



Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation Tourism Committee Meeting

MEETING MINUTES for July 29, 2026: 9:00 – 10:00 AM

Committee was held at 230 S Sporting Hill Road, Suite 100, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Attendance: Mark Bodenhorn, Dustin LeBlanc, Amy Brickner, Katie Perkowski, Sara Wise, Jon Cox,
Kelly Neiderer

CAEDC Staff Present: Laura Delaney, Ashley Kurtz, Patrick Bourque, Aaron Jumper, Stacy Tussey

Excused: Lutrica Eberly, Allen Dieterich-Ward

CALL TO ORDER:

Mark Bodenhorn called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

MINUTES

On a motion by Dustin LeBlanc, seconded by Sara Wise, the committee approved the June 24th meeting minutes. The minutes of June were approved and motion passed.

UPDATED TOURISM GRANT EVALUATION RUBICS

- Finance Committee provided feedback on the tourism grant scoring rubric, focusing on additional evaluation points, timely fund expenditure, and health/financial viability criteria.
- The rubric will be used internally to standardize how project recommendations are formed; it will not be shared in full detail with the board, but a total score for each project will be included in the recommendation sheets going forward.
- No minimum qualifying score has been set yet — this will be determined after seeing results from the upcoming round, with adjustments planned before the 2027 cycle.
- Tourism grants relaunch Monday, August 3, with applications open through September 4.
- No action yet on 2027 grant planning; discussions to begin later.

DEFINING THE FULL VALUE OF THE VISITOR

- Committee members discussed how to better communicate tourism's full economic value to residents, businesses, and community stakeholders noting that tourism's impact extends beyond hotel tax and overnight stays to include restaurants, retail, real estate, talent attraction/retention, and overall quality of life.
- Tourism as a gateway to residency: Visitors often become future residents/business owners, tourism serves as a "discovery" mechanism for the community, later translating into population and tax base growth.
- Balancing positives and negatives: Members discussed the need to counter negative perceptions of tourism (e.g., traffic, crowding) by reinforcing the economic and lifestyle benefits of its funds, noting that local resources and amenities often exist *because* of tourism revenue, even when that connection isn't obvious to residents.



- Symbiotic relationship between tourism and business: Strong downtowns and businesses attract tourism, and vice versa; this reciprocal relationship is core to the organization's mission.
- Organizational identity/branding challenge: Some members noted that the dual function of the organization (economic development and tourism) has made it harder for the public to understand and credit its tourism-related impact.
- Increasing visibility of how grant funding directly benefits local businesses (e.g., spotlighting grant recipients).
- Leveraging the proposed ambassador program as a communication tool.
- Exploring ways to connect school and community programming to tourism-funded initiatives, to build public awareness and local ownership/pride.

The next Tourism Committee meeting will be held on August 26, 2026, from 9:00 am-10:30 AM.

ADJOURNMENT

The Meeting was adjourned at 9:59 AM, motioned by Amy Brickner a seconded by Katie Perkowski.