

St. Michaels Tourism Board

Public Meeting Minutes

January 20, 2010

Present:

Chairman Jon Mason, Vice Chairman Bonnie Booth, Rosemary Fasolo, Helen Van Fleet, and Debbi Dodson, Advisor, Talbot County Office of Tourism, Administrative Clerk Sabrenia Yohn, Public Works Clerk Suzanna Warnick, and one member of the public, (John Booth). Members Angela Eade-Spence, April Whitacre and Stuart Parnes were absent.

Call to Order:

Chairman Booth called to order the meeting of the St. Michaels Tourism Board at 8:30 a.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building (Town Office), 300 Mill Street, St. Michaels, Maryland.

Approval of Minutes:

Member Fasolo had one change to the minutes for November 19, 2009. Member Van Fleet made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2009 as modified. Member Fasolo seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 4-0 in favor. Member Booth then made a motion to approve minutes for the December 8, 2009 meeting. Chairman Mason seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Geocache Program:

Suzanna Warnick, Public Works Clerk for the Town of St. Michaels, provided an overview of the Geocache Program, noting that the Town was working in conjunction with the Maryland Municipal League (MML) and the Geocache box was now activated. Ms. Warnick asked that the Tourism Board consider contributions to the Geocache box. Member Fasolo asked about getting e:mail addresses from the visitors to the box and suggested that perhaps this topic could be discussed again when Member Spence is present as she serves on the Board as the representative of the Business Association. Member Fasolo also suggested incorporating the MML logo/website address in advertising. Member Booth suggested that the Board should ask MML for permission to use their logo. They also discussed the potential advertising for the Geocache in Maryland Life Magazine and Debbi Dodson volunteered to speak with Dan Patrel at the magazine as she is on the Board of Directors of the magazine.

Approval of Invoices:

Chairman Mason approved an invoice for Pixel, Print & Post in the amount of \$130.00.

Advertising Update and Report from the Marketing/Advertising Sub-committee:

Debbi Dodson gave an overview of recent advertising, and noted that the Crab Claw Restaurant was voted best crab cake in Maryland by Southern Living Magazine. Debbi said that she and Member Booth had met as members of the Marketing/Advertising Subcommittee. Ms. Dodson gave a review of the meeting and suggested that the Board look more closely at Washington D.C. for advertising opportunities, particularly The Hill Report and Recreation News. Ms. Dodson said there was approximately \$15,000 remaining in the ad budget, and \$3,000 could be used to advertise in Recreation News. On another topic, Ms. Dodson said the Bobby Parlett and Lori Moritz have asked about advertising for the WineFest. Ms. Dodson said her response to them was that no seed money was available from the Tourism Board for the Winefest. After a brief off-the-record discussion, Member Booth said that the Tourism Board should not provide seed money to any organization and member Van Fleet noted that everyone needs to follow the process for requesting funds, using the forms that are available on the Town's website. Member

Fasolo agreed, and added that it is getting late to meet publication deadlines to advertise the proposed Winefest event. Ms. Yohn noted that the Winefest organizers were coming before the Commissioners on February 24, 2010 to provide an overview of the event. Member Booth said more needed to be known about the project before any advertising was done. Chairman Mason said that he would be willing to support the event from the Town Dock, but that no one has approached him or any other business to his knowledge and he agreed that the event cannot be advertised until more information is provided.

Discussion continued regarding advertising with Member Booth noting that the cost of advertising in The Hill Report was \$2,400.00. Ms. Dodson provided an update on Restaurant Week, noting that March 21 was the kick-off at The Oaks from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m., with tickets priced at \$35.00 per person. Ms. Dodson said the proceeds would be divided in thirds - 1/3 to restaurants, 1/3 to Talbot County Tourism for advertising, and 1/3 to the website. Ms. Dodson provided details of the costs of meals for the week (March 21 thru March 27) and noted that the restaurants participating in St. Michaels were Ava's, Ruppert's, Town Dock, and the Inn at Perry Cabin and possibly Market House Gourmet. March 28, 2010 will be the closing of the event with the showing of the movie "Big Night" which will be a fund raiser for the film festival.

Member Booth asked about the frequency of publication for the Hill Report. Ms. Dodson said she would e-mail that information to everyone.

Member Fasolo then made a motion to take advantage of a "by one get one free" advertising opportunity in the Washington Times for a Valentine's Day, the cost of which not to exceed \$3,300.00. Member Booth seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Member Booth also made a motion to reserve space with Main Line for advertising. Member Fasolo seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 4-0 in favor. Ms. Dodson and Member Booth will meet as the advertising sub-committee and forecast for future advertising.

Photography RFP:

Chairman Mason opened a discussion of the Photography RFP. Ms. Yohn gave an overview of the steps in this process which include either amending the Board's current budget to allocate funds for a photographer or waiting until next year's budget to allocate the funds then. Member Fasolo said she had talked to a couple of professional photographers but had not pursued it further. Member Fasolo suggested approaching the Art League about a possible photography contest as part of the Paint the Town event with prizes being given and any photographs submitted would become the property of the Tourism Board. Chairman Mason, Member Booth and Ms. Dodson agreed that it was a good idea. Ms. Fasolo said that Art League could create and manage the competition, and pick winners. The members agreed to have Member Fasolo approach the Art League with the idea and to solicit their feedback.

Get Away Program:

Discussion of this topic was deferred until Member Spence returns.

Tourism Board Vacancy:

Chairman Mason said the Tourism Board has one vacancy due to the departure of Stuart Parnes, and noted that a letter had been sent by the Commissioners to Langley Shook, President of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, inquiring about potential candidates to fill Mr. Parnes' seat as the not-for-profit representative. To date, there has been no response from Mr. Shook. The members also discussed absent members, which at times had caused meetings to be cancelled for lack of a quorum. Chairman Mason said he favored sending the letter to absentee members.

Member Fasolo asked about the possibility of the Business Association sending a liaison or substitute in the event that Member Spence has to be absent for long periods of time. Member Booth agreed and the board will discuss with Ms. Spence upon her return.

Public Comment:

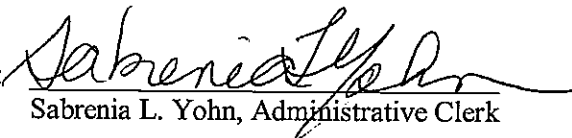
There were no comments from the public. Mrs. Yohn reminded members to fill out their gift disclosure forms and send them into the Town Office if they had not already done so.

Announcement of Next Meeting:

Chairman Mason announced that the next meeting of the Board would be February 9, 2010.

Adjournment:

Member Fasolo made the motion to adjourn. Chairman Mason seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 4-0 in favor at 10:05 a.m.

Submitted by:  Date: 2/17/2010
Sabrenia L. Yohn, Administrative Clerk