

**City of Sky Valley
Marketing Committee**

Thursday, June 19, 2014

11:00 AM

Timeshare Meeting Room, 501 Sky Valley Way

MINUTES

Chairman Gurley called the meeting to order.

Those Present: Gurley, Gillespie, Howard, Turner, Fogerty, Cillo, Hughes, Goodgame, City Manager Lapeyrouse, City Clerk Cantrell.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

- Introduction of Marketing Coordinator

Chairman Gurley introduced Mr. Johnson, who is working with us on our marketing project.

- Teka Earnhardt, Rabun County Tourism Development Authority

Chairman Gurley introduced Teka Earnhardt. Ms. Earnhardt said that she has worked with the Tourism Development Authority for about five years. She explained that the name recently changed from The Convention and Visitors' Bureau to the Tourism Development Authority. She said their only mission is to bring tourism to the county. The least amount of money spent is on printed materials. People are online almost constantly, and this is the priority. All of the print advertisements have a digital component. She presented examples of advertisements. Southern Magazine has a national market and is located in Barnes and Noble and other bookstores. The Authority partners with local governments and businesses to help coordinate efforts. Target market for Rabun County is on Facebook. The fastest growing market on Facebook is women age 55+. We target the nicer areas of Atlanta, Florida, Greenville and Spartanburg, SC. We are starting to target North Carolina areas as well because Asheville has changed so much in recent years. Charlotte, Raleigh, and Greensboro areas in NC are a lesser targeted area, but are still being reached. She said they are also on Instagram. Pinterest is huge, and they get hits every day. The focus to attract people to our area is natural beauty.

TripAdvisor is free advertising, and we need to work on Sky Valley's page. Sky Valley wasn't on the list; she had to call and request a page.

Visitors Guide – working with four visitors centers and test marketed covers for guides to see which one people chose the most. We are printing 75,000 copies this year, and they will be out in October.

QR Codes were discussed. The Authority is not currently using them.

Ms Earnhardt encouraged people to snap pictures, take videos, and send them to her so she can share them. Email them to teka@explorerabun.com. Taking pictures of people was discussed. Ms. Earnhardt's recommendations are: If you take a picture of a recognizable adult at a public event, it is OK to share. If you take a recognizable picture of a child, you should have their parent sign a photo release form.

The Tourism Authority had a representative attend a golf show in Chicago who gave out golf brochures on Kingwood and Sky Valley and Rabun County.

They use wordpress for their website and mailchimp for email lists.

Discussion followed about thinking bigger: wedding destinations and partnering with Kingwood or another nearby golf location. For website listings, we can do an exchange where for example, the city's site lists the zipline (Highlands Aerial Park), the zipline lists the city.

Ms. Earnhardt said she has claimed the title "Farm to Table Capital of GA" for Rabun County. We have six top chefs in the county that all fit the farm to table concept.

Chairman Gurley thanked Teka Earnhardt for her presentation.

Gillespie said he will no longer be able to serve on the marketing committee and that he has asked Steve Brett to take his place since he will be serving as the marketing person for the Club. City Clerk Cantrell will add this to the July council meeting for approval.

ADJOURN

Respectfully submitted:



Mandi Cantrell, City Clerk