

# Minutes

## TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

### Regular meeting

5:30 p.m. February 12, 2025

Board Meeting Room of Town Hall Annex, 105 E. Corbin St.



Present: Chair and Commissioner Meaghun Darab, Dani Black and Victoria Pace

Staff: Planning and Economic Development Manager  
Shannan Campbell  
Planning Technician Dakotah Kimbrough

#### 1. Call to order

Chair Meaghun Darab called the meeting to order at 5:39 p.m. and confirmed the presence of a quorum.

#### 2. Agenda changes and approval

There were no proposed changes.

Motion: Member Victoria Pace moved to approve. Member Dani Black seconded.

Vote: 3-0.

#### 3. Minutes review and approval

Manager Campbell had no minutes to provide this session, noting there would be several sets for approval at the next meeting. She explained that Kimbrough was assisting her in getting minutes drafted from previous meeting audio files.

#### 4. Action items

##### 1. Appoint a Vice Chair

Black praised Pace for her efforts during her tenure as vice-chair.

Motion: Black moved to reappoint Pace as Vice-chair. Darab seconded.

Vote: 3-0.

##### 2. Adopt a 2025 Meeting Schedule

Campbell presented the proposed meeting schedule for 2025, which was included in the packet. She asked if the dates worked for everyone present. The board members confirmed that the dates worked for them. Campbell mentioned that she would add the dates to their calendars, as she needed all three members present at the meetings.

Motion: Pace moved to adopt the 2025 meeting schedule. Black seconded.

Vote: 3-0.

##### 3. Special Projects & Partnerships: Hillsborough Seafest 2025

Kevin McKiernan, representing the Hillsborough Seafest, presented information about the proposed event. He explained that the Hillsborough Seafest was formerly the Efland Seafood Festival, which wanted to move to

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Hillsborough to attract a larger audience from the wider area. The event would partner with Meals on Wheels Orange County as the beneficiary.

Kevin discussed the following key points:

- The event was still being worked out with the farmers' market, as there were overlapping use of space
- The carnival aspect had been removed from the event plans
- The festival would focus exclusively on seafood, with nearly 100 vendors lined up
- Live music and a Frisbee dog competition were planned as entertainment
- The organizers aimed to benefit local businesses by cross-promoting events and working with local establishments
- The event was tentatively scheduled for May 16-17, 2025
- The proposed hours were 5 p.m. to 8:30 or 9 p.m. on Friday, and 9 or 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Saturday.
- The organizers were working on parking solutions, including potential shuttle service
- The event would be a plate sale format, with pre-sale tickets and pre-made plates
- There would be a beer garden with pricing structured not to compete with local establishments
- Local vendors would be prioritized and not charged vendor fees
- The organizers requested \$10,000 for radio and social media advertising

The board members asked questions and expressed concerns about:

- The impact on the farmers' market and local businesses
- Parking and traffic management
- The need for proper permits and approvals
- The importance of including all local hotels and short-term rentals in promotions
- The potential economic impact on local businesses during the event

Motion: Pace moved to approve \$10,000 in funding for the Hillsborough Seafest 2025, contingent on the event obtaining all necessary permits and reaching an amicable arrangement with the farmers' market. Black seconded.

Vote: 3-0.

## 5. Discussion items

### A. Update on holiday decorations ordered

Campbell reported that holiday decorations had been ordered and displayed, including large present boxes to replace deteriorated ones from the previous year. The cost was approximately \$6,000 to \$7,000, with shipping costs of almost \$1,000. Additional decorations were purchased for the visitor center, including a tree and light-up gingerbread people, costing less than \$300.

Campbell mentioned that there was still money left in the holiday decor line item and suggested purchasing outdoor green garland with battery-powered lights to decorate metal fencing and handrails around town. She indicated that she would have to verify with the business owners that they were OK with this idea.

### B. Update on cultural performing arts/feasibility

Campbell provided an update on the cultural performing arts feasibility study. She reported that she had been in discussions with Katie at the Orange County Arts Commission regarding procurement for the study. They were considering the land at the Hillsborough train station as a potential location for the Cultural Performing Arts Center. Campbell emphasized the importance of completing the feasibility study quickly to present to the town board and other stakeholders and demonstrate the project's viability.

### C. Update on STR/Home Occupations

Campbell reported that the ordinance for short-term rentals and home occupations had been updated to explicitly indicate that STRs are home occupations, and an FAQ had been created. She mentioned that they had hired a code enforcement contractor to address complaints about short-term rentals and to work on getting home occupation permits for businesses operating without them.

## **6. Monthly reports**

### **A. Tourism Staff Updates**

- High-quality photography has been obtained for marketing purposes through a local photographer
- A marketing opportunity with WRAL was taken advantage of, resulting in a promotional video for Hillsborough, which was shared
- The TDA members were reappointed to their positions
- The fiscal year 2024 ended with \$130,000 in occupancy tax revenue, which was \$10,000 more than in FY 2023

### **2. TDA Member Comments & Updates**

Board members expressed appreciation for Campbell's and Amanda Boyd's work. They also discussed potential marketing opportunities related to the Virginia International Raceway (VIR) events and the possibility of arranging transportation between Hillsborough and nearby attractions.

## **7. Adjournment**

Darab adjourned the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dakotah Kimbrough  
 Planning Technician  
 Staff support to the Hillsborough Tourism Development Authority

Approved: May 21, 2025