

TOWN OF ABINGDON
TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Tuesday, August 13, 2024, at 9AM
Barter Smith Stage (Stage II)
110 West Main St. Abingdon, VA 24210
Meeting Minutes

A. Welcome - Chairman called the meeting to Order: Time: 9:00 am

B. Roll Call

Members Present:

Amber Fiorini, Danny Owen, David Dalton, Betsy White, , Tina Murray, Dwayne Anderson - *Ex-Officio*, Neta Farmer - *Ex-Officio*

Members Absent:

Hana Eichin

Quorum Present? Yes

Guests Present: DeeDee Cole, Loren Zehr, Mike Henningsen, and Janice Thayer

Town Staff Present: Mike Cochran, Mayana Rice, Isaiah Thomas, Jamie Barker, Chad Thompson, and Diana Blackburn.

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

- June 4, 2024, Meeting Minutes
- July 22, 2024, Meeting Minutes

Motion by Dwayne Anderson, seconded by Tina Murry to approve the June and July minutes.
Motion carried by unanimous vote.

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

E. AGENDA ITEMS

Abingdon Town Council approved lowering the number of members for the TAC from 15 to 9 to make reaching a quorum would be easier.

- **Committee Appointment** – Betsy White was appointed to fill the Arts & Culture – William King Museum of Art slot.

- **Election of Officers: Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary**

- **Nominations from the floor**

Dwayne Anderson Nominated Amber Fiorini for Chair and David Dalton for Vice Chair,

Seconded by Tina Murry. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Jamie Barker, Town of Abingdon, will serve as the Secretary.

- **Staff Updates**

- **Marketing – Chad Thompson**

- The town is in the process of creating a new website, completing the information for a walking tour, and adding new information to the visitor guide.
 - A new grant for a podcast for the town has been granted, it will focus on different pillars of tourism.
 - New drone shots of Main Street to be taken soon.

- **Visitor Services – Diana Blackburn**

- 12% increase in visitors June to July.
 - Community Day the first Saturday of the VHF was busy with 260 people in the door of the Fields-Penn House.
 - Town wide yard sale on August 17, 2024, with 49 locations listed on the map.
 - The department is working to hire a 3rd person to serve as the Tourism Coordinator.

- **Member Updates**

- Work is still on going on with the mountain bike park project.
 - The groundbreaking ceremony for the William King renovations held on August 20.
 - A new collection of Animal art is coming to the William King Museum.
 - William King does not anticipate closing during the renovations, which is planned to last through the end of 2025.
 - The call for vendors for the Mistletoe market is almost closed.
 - Highlands Festival finished with no problems. Plans for Abingdon in October ongoing.
 - The Muster Grounds had a record number of new people using the forge for the first time. They are also working on helping people build their family tree, that heritage tourism is on the rise.
 - There will be filming at the Muster Grounds for a PBS documentary on the March to King Mountain.
 - The Barter will finish its summer season and close for two week before the fall shoes start on September 1.

F. OTHER BUSINESS - None

G. NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, September 3, 2024, 3pm, at Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator, 851 French Moore Jr., Blvd, Abingdon, VA 24210

H. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to Adjourn by Betsy White, Seconded by David Dalton. Passed by unanimous vote.