

St. Michaels Tourism Board

Public Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2009

Present:

Chairman Jon Mason, Rosemary Fasolo, Ilene Morgan, Stuart Parnes, Angela Eade-Spence, Helen Van Fleet, Debbi Dodson, Advisor, Talbot County Office of Tourism, and Administrative Clerk Sabrenia Yohn. Vice Chairman Bonnie Booth was absent. No public added the meeting

Call to Order:

Chairman Mason called to order the meeting of the St. Michaels Tourism Board at 8:35 a.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building (Town Office), 300 Mill Street.

Approval of Minutes:

Member Helen Van Fleet made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2009 meeting. Member Ilene Morgan seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 6-0 in favor.

Approval of Annual Reports to the Commissioners:

Chairman Mason opened the discussion. Because he will be unable to attend the Commissioners' meeting on August 12, 2009 to present the Tourism Board's annual reports, he had prepared a letter to the Commissioners to be read into the minutes of their meeting. The members discussed minor revisions to be made to the letter. Debbi Dodson reviewed the annual reports with the Board members. Member Rosemary Fasolo suggested as additional accomplishments for the year that the report include the higher distribution number for e:postcards; the increased URL tracking; and the Board's subsidy of \$2,500.00 to the St. Michaels Business Association for distribution of rack cards .

Advertising Update including 2010 Advertising Schedule:

Chairman Mason opened a discussion of the 2010 Advertising schedule. Debbi Dodson said that the Board had already approved the schedule, with the exception for decisions on ads to run this winter. This topic will remain on the agenda to be discussed at a later meeting.

Request from the Midnight Madness Committee for extended use of Frederick Douglass Park on December 5, 2009:

Sabrenia Yohn gave an overview, noting that the Commissioners had asked the Tourism Board to review the Midnight Madness Committee's request to use Frederick Douglass Park and a portion of the public parking lot at Talbot and Mill Streets for the Midnight Madness drawing. Member Ilene Morgan said that PNC Bank had declined the use of their parking lot due to potential liability issues and St. Luke's United Methodist Church was already being used for event activities on that day. Mrs. Morgan also stated that Market House had offered its parking area, and electricity was available from the St. Michaels Business Association's information booth on Mill Street. The members discussed the possibility of the event taking place in Muskrat Park, but conceded that it was too far from the main shopping area. The members agreed that the use of Frederick Douglass Park and its parking lot, along with overflow onto Mill Street, would also encourage shoppers and visitors to the North end of Town. It was noted that the Commissioners would have to approve the use of Town property, and the police would need to designate the lot as a no parking area for the event and be on hand to ensure public safety.

Old Business:

- **Vacant Shops Update** - As there was no update on this matter, it was agreed among the members to remove this topic from future agendas.
- **Passport Program Update** - Member Angela Eade-Spence opened the discussion of the passport program and distributed a handout. Ms. Eade-Spence noted that store owners have been keeping the cards instead of putting them in the designated passport boxes around Town. Ms. Eade-Spence also discussed costs for the initial printing of cards and the creation of holders to put into the businesses. She said approximately 50 holders had been distributed but that approximately an additional 25 were needed. Member Ilene Morgan said she liked the current holder and proposed continuing with this presentation. Ms. Eade-Spence said that businesses would fund the larger passport program by having their ads and coupons in the passport books; however a larger program would be difficult to manage, while the postcard program in its current form was easier to manage. Ms. Eade-Spence noted that the next drawings would be at the end of September and the end of December, 2009. Members Ilene Morgan and Rosemary Fasolo proposed that the program not be date-specific and Chairman Mason agreed. The members continued a discussion of the costs of the current program – (which will be called the "Getaway Program") versus the costs associated with the "Passport Program" which includes the use of coupons from the businesses. Member Rosemary Fasolo also proposed turning the management of the Passport Program over to the St. Michaels Business Association. The Business Association, using the funding forms provided on the Town's website, could then ask for funds from the Tourism Board to promote the advertising of the program. Member Stuart Parnes stated that he liked the current Getaway Program. Chairman Mason noted that at the July 14, 2009 meeting, the Tourism Board had approved \$1,000.00 to be used for promoting the Getaway Program and based on the costs submitted to date as reflected in the handouts, there was approximately on \$100.00 remaining for use. Debbi Dodson asked that actual invoices for costs to date for the Getaway Program and Passport Program be sent to her at the Talbot County Office of Tourism for reimbursement to Aida Leisure for her efforts. Chairman Mason also asked that invoices be sent to Sabrenia Yohn so that they could be presented at the Board's meetings for review.
- **Banner Program proposal to the Commissioners** - The members discussed various aspects of the over-the-street banner proposal prepared by Member Stuart Parnes to be presented to the Commissioners during their meeting on August 12, 2009. Member Rosemary Fasolo asked the group to consider an alternative to Pixel Post as the drop-off point for Choptank to pick up banners to be hung and to return the banners when they are taken down for each event. It was proposed by Chairman Mason that the Town office serve as the pickup and drop off point. Member Fasolo offered however to create a spec sheet for the banners to be given to applicants. Member Parnes said he would make revisions to the proposal based on the discussions and present it to the Commissioners at their meeting on August 12.

New Business:

- Chairman Mason opened a discussion regarding the application of April Dean Whitacre of Charisma as a board member replacement for Ilene Morgan. Ms. Morgan and Chairman Mason said that they endorse the application of Ms. Whitacre as the retail representative to the Tourism Board. Sabrenia Yohn indicated that she would forward Ms. Whitacre's application to the Commissioners for consideration.
- Member Rosemary Fasolo asked that a discussion regarding preparation of a photography RFP be added to the Board's agenda for September.
- Member Stuart Parnes opened a discussion regarding the Heritage District - Stories of the Chesapeake. He, along with Debbi Dodson, noted that participation in the program could potentially make various St. Michael's groups and museums eligible for low interest loans

and grants for renovations. Member Parnes suggested inviting Elizabeth Watson to make a presentation to the Board at the September meeting, to be followed possibly with a presentation to the Commissioners for their consideration.

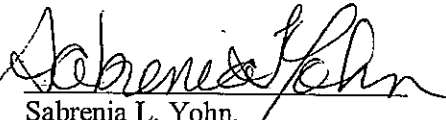
Next Meeting Date and Time:

Chairman Mason said the next meeting of the Tourism Board would be September 8, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.

Adjournment:

Member Rosemary Fasolo made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Stuart Parnes seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 6-0 in favor at approximately 10:10 a.m.

Submitted by:


Sabrenia L. Yohn,
Administrative Clerk

Date:

9/22/09