



Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
A Joint Meeting of the Public Authority and Nonprofit Corporation
Explore Asheville – 27 College Place, Asheville

Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, July 26, 2023

- Present (Voting):** Brenda Durden, Chair; Matthew Lehman, Vice Chair; Kathleen Mosher, HP Patel, Larry Crosby, Andrew Celwyn, Elizabeth Putnam, Scott Patel
- Absent (Voting):** Michael Lusick
- Present (Ex-Officio):** Buncombe County Commissioner Terri Wells, Asheville Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore
- Staff:** Vic Isley, Jennifer Kass-Green, Michael Kryzanek, Carli Adams, Penelope Whitman, Kimberly Puryear, Tiffany Thacker, Julia Simpson, Ashley Greenstein, Josh Jones, Glenn Ramey, Connie Holliday, Shawn Boone, Kathryn Dewey
- BC Finance:** Mason Scott, Buncombe County/BCTDA Interim Fiscal Agent
- In-Person Attendees:** Colleen Swanson, Meetings Database Institute (MDI)
Chris Corl, Debra Campbell; City of Asheville
Brian DeWine, Asheville Tourists
Randy Claybrook, Asheville Bed & Breakfast Association
Rick Bell, Asheville Buncombe Hotel Association
Sharon Tabor, Jason Burk; Black Mountain-Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce
Chris Smith, Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission
John Ellis, Prior BCTDA Board Member
Rubi Molina, Lacy Cross; Movement Bank
Olivia Ward, OnWard Digital Media
Dave Nutter, Planner
Jason Sanford, Ashevegas.com
Chase Davis, Mountain Xpress
Sarah Honosky, Asheville Citizen Times
- Online Attendees:** Nick Kepley, Sha'Linda Pruitt, Khal Khoury, Emily Crosby, Tina Porter, Anna Harris, McKenzie Provost, Cass Herrington, Ali Wainright; Explore Asheville
Jim Muth, TPDF Committee
Scott Kerchner, Element Downtown
Tina Kinsey, Asheville Regional Airport
Diane Rogers, Pinecrest Bed & Breakfast
Chip Craig, Greybeard Rentals
Zach Wallace, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce
Madison Davis, Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission
Chelsey Hett, Love the Green
Andrew Nissley, Niche Core LLC
Olivia Terrell, The Indigo Road Hospitality Group

Executive Summary of Meeting Minutes

- Durden called to order the joint regular meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority, and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation, at 9:04 a.m. Introductions were made around the room.
- Isley acknowledged new board leadership.
- Minutes from the June 28, 2023, BCTDA meeting were approved with an 8-0 vote.
- The preliminary June 2023 financial reports were reviewed and approved with an 8-0 vote.
- Isley provided her President & CEO's report.
- The TPDF Committee's Major Works Pathway funding recommendation for McCormick Field was approved with a 7-1 vote.
- Michael Kryzanek, Carli Adams, and Colleen Swanson presented on business development efforts.
- Kimberly Puryear provided a status update on the Black Cultural Heritage Trail.
- Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore and Commissioner Terri Wells gave brief reports.
- With an 8-0 vote, the BCTDA meeting adjourned at 11:11 a.m.

Call to Order of the Joint BCTDA Meeting

Durden called to order the joint regular meeting of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), a Public Authority, and BCTDA, a Nonprofit Corporation, at 9:04 a.m.

Durden said the meeting was being livestreamed. She noted that the agenda and meeting documents are on [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com) and were emailed to everyone who registered via Zoom by 8:00 a.m. Additional materials, including the PowerPoint, are posted after the meeting.

Introductions were made around the room.

Isley recognized and thanked the outgoing chair, Mosher. Isley welcomed the new chair, Durden, as well as vice chair, Lehman, and nonprofit treasurer, HP Patel.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Crosby made a motion to approve the June 28, 2023, regular meeting minutes. Celwyn seconded the motion. There was no discussion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

June 2023 Preliminary Financial Reports

Mason Scott, BCTDA interim fiscal agent, presented the preliminary June 2023 financial reports. The final June reports will be presented in the fall in conjunction with the annual audit.

