

St. Michaels Tourism Board

Public Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2009

Present:

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

Call to Order:

Chairman Mason 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.

Approval of Minutes:

Member Booth made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 22, 2009 and October 20, 2009 meetings. Member Fasolo seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Advertising Update:

Chairman Mason opened the discussion. Member Booth offered congratulations to Ms. Dodson for winning the "best new product" award for the bicycle trail map and promotion, and congratulations to Member Fasolo for the printing. Ms. Dodson said the first Restaurant Week was planned for March 21st through the 21th, 2010. Ms. Dodson said proceeds from the event would go to support restaurants for the cost of some of their supplies and food and that any leftover funds would be used as seed money for the next year's event. Ms. Dodson said the advertising for the Fall event in St. Michaels was changed. Member Fasolo asked about the book of ads and offered to send the files to the Business Association so the ads could be printed out and the book updated. Ms. Dodson continued to outline current and upcoming advertising and promotions in St. Michaels and the surrounding area. Ms. Dodson said that the Board needed to pick a date to discuss the marketing of St. Michaels from January through June 2010. Member Booth said the group should also address the fireworks on July 3rd, noting that the Yacht Club would not be doing them this year due to safety issues. Ms. Booth said the St. Michaels Business Association has formed a committee to plan the event and find a new venue. She said that P.J. Pecorak has offered the Huntman property for the fireworks launch, which should provide for better viewing from the Town. Member Booth said St. Michaels would use a different fireworks company than previous years to avoid conflicts with Easton, and that the whole weekend could be advertised as an "Old-fashioned 4th".

A discussion of advertising continued, including the consideration of doing more internet advertising and the advertising sub-committee exploring ways to expand the advertising demographics. Ms. Dodson mentioned the very positive attendance at the Waterfowl Festival this year, and indicated that the demographic has changed possibly due to improved and increased advertising for the event. Member Fasolo said the Tourism Board is due to send out another e-post card, possibly for Midnight Madness and Christmas in St. Michaels. The members discussed costs of possible increased mailings. The possibility of changing the e-postcard images was discussed and Ms. Dodson suggested using the Midnight Madness image from last year. Member Fasolo said she would have a proof for Debbi Dodson to approve by Tuesday. Member Van Fleet urged the sub-committee to research carefully the costs of sending out more e-cards. Debbi Dodson suggested November 23, 2009 at 10:00 a.m. at Five Gables dining room for the next

meeting of the ad subcommittee, and the members agreed. Chairman Mason suggested the topic of town-wide special deals be discussed by the sub-committee for the weak months - January, February, and March. Member Fasolo said a similar topic would be discussed at the Business Association's meeting this evening.

Request for Proposal (RFP) - Photographer:

Chairman Mason opened the discussion of the RFP for a photographer. Member Fasolo said she had a concern about getting releases from people who are photographed for Town publications and suggested that language be added to the RFP that makes the photographer responsible for obtaining the model release. Ms. Dodson suggested that the photographer should consult with the Tourism Board representatives to identify appropriate people for the photo shots. Member Fasolo said the RFP should also require the photographer to provide a portfolio of un-retouched images, and include a fee schedule for a package of ten useable images. Members discussed dates for advertising the RFP, bid opening and the bid award. Chairman Mason asked Mrs. Yohn to make revisions to the RFP based on the discussions and to send the revised version to the Board Members for review.

Tourism Board Opening:

The members discussed possible candidates to replace Stuart Parnes on the Tourism Board. Michael Valliant of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum and Trish Payne of the Community Center were mentioned. The members generally agreed that it should be someone who represents tourism and non-profits, and asked that anyone interested should submit a letter and resume.

Review/Approval of Invoices:

Chairman Mason opened a discussion of Tourism Board invoices submitted to Sabrenia Yohn. After some discussion, Chairman Mason called for a motion to approve the website agreement between the Tourism Board and the St. