

St. Michaels Tourism Board

Public Meeting Minutes

June 15, 2009

Present:

Member Ilene Morgan, Member Stuart Parnes, Member Rosemary Fasolo, Member Helen Van Fleet, Debbi Dodson, Advisor, Talbot County Office of Tourism, St. Michaels Zoning Inspector/Codes Enforcement Officer Deborah Renshaw, and Administrative Clerk Sabrenia Yohn. Chairman Jon Mason and Vice Chairman Bonnie Booth were absent.

Call to Order:

Member Morgan called to order the meeting of the St. Michaels Tourism Board at 8:37 a.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building (Town Office), 300 Mill Street.

Approval of Minutes:

Member Fasolo made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 2, 2009 meeting. The motion was seconded by Member Morgan and passed on a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Signage:

St. Michaels Zoning Inspector/Codes Enforcement Officer Deborah Renshaw opened a discussion regarding signage in the Town of St. Michaels. Mrs. Renshaw explained that the Town's code must be amended to allow for additional types of signage options, such as wayfaring signs. She then gave a history of signage in the Town which included the adoption of the St. Michaels Comprehensive Plan and that provisions of the Comprehensive Plan now need to be implemented by the Commissioners of St. Michaels and the St. Michaels Planning Commission. Mrs. Renshaw said that she needed to give the Commissioners some suggestions and ideas on the signage issue by September 1, 2009, and if the Commissioners approve, the Code would be amended around the first of the year 2010. Mrs. Renshaw said she is also working with Carol Parlett from the St. Michaels Business Association (SMBA) on signage for the businesses and also soliciting ideas from the museums. Member Parnes said that he would provide Mrs. Renshaw with prior data and research that he might have on the subject. Mrs. Renshaw said she welcomed any ideas the Tourism Board might wish to contribute before the September deadline. Mrs. Renshaw also advised that there is a meeting scheduled for July 9, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. in the meeting room of the St. Michaels Free Library to discuss signage. Member Fasolo also asked about the cleaning of the public restrooms in Town. Mrs. Renshaw said that she would mention this to the Town's Public Works Department.

Midnight Madness:

Member Morgan opened the discussion regarding the Midnight Madness event and their request for support from the Board to allow out-of-doors audio during the event and the letter drafted by the Board to the Commissioners. She also had written permission from Chairman Mason to approve the letter. Member Fasolo made the motion to approve the Board's support of the event and the letter to the Commissioners. The motion was seconded by Member Parnes and passed on a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Advertising Update:

Debbi Dodson opened the discussion on advertising, noting that the Tourism Board had a few thousand dollars remaining in the fiscal year 2009 budget to spend on advertising. Ms. Dodson suggested running another ad in the Washington Times. Member Fasolo made the motion to

approve running of the additional advertisement in the Washington Times as proposed by Ms. Dodson. The motion was seconded by Member Van Fleet and passed on a vote of 4-0 in favor.

Proposed Media Plan:

Debbi Dodson stated that she was working on the reports with Jon Mason and Bonnie Booth.

Old Business:

- **Annual Reports to the Commissioners** - Ms. Dodson said the advertising report was almost completed and that she intended to package the ad information for the Commissioners. She stated that she would e-mail the marketing plan to the Board members and then suggested that the Board schedule another meeting to review the plan and make changes before it is submitted to the Commissioners.
- **Election of Tourism Board Members update** - Sabrenia Yohn provided the group with an update on potential candidates and noting that the Commissioners would be considering the appointments during their June 24, 2009 meeting. She also mentioned that Marianne Yost Armitage had expressed interest in serving on the Board in the past, but had not submitted a letter of interest for this year.
- **Branding and Campaign Ads** - Member Fasolo opened the discussion and provided a sample package of ads with branding. There was a discussion of suggested changes to the ads and questions of whether copies could be made available to post at the Maryland Municipal League (MML) Convention in Ocean City at the end of June. Debbi Dodson suggested using some of the remaining advertising funds to hire a professional photographer to obtain some good photos for the advertising. Member Fasolo asked Ms. Dodson if she could add a proposed cost to the marketing plan. Ms. Dodson said she could use estimates based on her costs at the Talbot County Tourism office. Member Morgan also asked if these ads could be run in the Washington Times.
- **Billboard Advertising** - Debbi Dodson said that the Talbot County Office of Tourism was trying to negotiate the use of a billboard on Route 50 East just before the Route 404 turnoff that is currently advertising the Tidewater Inn. The cost would be approximately \$600.00 but that the amount was still being negotiated. Ms. Dodson said she would need a commitment to contribute to promotion of an event on the billboard. Member Fasolo suggested that perhaps the Tourism Board could commit to four months. The Board members agreed they liked the new design, but wanted to obtain input from Chairman Mason and Vice Chairman Booth. Member Fasolo said she would e-mail the design to them for their consideration.
- **Passport Cards** - Member Morgan opened the discussion and handed out information to be presented to the St. Michaels Business Association (SMBA) to solicit their help in managing the passport program. Member Van Fleet suggested e-mailing the information to them. There was a discussion regarding the two drawings that have already taken place and Debbi Dodson added that the second winner was coming next week to stay at the Five Gables Inn and Spa. It was noted that the Board needs to find out from Chairman Mason if the third drawing has been done. Member Fasolo suggested requesting help from the businesses and restaurants for prizes. Member Fasolo had also taken all of the zipcodes from completed passport cards and created a chart with geographic information.
- **Banner Update** - Member Parnes opened the discussion and said he was waiting to hear from Choptank Electric regarding the dimensions for the banners. Member Fasolo said a top cable was in place and Choptank had provided a nylon rope for the Paint the Town banner that is currently in place. There was a discussion regarding the "Hold Harmless Agreement" with Choptank that would be signed off on by the Town for each event and that requests for banners would come to the Tourism Board first for review, and if all specifications were met, the request would then be forwarded to the Commissioners. Member Fasolo added that the

same hardware would be in place and used for all banners. Member Parnes noted that Choptank would also need one point of contact for pickup and drop off of banners and it was proposed that Pixel Post could be the drop-off/pick-up point. Member Fasolo also suggested that timeframes should be clearly defined for how many days before and after the event a banner could be displayed. Upon review of the list of annual events prepared by Member Parnes it was noted that "Oyster Jam" and the annual boat auction at the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum should be added to the list of events. The members agreed that if there were competing dates, the Tourism Board would determine how the events would be advertised. Member Parnes said he would revise the proposal, including the suggested changes, and send it on to the Commissioners.

New Business:

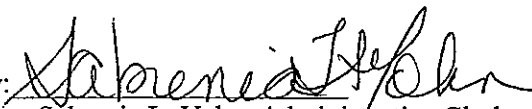
- **Vacant Shops** – Member Fasolo opened the discussion regarding vacant shops in town. Member Parnes said he had contacted the previous proprietors of the Candleberry Shop to inquire about advertising upcoming events for the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum in the windows of the building. He is waiting for a response from the owner of the building.
- **"Jamie on the Go"** - Debbi Dodson explained that this is an infomercial featuring Jamie Costello which was filmed around town and then was broadcast live from the Crab Claw Restaurant. She noted the cost to participate is approximately \$2500.00.
- **Annual Marketing Awards** - Debbi Dodson said the Talbot County Office of Tourism would be holding its annual Marketing Awards ceremony on June 16, 2009. There would be members of the media present.

Next Meeting Date:

In July, the Tourism Board will meet on July 1, 2009 at 8:30 a.m. and July 14, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.

Adjournment:

Member Fasolo made the motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Member Parnes and passed on a vote of 4-0 in favor at 9:50 a.m.

Submitted by: 
Sabrenia L. Yohn, Administrative Clerk

Date: 7/1/09