



**NORTH CAROLINA TRAVEL & TOURISM BOARD
MEETING MINUTES**

N.C. Travel & Tourism Board Meeting, May 22, 2024, 10:00 a.m.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Kimberly Albritton, Rolf Blizzard, Chris Chung, Sen. Dave Craven, Denny Edwards, Shannon Gilligan, Sen. Bobby Hanig, James Meacham, Lynn Minges, Lee Nettles, Steven Pasquantonio, Rep. Ray Pickett, Jessica Roberts, Greg Walter

MEMBERS ABSENT: Arthur Fisher, Rep. Charles Miller, Sec. Machelle Sanders, Vivek Tandon

LIAISONS, STAFF AND GUESTS PRESENT: Ashton English, Suzanne Brown, Guy Gaster, Scott Gilmore, Bryan Gupton, Kathy Prickett, Marlise Taylor, Wit Tuttell, Heidi Walters

Lee Nettles, acting as chairperson, called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. The meeting was held in-person and remotely.

WELCOME/COMMENTS FROM THE CHAIR

Roll call was taken of board members present. Nettles reminded members of the Ethics Statement, in accordance with Executive Order No. 35. He asked for approval of the November 2023 meeting minutes. James Meacham made the motion to approve, seconded by Denny Edwards; the minutes were unanimously approved.

Congratulations went to Visit NC for the results of visitor spending for 2023 in NC. Thanks were expressed to partners and the General Assembly for their support.

INDUSTRY PARTNER UPDATE

Rolf Blizzard, NC Travel & Tourism Coalition – Their main emphasis for next year is on tourism marketing dollars and school calendar. NCTTC did a poll in conjunction with NC Chamber and the result overwhelmingly supported schools starting the last week of August/after Labor Day.

In appreciation of Blizzard's time as Chairman of the NCTTB, Wit Tuttell presented him with a frame of North Carolina photos.

Lynn Minges, NC Restaurant & Lodging Assn. – The General Assembly has introduced a bill on human trafficking that would require every hotel employee to have training on human trafficking. Most major hotel brands are already doing this. Watching ABC omnibus bill in General Assembly. The Serving Careers campaign has had 164 million impressions on the ads; it has delivered more than 600,000 applications to NC businesses.

Continuing work on recurring issues, such as supporting Visit NC, school calendar and occupancy tax issues.

Jessica Roberts, NC Travel Industry Association – Some members of NCTIA met with NC Sen. Julie Mayfield to discuss occupancy tax usage; also met with NC Rep. John Bell regarding sports. Several members also met with their local General Assembly representatives.

James Meacham, Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina – Consistency for short-term rentals and occupancy tax collection is a challenge. Discussed letter being sent to counties/local municipalities proposing settlements. Discussion followed regarding need for uniformity, which will take a lot of work, as the problems will continue to grow; suggestion to consider possibly starting a sub-set group to get started.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Sen. Bobby Hanig noted the General Assembly has never gone without an ABC omnibus bill and believes the bill will pass this session. He noted the job situation is getting better in NC but he's hearing from businesses that, while more workers, many lack necessary skills, affordable housing still an issue. Sen. Dave Craven concurred the omnibus bill has much needed provisions, including reforms that will benefit small businesses. While media has reported a budget surplus, there is a divide between House and Senate regarding spending.

EDPNC UPDATE

Chris Chung echoed the congratulations for Visit NC for the 2023 visitor spending results. The EDPNC Board meeting next week will focus exclusively on the effects of tourism on NC's economy. Business Recruitment is hosting site selection consultants during the US Open in Pinehurst next month.

VISIT NC UPDATE

Marlise Taylor provided information on research-based strategies, including what's in Visit NC's research portfolio and how that data is used to make strategic marketing decisions.

Wit Tuttell noted PR successes from recent familiarization trips and media placements. In addition to reporting the partner program sales due to increased varied offerings; the goal is to get more partners engaged in more ways.

NC Film Office's Guy Gaster report film production spending, noting it's slowly but steadily rebounding from the writers and actors strikes. He also gave an update on recent and current productions. There's also a research study in effect looking at capacity that's basically a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis.

Heidi Walters discussed Cycle NC's Mountains to Coast ride, which Visit NC has always sponsored; five years ago, that sponsorship transitioned to Retire NC. [Retire NC also sponsors Cycle NC's Coast and Mountain rides.] She also noted the importance of Cycle NC's rides as

they touch so many Tier 1 and Tier 2 counties. Walters also reported on the German mission to promote the new Lufthansa flight [to RDU], including meetings with travel trade. Outdoor NC has just launched a new website and new social media handles.

COMMERCE UPDATE

No report provided.

WELCOME CENTER UPDATE

Bryan Gupton noted there is a lot of participation by tourism partners at NC Welcome Center events this week, in observance of National Travel & Tourism Week. He said the [newly reconstructed] I-95 South NC Welcome Center is expected to open around July 4. There are ongoing improvements at other Welcome Centers being done by NCDOT and several civic groups.

OTHER BUSINESS

No additional business.

The next NC Travel & Tourism Board meeting is Wednesday, August 21.

CLOSING

James Meacham made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Denny Edwards; the motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m.