

MINUTES
GASTONIA TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2013, 1:00 P.M.
GASTONIA CONFERENCE CENTER,
145 SOUTH MARIETTA STREET, GASTONIA, NC

The Gastonia Tourism Development Authority (GTDA), met on Tuesday, October 29, 2013, at 1:00 p.m. at the Gastonia Conference Center. Authority members in attendance were:

Nicole Bolt, Hampton Inn & Suites
John Bridgeman, Mayor
Jesse Cole, Gastonia Grizzlies
Ed Munn, City of Gastonia
Bill Owen, Gastonia Conference Center

Guests: Walt Israel, Gaston County Travel & Tourism
Crystal Thornburg, Time Warner Cable
Nancy Bollinger, Time Warner Cable

City staff members present were: Rachel Bagley, Managing Exec.-Mktg./Revitalization
Initiatives
Flip Bombardier, Assistant City Manager-Public
Infrastructure
Ash Smith, City Attorney
Melody Usery, Director of Financial Services

Mayor Bridgeman opened the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. Mayor Bridgeman asked if there was a motion to approve the minutes of the Gastonia Tourism Development Authority (GTDA) meeting of September 4, 2013. A motion was made by Mr. Cole and was seconded by Mr. Munn to approve the minutes. The GTDA voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the minutes of September 4, 2013.

ITEM 1: REVISED AD CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL:

Mr. Walt Israel, Gaston County Travel & Tourism, requested the GTDA reconsider a \$78,000 television ad campaign with Time Warner Cable (TWC) to raise awareness and promote tourism to the county. The initial proposal was presented to the GTDA on August 19, 2013. In order to compare the proposal of August 19, 2013, with the revised plan, Ms. Crystal Thornburg and Ms. Nancy Bollinger, from Time Warner Cable, presented additional information on the original proposal and the revised proposal. The revised campaign plan was developed to focus on reaching the markets identified by county hoteliers as primary tourist markets and would cost approximately \$65,500. The GTDA's portion of that cost would be approximately \$25,000.

While the TWC representatives provided the revised plan, Mr. Israel asked that the GTDA members vote to fund the previous plan of August 19 because it was the campaign his board had approved. Under the previous plan, GTDA's portion of the ad cost would be approximately \$29,000. At that time, the GTDA decided not to participate in the ad campaign and instead voted to establish a contract group sales effort that would focus on soliciting organizations, groups, companies, etc., that would yield tourism visits, specifically to Gastonia, that result in hotel bookings.

ITEM 2: SALES POSITION PROPOSAL:

On September 16, 2013, the GTDA subcommittee, consisting of Mr. Cole, Ms. Bolt, Mr. Owen and Ms. Bagley met to develop a job description, scope of work, and other details necessary to establish the sales position. Mr. Owen presented details of the meeting on behalf of the subcommittee regarding the sales position proposal to the Authority. This contracted sales position would concentrate on recruiting sports tournaments and other activities that would directly impact hotel occupancy.

AUTHORITY ACTION:

After much discussion about the Time Warner Cable ad campaign proposals and the sales position proposal, a motion was made by Mr. Owen to move forward with the implementation of a contracted sales position. After Mr. Munn seconded the motion, a vote was taken. Mayor Bridgeman, Mr. Munn, and Mr. Owen voted in the affirmative to accept the motion. Ms. Bolt voted against the motion. Mr. Cole abstained from voting, therefore, a failure to vote either way was counted in the affirmative. For that reason, the official result of the vote is 4-1 to move forward with the contract sales effort.

A follow-up meeting of the subcommittee was scheduled for Wednesday, November 13, 2013, at 2:00 p.m. to determine the next steps in contracting with a company, persons, or person to solicit tourism group sales that will increase bookings for Gastonia hotels (especially on the weekends). Ms. Bolt suggested a deadline of January 1, 2014, to implement the position.

ITEM 3: OTHER BUSINESS

With no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:55 p.m.