back concerning missions and tradeshow, naming several events and shows she has recently attended. While Group Travel is slower to rebound, RetireNC is seeing increased interest at consumer shows, including partner participation. She also provided updates to the Outdoor NC stewardship program. Scott Peacock provided a sneak preview of Visit NC’s new marketing campaign, which will be unveiled at the Visit NC Tourism Conference.

COMMERCE UPDATE

No report provided.

WELCOME CENTER UPDATE

Bryan Gupton noted traffic was down in 2022, mostly due to NCDOT closures. Staff is seeing an increase in assisting travelers with reservations, despite some centers having staffing issues. International visitation at centers is up. CLT traffic is up 7%.

CLOSING

Rolf Blizzard asked if there was any other business to discuss; little more was noted.

The next board meeting will be May 9, as the meeting will coincide with National Travel & Tourism Week.

Greg Walter made the motion to adjourn; seconded by Sen. Craven.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.