



August 24, 2017  
2nd Floor CVB Conference Room  
Meeting Minutes

### **Members Present**

Bureau: Jenny Bell, Jessica Bennett, Angie Brady, Kelly Brill, Denise Comulada, David Nash

Members: Lily Aguilar Schmidt, Beth Buckingham-Rivas, Ramona Moore, Deanna Morgan, Kimberly Covington, Katherine Stern, Byron McNeill, Nicole Wilson

Guests: Mary Kinney, Wanda Wesley, Dorothy Fielder, Jeff Longo and Nathan Driscoll

### **Summary / Group Information Sharing**

Jenny Bell called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. She welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending the meeting, noting Myron's absence. She then asked attendees to introduce themselves to the group. Katherine Stern introduced herself as new Director of Sales at Comfort Inn. Ramona Moore, Ramada Plaza, Deanna Morgan, DoubleTree, Beth Rivas with Courtyard, Kimberly Covington with Home2Suites. Lily Aguilar Schmidt from TownePlace Suites and Byron McNeill from Hampton Inn were also present and introduced themselves. Mary Kinney with Arts Council, Wanda Wesley and Dorothy Fielder with Umoja Group, and Jeff Longo with Fayetteville Marksmen, guest speakers, also introduced themselves.

Jenny explained that she moved to Fayetteville Labor Day 14 years ago from Texas. She made it a mission to be a tourist in her own city and experience everything with fresh eyes. She and her family experienced the Greek Fest, FireAntz, Blues & Brews and discovered that Fayetteville had a lot to offer. She wanted to welcome some representatives from some of the older festivals that are coming up to hear what they will have new and exciting this year. She welcomed Mary Kinney to talk about the 39<sup>th</sup> International Folk Festival, Wanda Wesley and Dorothy Fielder with the 25<sup>th</sup> Umoja Festival and stated that Reverend Papagikos was not able to attend to discuss the 27<sup>th</sup> Greek Festival. She also welcomed the owner of Fayetteville Marksmen, Jeff Longo, and is interested in hearing their plans for the new year. Jenny felt that attendees are the ambassadors for our community and experiencing these events first hand allows us to promote these events.

## **Speakers**

### **Wanda Wesley and Dorothy Fielder – Umoja Group**

**Wanda Wesley has been a member of the Umoja Group for over 20 years. Her passion and work in the Umoja Group is to arrange and choreograph African dancing/drumming performances. She also assists Dorothy Fielder, the group's leader. Wanda is an Airforce veteran and is employed by the CC Schools in the Pre-kindergarten Department. Dorothy Fielder is one of the founding members and current leader of the Umoja Group. She is a retired CC Schools' social worker, community organizer, senior athlete and mother of five.**

Ms. Wesley stated that the Umoja Festival is Saturday at Smith Rec Center and Seabrook Park. They have partnered with Cape Fear Valley Health System to bring a health fair to the event. The health fair is from 10-2pm inside although a mobile unit will remain outside later in the day. It is a family friendly event in an effort to bring diversity and education together to foster unity. There will be a Wall of Honor that EE Smith students created on Langdon Street that features local heroes. This event is not coming to Fayetteville, it is representatives from our community stepping out to educate and share their heritage with others to enhance unity. There will be entertainment, dancing, plays and storytelling. We are expecting 2000 attendees, which is up from the 200 attendees 25 years ago.

### **Mary Kinney – The Arts Council of Fayetteville/Cumberland County**

**Mary Kinney is the Marketing Director for the Arts Council of Fayetteville/Cumberland County for the last 8 years. She fell in love with the community as a 17-year old college student when attending the International Folk Festival. She and her husband are raising two boys and she is known for her collection of silly socks and corny jokes.**

Ms. Kinney spoke about loving the International Folk Festival community and comradery that she experienced years ago. She is excited about the 39th year of the Festival and they are already planning next year's 40<sup>th</sup> year, although she is unsure how they can top this year's line-up. New this year is the Mystic India World Tour on Saturday. The Festival will be kicking off on 4<sup>th</sup> Friday in September (September 22, 2017) with the band Sirius.B on Hay & Ray. Saturday morning at 10:30 is the parade and it is spectacular event! The Festival will be open later Saturday (8pm) for the Mystic India performances.

### **Jeff Longo – Fayetteville Marksmen**

**Jeff Longo is the owner/president of the Fayetteville Marksmen and has spent over 20 years in professional hockey in upper management positions. He began his career as an intern for the NY Rangers. He worked for the SanDiego Gulls, Charlotte Checkers and VP of Marketing and Community Initiatives for the NJ Devils. He then returned to Charlotte and served as consultant for the Charlotte Checkers. Mr. Longo is also an associate professor and program director at Johnson & Wales University in Charlotte.**

Mr. Longo stated that he purchased the FireAntz and rebranded the team to the Fayetteville Marksmen. They came in at the end of the year and tried some different ways of attracting attendees. He and his partner, Chuck Norris, believe they need to draw attendees for game experiences, selling more than the game. They introduced a \$1 hot dog night and a \$1 beer night – they drew 4600 and 4700 attendees; average attendees at a game were 1700. They plan to introduce more game experiences different events (ex.: Teddy Bear toss, where teddy bears are donated after the game). They have a \$49 package, which includes 4 tickets, 4 pucks and a \$50 Carabba gift card. Jeff noted that there is only one other rink in the area, Cleland, and the Marksmen want to bring more tournaments to town involving youth hockey, UNC and Methodist. They revealed an inflatable tank and will be revealing their mascot 2pm Saturday at the Cross Creek Mall in the food court. The mascot is a fox, but the name will be revealed Saturday. Jeff stated that the mascot will have a heavy presence in the schools and in the community. It was suggested that he contact Mike Gibson with Parks & Rec.

### **Score Card**

Jenny reviewed the Sales Department Score Card.

Jessica Bennett reviewed the Tourism Department Score Card.

David Nash reviewed the Communications Department Score Card.

### **Visitor Profile**

David Nash reviewed the Visitor Profile.

### **Smith Travel Report**

Angie Brady reviewed the Smith Travel Report.

### **Estimated Economic Impact (EEI) and Contracted Revenue**

Jenny and Jessica reviewed the EEI and Contracted Revenue for verbal and definite leads.

### **Tourism Report and New Products**

Angie reviewed the Tourism Report and New Products.

- She reviewed the activities surrounding the Heroes Homecoming in November, noting that she has 130 tables secured at local businesses, and hoping to have an additional 80 schools participate as well. There will be a press conference September 13<sup>th</sup> and she is expecting interest to increase even more. Heroes Homecoming will provide everything needed for a display including the table and place setting, along with set-up directions and an explanation for visitors of each piece and its relevance.
- Setting up a Partner Day at I-95 North and South at the end of September.

### **Communications Report**

David reviewed the Communications Report.

## **Visitors Center Report**

Denise Comulada reviewed the Visitors Center Report.

## **Group Information Sharing**

Jenny asked if there was any new news from the hoteliers, with Lily stating they are excited to have seen the hotel per diem rate go up. Ramona announced that she circulated the FAHA Golf Tournament application for October 26<sup>th</sup>. They will also be having a silent auction this year and asked for donations for the baskets. The Golf Tournament and Silent Auction will benefit Stanton Hospitality House, which helps young mothers with babies in the NICU.

**Next Meeting** – September 28th, 2017, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor CVB Conference Room

**Meeting Adjourned**