

Cultural Affairs and Tourism Citizen Advisory Committee

Work Session

Saturday, January 5, 2019

Springhill Suites

Attendance: Elizabeth Hovell (Chair), Marc Galvin, Angel Jackson, Tommy Malcom

Absent: Sarah Cumuze, Dean Bright, Stephanie VanDyck

Staff: Alex Perschka, Kristy Curtis

Open the Meeting: A motion was moved to begin the meeting and it was established that the group had quorum.

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved. Motion/Second: Angel Jackson/Mark Galvin

Discussion: The discussion centered on the Tourism Office transitioning from a Department of County Government to that of a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), the specifics of which have yet to be determined.

- This group (the CAT) would presumably cease as a County Commissioner's Advisory Committee and become 'something else' – TBD – which would be created along with the DMO to support similar activities.
- The change to a DMO, encouraged by the Commission, would potentially free additional funds to be expended on tourism activities, though there is no guarantee as to the recipient of those funds.

Tourism Director' Report: Alex Perschka, Tourism Director, provided his 2017 summary report to the group. Statistics included ~2200 visitors and ~\$43 million generated by tourists in Oconee (up from \$41million the year before). Alex also reported that the Tourism Office had applied to the Georgia Department of Economic Development: Tourism office for the Tourism Product Development grant to renovate the Welcome Center. This had been one of the primary recommendations of the Tourism Product Development Team from the State Office after their visit to Oconee County.

Other Topics of Discussion: Before closing the meeting the group also talked briefly about the following topics:

- Georgia Main Street Program– Questions came up about this program and if it was something that Oconee should consider and what resources it could bring to the community.
- Artists' Meeting – The group talked about the original meeting with local artists and how we should continue interacting with that group of individuals.
- Murals – The group discussed the idea of facilitating the creation of murals throughout the county (in various municipalities). Ideas included tapping into local artists, UGA art students, local students and teachers, etc., who could help in the design and creation of the murals.
- The group closed with conversations around meeting with Justin Kirouac and Chairman Daniels to understand their vision of tourism and economic development in Oconee and how we could help support that vision.

Next meeting: March 14, 2019 at 6:00 PM at the Tourism Office, Watkinsville.

Minutes submitted by Angel Jackson