

# Minutes

## TOURISM BOARD

### Regular meeting

5:30 p.m. January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026

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



**Present:** Chair Victoria Pace, Vice-Chair Megan Kimball,  
Rainbow Cabbage, Barney Caton, Scott Czechlewski,  
Smita Patel, and Eryk Pruitt

**Absent:** Meaghun Darab

**Staff:** Planning and Economic Development Manager Shannan Campbell  
Planning Technician Dakota Kimbrough

#### 1. Call to order

Chair Victoria Pace called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. with the presence of a quorum.

#### 2. Agenda changes and approval

**Motion:** Member Caton moved to approve the agenda as presented. Member Patel seconded.  
**Vote:** 6-0.

#### 3. Minutes review and approval

The minutes from November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, were presented for approval. No changes were suggested.

**Motion:** Member Pruitt moved approval of the November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, minutes as submitted. Member Czechlewski seconded.  
**Vote:** 6-0.

#### 4. Presentations

- A. New board member interview- Spencer Welborn (Eno River Brewing)  
Planning and Economic Development Manager Shannan Campbell introduced Spencer Welborn, who had applied to fill a vacant seat for a food and beverage tax remitter on the Tourism Board.

Spencer Welborn introduced himself as co-owner of Eno River Brewing, which opened approximately 2½ years ago. He shared that he has been a Hillsborough resident since 2010 but has had connections to Hillsborough his entire life, having grown up near the Orange County/Durham County line. Before opening the brewery, he worked in higher education at UNC.

Mr. Welborn expressed his interest in getting involved with the community and mentioned that he completed the Government 101 course last fall. He emphasized his belief that Hillsborough offers unique and genuine tourism opportunities compared to neighboring jurisdictions. He noted that he would bring a

valuable perspective to the board, having both grown up visiting Hillsborough for events like Hog Day and now operating a business in town.

Following his presentation, board members introduced themselves to Mr. Welborn. Campbell noted that the Tourism Board would discuss the potential appointment later in the meeting.

## 5. Discussion/Action items

### A. 2026 Tourism Board Regular Meeting Schedule Adoption

Shannan Campbell presented the proposed 2026 meeting schedule. She noted that unlike some years, there were no conflicts requiring date shifts. There was discussion about a potential conflict with the June 1st meeting, as it falls near Memorial Day weekend. Board members agreed to adopt the schedule as presented, with the understanding they could revisit the June date if attendance issues arose closer to that time. Campbell emphasized the importance of having a quorum for the June meeting due to budget adoption requirements.

Motion: Member Caton moved to adopt the proposed 2026 meeting schedule. Member Czechlewski seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

### B. FY 27 Initial Draft Budget & FY 25/26 Revenue Comparisons

Campbell presented an initial draft of the FY 27 budget for discussion purposes. She explained that the numbers for contract partners were placeholders from the previous year, as decisions about those allocations would be made by the board during future meetings. She highlighted several potential tourism projects for the board to consider:

- Calvin/Nash Street kiosk cost-share signage project with the Town of Hillsborough, which would place informational kiosks at the new Riverwalk entrance and in the West Hillsborough business district
- A shelter at the main Riverwalk entrance at Weaver Street to provide shade
- Tourism website update, as the current site is functioning but built on an outdated theme that can cause technical issues

Board members discussed revenue projections and the potential deficit of approximately \$50,000 if the budget remained as presented. Member Cabbage suggested that the deficit could be addressed by reducing contract partner allocations proportionally. Member Caton noted that using the fund balance would not be significant as the fund balance is healthy. There was discussion about whether continuing to use fund balance was sustainable in the long term, especially if revenues don't continue to come in higher than projected.

Member Czechlewski requested trend data for the fund balance over the past 10 years to help inform decisions. Several board members noted that difficult conversations about allocations would likely occur during the contract partner presentations in upcoming months.

### C. 2026 VisitNC365 Conference Attendance (March 16-18 Asheville, NC)

Campbell informed the board about the upcoming VisitNC Tourism Conference scheduled for March 16-18, 2026, in Asheville. She noted that the board typically sends 2-3 members and covers hotel accommodation, conference registration, mileage, and meals not provided by the conference.

Campbell emphasized the value of the conference for networking and learning about state tourism initiatives. Member Caton noted that attendees get advance information about state marketing plans for the year.

Several members expressed interest, though Chair Pace mentioned a scheduling conflict with a trip to Japan. Board members discussed accommodation options. No members expressed definitive interest. Campbell indicated that members should reach out to her if they'd like to attend. She said that unfortunately she had a scheduling conflict this year and could likely not attend.

## **6. Monthly reports and comments**

### **A. Tourism Staff Report, Visitors Center Updates, & OC Visitors Bureau Updates**

Campbell reported that January is typically quieter for tourism activities as businesses recover from the chaos of the holiday season. She mentioned that the Orange County Visitors Bureau did not meet in December, so there were no updates to report.

Member Czechlewski, of the Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce, provided an update on the Christmas parade, reporting 92 entries (up from 90 the previous year). He noted some spacing issues during the parade, particularly related to the Hillsborough Cheer Dance and Gymnastics group, which performs during the parade. He also mentioned challenges with parking enforcement along the parade route and difficulties with the exit strategy, as participants did not follow the planned route after completing the parade.

Dani McIvor, of the Alliance for Historic Hillsborough, provided a brief update on the "Tinsel & Traditions" holiday event, reporting that it exceeded sales projections with 270 tickets sold against a goal of 250. The celebration at the visitor center received positive feedback. It was noted that a more detailed report would be provided at a future meeting.

Several board members commented on the success of the tree lighting, the holiday shuttle service, and the Solstice lantern walk. Member Patel mentioned that the change in the Solstice event format resulted in fewer reservation delays compared to previous years. She said that she was really happy with the change for Solstice and thought other business owners probably were as well.

### **B. Tourism Board Member comments and updates**

Spencer Welborn excused himself from the meeting as the board discussed his appointment to the vacant food and beverage tax remitter position.

A motion to recommend Spencer Welborn for appointment to the Tourism Board was motioned and affirmed by all.

The board was informed that their recommendation would go to the Town Board for approval at their Monday night meeting.

Motion: Member Caton moved to appoint Spencer Welborn to the Tourism Board. Member Cabbage seconded.

Vote: 6-0.

## **7. Adjournment**

Chair Pace adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Dakotah Kimbrough  
Planning Technician

Staff support to the Hillsborough Tourism Board  
Approved: August 31, 2026