

**Kings Mountain Tourism Development Authority**  
**March 21, 2023**

The Kings Mountain Tourism Development Authority met on Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 3:00 pm in the City Council Chambers. Meeting was called to order at 3:13 pm by Mike Butler with a quorum present. Mike welcomed and thanked everyone for being present at the meeting.

Attendance: Mike Butler, Chuck Kilroy, Sharon Horne, Rick Moore, Chris Johnson, Tracey Gaughan, Kemp Mauney (Alternate) and Vicki Thompson (Alternate). Brenda Lovelace participated via cell phone. Absent were Councilmember Jay Rhodes (Alternate), Al Patel (Quality Inn), and Leanne Halk (Holiday Inn Express).

Also present were Ellis Noell, TDA Director, Cynthia Cash, Deputy City Clerk and Jana Williams, Assistant Finance Director.

Agenda was approved by motion by Rick Moore and seconded by Tracey Gaughan. Vote was unanimous.

Minutes of February 21, 2023 meeting were approved by motion by Sharon Horne and seconded by Rick Moore. Vote was unanimous.

Finance Report was given by Jana Williams. She gave out copies of the report. There were no questions about the budget. Jana advised the board about turning in their expense report for the annual conference that they just attended.

Mike advised the Board that Christy Conner, Special Events Manager, resigned this morning.

**Old Business:**

- Discussion/Action – Visit NC Tourism Conference 2023. There were several comments. Chuck Kilroy said he thought it was a lot of great information about getting data from different sources. He said one thing he thought was of interest to the casino was about the happy hour law – liquor law, where they offer discount drinks during happy hour. He said the casino was interested in doing that. He said his understanding is that it has to pass by the individual jurisdictions so he guessed that Cleveland County would have to pass it. Vicki said that she thinks a lot of it has to do with how the ABC is regulated in NC because we self-regulate. Vicki said that there is so much data that the city, county and state use to identify your target tourism needs. She said we may want to find out more about this since KM is growing and developing. We want to know the folks that we need to talk to about bringing in tourism, hotels, restaurants, people coming to events, etc. We need to decide if we want to get it and how we want to pay for the information. Ellis said he will do some research because the county is involved with that and he will bring back some information. Sharon said KM has so much to offer with the parks, trails, casino, winery, Joy Theater, etc. and we have such a prime location that she feels like we could do a lot as far as bringing more people in. Ellis advised that he wants to propose a budget increase on the advertising for the TDA. There are a lot of things out there but it is going to cost some money. Kemp advised that he enjoyed the keynote speaker, Samantha Brown, who has a television show “Places to Love.” She mentioned that this is the year of the trail. At the conference, Ellis had a meeting with the NCTIA, our lobbying group and found out

some of the issues on the big scale – school calendar year, workforce development, things that are important. Ellis said that because tourism is economic development, he thinks the board needs to invite the Economic Development Director for the City of KM to be an ex-officio of the board, to give insight on the general economy and what is going on. He will come back at the next meeting and make an official proposal on that. Ellis also met with Wally Wasa, who is the manager of the Visitor's Centers. There were over \$9 million visitors that went through the welcome centers in NC. All the welcome centers have our brochures and he is going to check the inventory. Ellis also met with the writers of several magazines, media outlets and folks from UNC Public Television because they have NC Weekend and that is a real driver for travel and tourism. He said we have had them in KM for Liberty Mountain, Natural Watercolor Show at the Gallery at Southern Arts Depot and others. It really drives traffic to these locations. UNC Public Television is a great media outlet.

- Discussion/Action – Proposal from City of Kings Mountain Special Events Department for 45% of grant cycle budget, outside of the Kings Mountain TDA guideline application process. Discussion on this item was cancelled at this time. The golf cart is also on hold at this time. If it hasn't been purchased yet, it is not going to be.

### **New Business:**

- Discussion/Action – 2023/2024 Kings Mountain TDA Budget. There was no discussion on this item. Proposal will be done at next month's meeting.
- Rick Moore advised that he is resigning from the TDA Board effective today, March 21<sup>st</sup>. Said he has served many years and has enjoyed it. Said with his wife's health and other issues, he was resigning. Hopes everything keeps going well and keeps growing. Ellis said that Rick has done a fantastic job since he joined and he appreciates all his help. At one time, he was on the Governor's Board for the State Travel and Tourism. It was great to have KM represented through him. The board thanked him for what he had done and advised that they had enjoyed working with him.

### **Directors Report:**

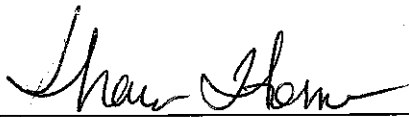
- Ellis advised that Motor Trend Magazine has something called a Hot Rod Power Tour. They are going to get about 600 of their participants to drop their hot rods. They will start in Atlanta, go to Charlotte, and then go to Bristol. He is going to try to bring them to KM between the Charlotte and Bristol stops and see if they can do a drive through or drive by stop in KM. He has reached out to them to see if they can get their marketing producers to have them come to KM.
- Ellis said there is an issue with occupancy tax, with some of the VRBO type businesses, especially Booking.com. He will talk with Chris Costner to see if there is any clarification on that.

Sharon asked about Rick Moore's position on the board. She wanted to know if one of the alternates could go in his place. Ellis advised that since Rick's position is represented by Hounds Campground and they have closed down, there would not be an open position on the board.

No further business. Next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 3:00 pm in Council Chambers. Motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 3:35 pm by Mike Butler and seconded by Chris Johnson. Vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Cash  
Deputy City Clerk

  
Sharon Horne, Secretary