

**Town of Seven Devils
Tourism Development Authority Meeting
January 23, 2024**

The Town of Seven Devils Tourism Development Authority met for an organizational meeting on Tuesday, January 23, 2024, at Town Hall. Chair Anne Fontaine, Member Rick Blonshine, Member Leigh Sasse and Member Alejandra Fernandez attended in person. Town Manager Johnathan Harris, Finance Officer Helga Sappington, Parks & Recreation Director Jewel McKinney were present.

Call to Order

Town Manager Johnathan Harris called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.

Nomination of Chair

Anne Fontaine was nominated Chair. She accepted her nomination. Richard Blonshine was nominated Vice Chair. He accepted his nomination.

Adopt Agenda and Approve Minutes

Chair Anne Fontaine added a new business item "Traffic Control/ Wrecker Service" to the agenda. A motion to approve the minutes from the November 28, 2023, meeting was made by Member Rick Blonshine and seconded by Member Leigh Sasse; all approved. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

- Town Manager Johnathan Harris updated the TDA members on the location for the additional Town Webcam. Installation will start when the weather permits.
- Town Manager Johnathan Harris and Parks & Recreation Director Jewel McKinney updated the TDA Members on the PARTF Grant for the Park at Seven Devils. Bid packages are being prepared by the Town engineer. Playground and Dog Park construction will start when the weather permits.
- There was a discussion about the need of additional funding for off-duty Police Officer's during the winter holiday season. The contracted off-duty Police Officer's would continue to help direct traffic to support tourism safety during peak hours throughout the winter holiday season. The TDA Members will revisit additional funding request once the original funding request of (\$15,000.00) is exhausted.
- Recreation Director Jewel McKinney updated the TDA Members on the positive feedback of the 2023 Lite the Nite. She suggested for the TDA to purchase tables and tablecloths to avoid the rental cost in the future.
- The TDA Members revisited the discussion about having an artist do a rendering of Seven Devils Town Hall for prints. Parks & Recreation Director Jewel McKinney will reach out to local artists to get an estimate.
- The TDA Members revisited the discussion about a funding request from the Parks and Recreation Committee for Seven Devils T-Shirts. The T-Shirts would be sold at the Music on the Lawn concerts and other town events to promote tourism in the Town of Seven Devils. Parks & Recreation Director Jewel McKinney is waiting for T-Shirt samples.

New Business

- There was a discussion about the need for Traffic Control/ Wrecker Service during heavy snow. Town Manager Johnathan Harris informed the TDA Members that there was an issue with people wrecking and abandoning their cars blocking the road. The issue was caused by tourists not having the right cars/ equipment/ knowledge to drive in heavy snow. It caused the road to be shut down for hours and days at some locations. DOT was unable to plow, and people were stuck along the roadside. He was unable to get a wrecker service from the area to move cars. He stressed the need for a contract with a wrecker service and a fenced in lot close by to store the cars to keep the roads open for emergencies. The TDA Members agreed to fund it since the issue is caused by tourism in The Town of Seven Devils. Town Manager Johnathan Harris will reach out to local wrecker companies to get an estimate.

Email Approvals:

- Blowing Rock Chamber Visitor Map (\$600.00)
- Avery Chamber Visitor Guide (\$600.00)
- Blowing Rock Chamber Visitor Guide (\$350.00)

Financial Statement

Member Rick Blonshine made a motion to approve the financial statements; Member Alejandra Fernandez; all approved. Motion carried.

Citizen Comments

Wayne Bonomo expressed concerns about the planned Dog Park regarding aggressive dogs and vaccinations.

Larry Fontaine suggested for the Town to prepare better for possible emergency situations. Last weekend the DOT wasn't prepared for the snow. That resulted in the closure of several roads in the Town of Seven Devils. The Community Center sheltered approximately 45 people while roads were closed. There was also a discussion about salting the town roads and the TDA covering the extra cost to purchase salt. There was a suggestion to communicate more with the rental companies to prepare their renters for bad road conditions.

Board Comments

Member Leigh Sasse thanked the employees for their efforts during winter conditions in the Town of Seven Devils.

Chair Anne Fontaine suggested a new survey to focus on new projects as The Park at Seven Devils project will be completed by the end of three years.

Adjourn

At 9:55 am, Member Leigh Sasse made a motion to adjourn; Member Alejandra Fernandez seconded; all approved. Motion carried.