

NORTHEAST GEORGIA MOUNTAINS TRAVEL ASSOCIATION BOARD MEETING

Granddaddy Mimm's Distillery & Gift Shop

Wednesday, February 14, 2018

Attendees: Teka Earnhardt, Cheryl Smith, Jeff Skelton, Hilda Thamason, David Zunker, Tobie Chandler, Jerry Brown, Margaret McLean, Vickie Wineland, Candace Lee

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 am by President Tobie Chandler

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

Treasurer's Report: Teka Earnhardt reported that the organization is "in great shape", and, although some Chautauqua-related expenses are expected, with the current surplus, some consideration should be given to advertising in the fall. A motion to approve the treasurer's report was made by Jeff Skelton and seconded by Candace Lee.

Reports:

Update: Jeff Skelton reported that he had been checking on the status of Regional Map Guides, and that there are plenty in stock, so there is no need to reprint at this time. Candace Lee suggested that attention should be turned to producing a new guide for 2018/2019.

Education: Candace Lee reported that she has added a speaker from Piedmont College for the October meeting. She also said that Chateau Elan is questionable for the August meeting and that alternative locations are being considered. Topics and speakers are being explored for the Holiday meeting in Gainesville in December – suggestions included Braselton Brewing (Cheryl Smith will reach out). The Community House in Cornelia is also a possibility for the December meeting.

Co-Op: Regional Co-Op program is being managed again by Margaret McLean – looking at a multi-media campaign, with room for 12 partners. Because of re-structuring of the program at the state level, there is \$25,000 less money available this year than last – as a result participation by the co-op partners will be more expensive. She also reported that the structure is less flexible this year than last year, but she is working on creating a product and marketing plan that will be acceptable and advantageous for all. Emphasis in her planning has been on reaching all market segments with a variety of strategies and platforms – television, print, radio, digital. The core concept, she said, is putting a program together that results in each participant getting more coverage than they could get on their own – reaching Gen-X & Millennials, but also reaching the Baby Boomers.

Winter Chautauqua Update: There was discussion about how to send out notices for events like the Winter Chautauqua. Option 1: EventBrite and Option 2: PayPal. One suggestion was to go back to PayPal. Cost for both is about the same. EventBrite sends invoices direct and copies on calendar and majority board opinion was that EventBrite is more user-friendly. Hilda Thomason made a motion to stay with EventBrite; seconded by Margaret McLean. Motion carried.

New Business – Jeff Skelton announced that his business – Georgia Mountain Brochures -- has been sold, and he and his wife will be moving to the Round Rock region west of Austin, Texas. The new owner is someone who knows the business and knows Northeast Georgia – Vicki Wineland. Congratulations all around, and best wishes to Jeff and his family. With both Jeff and Vicki out of the room, a vote was taken to extend the brochure distribution contract with Georgia Mountain Brochures – motion made by Candace Lee to continue the contract – seconded by Margaret McLean. Motion approved, contract extended.

Motion made to adjourn the Board meeting and join the gathering membership for lunch and the day's program. Adjourned.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Special guests for the general membership meeting at Granddaddy Mimms included Graham Sweeney, Tourism Account Manager for Explore Georgia and the Georgia Department of Economic Development; and Lisa Love, Division Director for Explore Georgia. Ms. Love started the meeting off welcoming everyone, and reminding those in attendance, that in addition to great spirits and a rich history at Granddaddy Mimm's, the venue has a lot of music talent among its staff as well – in Tommy Townsend, grandson of Granddaddy Mimms, singer, songwriter and a former member of the Waylor's, a Waylon Jennings Band, now known as Waymore's Outlaws. Ms. Love, a walking encyclopedia of Georgia Music and music history, encouraged Townsend to sing a few tunes at the end of the event, and prevailed.

Graham Sweeney was introduced to provide the most up to date information about the Georgia promotional partnership – aka co-op. He reminded those in attendance of changes in the program, deadlines upcoming (March 1 being the opening day for applications) and details about how various matching aspects of the program were put in place and how they will work. He described that the program is a 1:1 match for individual and group participants, but that match partners have been vetted and decided by Explore Georgia. A total of \$400,000 is available in the program, covering digital, print and other media.

After lunch and door prizes, Tommy Townsend played a few tunes.