

NORTHEAST GEORGIA MOUNTAINS TRAVEL ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING

Left Nut Brewery, Gainesville

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

Attendees: Teka Earnhardt, Hilda Thomason, David Zunker, Tobie Chandler, Jerry Brown, Margaret McLean, Vicki Wineland, Regina Dyer, Vicki Starnes

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 am by President, Tobie Chandler

Meeting Minutes: The February Board and general membership meeting minutes were reviewed and approved. Motion to approve was made by Vicki Starnes and seconded by Teka Earnhardt. Minutes will stand as submitted.

Treasurer's Report: Teka Earnhardt reported that the organization is "in great shape," and the surplus that was originally thought existed from the last meeting was due to co-op fees that had not been paid. There are a few minimal Chautauqua-related payments still due to be received. Steve Chandler has not submitted his travel expenses yet and Tobie will email a reminder to get those submitted.

The second petty cash bank account that was opened for the debit card was discussed and Tobie is working with the bank to reverse the monthly service charges that were incurred. Teka is not keeping this account on quick books, but is keeping up with it on an excel spreadsheet.

A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by David Zunker and seconded by Margaret McLean.

Teka will check on any 2018 co-op payments not received and let partners know, if applicable.

Committee Reports:

Education: Tobie informed that the May 9th meeting will be held in Dahlonega. David stated the lunch would be held at the 1888 House and then the group will walk 2 blocks to have dessert at the Tumlin House. These are both event venues and the owners of both properties will present the program.

The next educational program is a webinar scheduled for June 13th. Jerry Brown will ask Chris Cavanaugh about participating in this and if not available, then Tobie will reach out to Laurie Rowe.

Co-Op: Regional Co-Op program is being managed again by Margaret McLean who reported that she will be sending out information with details with the goal to start production in May for the 2019 program. Basically, one photograph will be used in all media so she advised all participants to be thinking about what they want to submit for their destination.

Teka briefed the group on an advertising opportunity with Garden and Gun and although no exact details are available right now, she wants to gauge interest in a regional co-op, however, this is not to be confused with the state co-op as no matching funds would be available.

Membership: Vicki Wineland stated that 102 emails to members are sent, however, the exact number of members are closer to 87. Regina asked for a digital version of the membership brochure which is available on the website, but Vicki can send via email. Since it is time to reprint the regional brochure, this is a good time to also do a membership campaign.

Vicki Wineland stated that we own the rights to our brochure which was done by Lifespings and she can start the bidding process for this. Several printers were suggested and Tobie asked that we include in the RFP that we do not want a 10% overrun.

New Business: Since Jeff Skelton resigned from the board effective in February, the group discussed a farewell gift to be presented at the May meeting. Vicki Wineland will make sure he is invited to this meeting. His departure has left the Vice President position open. Margaret McLean nominated Hilda Thomason with a second by Vicki Starnes and all approved. Congratulations Hilda on this new board position. This now opens a member at large position and it will be announced to the general membership for anyone that may be interested in joining the board.

Cliff Climber award: Tobie distributed copies of the nomination form that High Country uses with some suggestions for revising this and the group discussed best ways to solicit nominations. It was suggested that each time a meeting reminder is sent that the form be attached. Tobie will check with Cheryl or Candace for any previous criteria that was established for this award and the respective categories (individual, organizations, etc). The consensus was to rename this award the Top of the Mountain award. Vicki Wineland will work on drafting a new nomination form to be posted on the website and also attached to member emails.

Unfinished Business: Facebook for members only was discussed and Teka offered for their summer intern to work on establishing this and doing 3-5 weekly posts promoting members. After much discussion, the name of the page selected was *Travel Georgia Mountains* and Vicki Wineland will reserve that name for the association.

Motion made to adjourn the Board meeting and join the gathering membership for lunch and the day's program. Adjourned at 11:30 am.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

President, Tobie Chandler welcomed the group and instructed everyone that El Tacoman was open for lunch. The business meeting began at 12:30 and Tobie thanked Regina Dyer for coordinating the meeting. Regina introduced Mannie Carrillo (El Tacoman) and introduced Richard Labriola, General Manager of the Hilton Garden Inn and Chair of the Gainesville CVB.

Mr. Labriola welcomed the members to Gainesville's Left Nut Brewery. Following the welcome, Tobie introduced the board members and announced the member-at-large opening on the board for anyone that may be interested in the position. She thanked all that attended Winter Chautauqua in March and informed that the travel association would be hosting this conference again in 2020. If any communities are interested in hosting this, please let her know.

The next meeting will be held at the 1888 House and the Tumlin House in Dahlonega on May 9th.

Cheryl Smith reminded the group to let her know if they are not receiving her monthly tourism reports via email and stressed the importance of updating listings on Exploregeorgia.org. In late May the state will be pulling the listings for the Georgia Travel Guide. She also informed she is working on a Georgia Wine Trail brochure. Two FAM tours will be coming through the region; in late May a German writer and in June a UK FAM tour.

Teka announced the co-op advertising opportunity with Garden and Gun to the membership and anyone interested should let her know. Details will be forthcoming in a couple weeks once she can gauge interest from the region.

Regina introduced special guest, Pap Data, owner of Left Nut Brewery who shared his journey of love, pain and endurance to develop the brewery. Although he originally thought he would locate near his home in Forsyth County; Hall County and the City of Gainesville saw the benefits of having a brewery and were easy to work with so he located his business here. They just celebrated their 2 year anniversary. He proudly announced that Kroger had approved distributing his brew in all their stores. It is currently distributed in Georgia and South Carolina, but by third quarter will also be in central and northern Virginia.

The brewery is located in the former 1927 Johnson & Johnson textile mill. The area has seen a resurgence of younger people moving into the area as well. He really considers himself as a stakeholder in the community and holds charitable events, such as the Shamrock event which is a fundraiser for Cystic Fibrosis.

The meeting concluded after lunch and door prizes.