Consultant Review Update

- Chris Corl -
  - Community & Regional Entertainment Facilities Dept.

Key Takeaways

- ABRSC is a 501c3 currently funded by the TDA, Buncombe County & City
- Founding Members (Including City) elected to evaluate current structure of ABRSC
- Consultant recommends absorbing the Sports Commission into the TDA
- No action requested presentation is to update Council on the study but items that may need to be discussed in the future will include:
    - Evaluation of current City funding to ABRSC
    - Items to include in new bylaws
    - Event ownership & risk

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

History -

- 2010 - Founded by City of Asheville, Buncombe County, Tourism Development Authority and University of North Carolina Asheville (Founding Members)
- Initial Funding Structure (annual)
  - City: $50,000
  - County: $50,000
  - TDA: $50,000
  - UNCA: In-kind use of facilities for events
- Initial Staffing Structure
  - 1 FTE, 1 part time seasonal
- Built to bring the SoCon back to Asheville & Execute

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

History -

- Current Funding Structure (annual)
  - City: $45,000
  - County: $45,000
  - TDA: $230,000
  - UNCA: In-kind use of facilities for events
- Staffing Structure
  - 3 FTE (1 vacancy)
- In ~11 years hosted 53 major sports events in Buncombe County
  - 83% on City property
  - 62% at HCCA

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

ABRSC -

Mission

Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission will identify and attract sports events and related meetings to enhance the health, wellness and quality of life for area residents and sports enthusiasts and will generate a positive economic impact by promoting our region as a recognized sporting destination.

Vision

To host memorable sporting events that will enrich the lives of the athletes and spectators

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

ABRSC - Event Diversity

- Youth Sports Tournaments
- High School Tournaments
- Adult Amature Tournaments
- NCAA Basketball, Westling
- Professional Tennis
- Runs - 5k, half/full marathons
- Spartan Race
- Bike Races - Road & Mountain
- Cornhole

ABRSC - Impact 2022

- 21 Events
- $19.2M in Direct Spend
- $31.5M Economic Impact to Buncombe County
- $944,000 in Local Taxes Generated
- Free access to basketball/tennis events & camps to 4,509 elementary or middle school students
- $5,000 in scholarships to local high school students

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

Return on Investment - 2022

- City of Asheville Annual Financial Support
  - $45,000 - Operations
  - In-Kind value (SoCon traffic management)

- Direct COA Revenues -HCCA Only
  - 2022 - $640,405

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

Consultant Review Reasoning

- Financial stability concerns
  - COVID
  - Funding sources

- Executive Director vacancy

- Vision for the Future

- How to Expand & Grow the Commission

Consultant Study

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

Huddle Up Group (HUG)

- Consultant Selected after RFP process

- Directed to assess;
  - Current structure & bylaws
  - Analyze the current funding model
  - Optimize board and staff
  - Identify Critical relationships for future success

- Conducted stakeholder engagement
  - Interviews, surveys, meetings etc.

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HUG - Recommendations

- Staff of ABRSC should become part of the auspices of Explore Asheville (TDA)
  - TDA is participating in the process, listening sessions and considering recommendations along with the other founding members.

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

HUG - Recommendations

- ABRSC's non-profit status should remain with bylaws rewritten
  - HUG's contract includes funding to re-write ABRSC's bylaws within the current scope IF founding members request a re-write
  - Founding Members annual support would continue to be provided to the non-profit entity.

HUG - Recommendations

- Suggestion to reorganize the board of governance, currently four seats (Founding Members), to be expanded to seven seats
  - Explore Asheville (permanent seat)
  - City of Asheville (permanent seat)
  - Buncombe County (permanent seat)
  - UNC Asheville Athletics (permanent seat)
  - Economic Development Leader (3 yr terms)
  - Corporate Community Leader (3 yr terms)
  - Youth Sports Leader (Chair of ABRSC advisory board)

HUG - Recommendations

- Continue with ABRSC's Advisory Board
  - (4) Seats appointed one each by founding members
  - Up to (21) additional seats appointed by board members, maximum total number of seats - 25
    - Currently (18) total seats filled

HUG - Recommendations

- Short Term Goals
  - Drive $20M in new economic impact to the destination annually through hosting events
  - Renew (4) annual events for 2024 and beyond
  - Create (1) new event per year to replicate past success
  - Secure events that will attract at least 30,000 new room nights during off-peak season in years 2024, 2025 & 2026
  - Execute an annual recognition event with a positive financial return
  - Provide access to sports camps/clinics for 100 underserved youth in our community each year
  - Commission an economic impact study to show the value sports tourism drives to Asheville in a given year

Pros

- Financial stability & administrative support
- Clearer definition of role in sports tourism sales
- Re-written bylaws
- More transparent ‘founding member’ board structure
- Long term growth potential in economic impact & as an organization is greater
- Strengthens partnership between TDA & ABRSC

Cons

- Securing sponsorship may be more challenging under perception of a TDA function
- Volunteerism concerns
- Less ‘control’ by the volunteer non-profit ABRSC board
- Potential shift in event logistics responsibility
- Unlikely to ‘regionalize’

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

Items for Consideration

- Short & long term staffing plan
- Initial and goal of future operating budget
- Continuation & growth of locally focused youth programming opportunities
- Continuation & growth of jobs in sports programming & training opportunities
- Evaluate current City funding to ABRSC
- New board - Total number of seats, area focus
- Event ownership & risk
    - Who assumes risk responsibility for current ABRSC ‘owned/co-owned’ events.
        - SoCon, Grapple, one-offs

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Discussion / Questions



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