Lehman made a motion to approve the preliminary June 2023 financial reports as presented. Crosby seconded the motion. A vote was taken; with all in favor, the motion carried 8-0.

President & CEO Report

Isley acknowledged the BCTDA's 40th anniversary, shared events in July and August that Explore Asheville supported, and presented June lodging occupancy and demand compared to prior years. Isley reflected on mid-year lodging performance, compared Buncombe County to other markets, and mentioned anticipated hotel openings. Isley concluded with key takeaways and emphasized the importance of shining a spotlight on Asheville; she played a new 60-second commercial spot.

Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) – Major Works Pathway

McCormick Field Funding Decision

Durden reminded everyone that the board discussed the TPDF Committee's funding recommendation for McCormick Field in the prior month's meeting. The recommendation was to grant the project \$22.95 million (including a \$1.95 million grant reallocation of the Coxe Avenue Green Street grant and \$1.4 million of debt service per year for 15 consecutive years) contingent on additional terms that were outlined. Durden explained this would be a monumental investment. Staff answered all questions.

Lehman then made a motion to approve the investment for the McCormick Field Major Works project as recommended by the Product Development Committee. Mosher seconded the motion. A vote was taken. Six board members voted in favor and Celwyn and Scott Patel opposed.

Isley pointed out that two-thirds of the BCTDA's current voting members must approve TPDF expenditures due to the new legislative requirements; thus, the 6-2 vote meant the motion failed. Additional discussion followed, and those who voted in favor explained their reasons for doing so and those who opposed explained their concerns.

Scott Patel suggested reconsideration of the motion and a revote. There was discussion about postponing reconsideration until all voting board members were present but concern was raised that doing so would affect the project's timeline. Durden agreed with the reconsideration and calling another vote. Upon the second vote, seven voted in favor, including Scott Patel; Celwyn remained opposed. As a result, the motion passed.

Business Development Update – Group Sales Performance and Marketing

Business Development Overview

Michael Kryzanek, vice president of business development for Explore Asheville, introduced himself and shared his background. He outlined the guiding principles for business development. He explained the business development cycle and specific efforts of the department. He gave an overview of team members, recapped FY23 achievements, and showed performance compared to other markets. Kryzanek then shared information about Asheville Business Events Council and about securing AdventureELEVATE 2024.

Group Marketing

Carli Adams, group marketing manager for Explore Asheville, explained how the marketing team supports business development efforts. Adams spoke about recent work and new tools.

Meetings Database Institute Analysis

Colleen Swanson, executive vice president for Meetings Database Institute (MDI), said MDI has worked with Explore Asheville for three years. Swanson provided background on MDI and then presented groups arrivals and data trends for FY24, which considered market segments, feeder markets, group sizes, arrival months, lead times, etc.

Black Cultural Heritage Trail Update

Penelope Whitman, vice president of Partnership & Destination Management for Explore Asheville, stated her background. Whitman then introduced Kimberly Puryear, destination project manager for Explore Asheville. Puryear shared the history of the Black Cultural Heritage Trail (formerly African American Heritage Walking Trail) and provided a progress report and previews of the storylines and designs. Puryear outlined the project's next steps; the anticipated completion is November 2023.

Asheville City Council Update

Vice Mayor Kilgore reported on recent city-related business, including the prioritization of affordable housing and the latest housing development approvals.

Buncombe County Commission Update

Commissioner Wells reported on recent county-related business, including broadband expansion, the ribbon cutting at Enka Recreation Destination, school investments, and new wildlife safety ordinances.

Miscellaneous Business

There was no miscellaneous business presented at this meeting.

Comments from the General Public

No one from the public signed up to make virtual or in-person comments during this meeting.

Adjournment

HP Patel made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and Crosby seconded the motion. With all in favor, the motion carried 8-0. The meeting was adjourned at 11:11 a.m.

The PowerPoint presentation and relevant documents are on file with Explore Asheville and are posted on AshevilleCVB.com.

The next joint BCTDA meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 30, 2023, beginning at 9:00 a.m., in the library of The North Carolina Arboretum, located at 100 Frederick Law Olmsted Way.

Respectfully submitted,



Julia Simpson, Manager, Executive & Strategy