

October 9, 2023

Hello Mrs. Ruffieux,

This request comes on behalf of the organizations listed below who have agreed as partners to launch an Appalachian heritage themed event in April 2024 that includes three days of activities planned by the respective partners. This is an unprecedented partnership to launch a new event, during the shoulder season, aimed at driving business and overnight stays within the county.

The 3-day schedule was planned to include four distinct events: an opening concert on Friday night at Haywood Community College; a Saturday vendor market and heritage fair on Main Street and the Shelton House grounds; the Haywood County Arts Council's Appalachian-dance themed event on Saturday night; and a closing ceremony on Sunday at Folkmoot. Former TDA Director Lynn Collins advised that each organization should submit separate grant applications for their own part of the event.

Since the time we applied and were each awarded TDA grant funding, two of the organizations partnering in the effort have undergone a change in leadership. The directors who submitted applications on behalf of Folkmoot (Evan Hatch) and the Haywood County Arts Council (Morgan Beryl) are no longer working on these projects. New leaders, HCAC Executive Director Tonya Harwood and Folkmoot Operations Manager Alicia Blanton, are interested in continuing the partnership and following through with plans. However, in our review of the paperwork that was submitted we realized that the application Mr. Hatch agreed to submit on behalf of HCC for the Friday night concert was not included.

Folkmoot board members are also concerned about the amount of funds they are committed to providing as a "match" for the Sunday event (at a rate of 265 seats, which exceeds their capacity) and are prepared to decline TDA grant funds if we can't make changes. If Sunday plans are cancelled and we can't move forward with the Friday night concert; Unfortunately, our plans for a three-day event will have to be scaled back to one day and limited to Saturday only.

To avoid major changes to the schedule, we would like permission to modify the plan for a Sunday event at Folkmoot and reallocate funds from other weekend activities to cover a Friday night concert at HCC. We are not asking to change the dollar amount requested. Folkmoot would also like to modify their application for Sunday to include a culinary-themed event planned earlier on Sunday, instead of the late afternoon concert that was included in the application.

Thank you for considering our request,

Beth Gilmore, DWC Executive Director
Tonya Harwood, HCAC Executive Director
Alicia Blanton, Folkmoot Operations Manager
Mark Stoffan, Shelton House, Board of Directors Chair
Caleb Tate, HCC Recruiter

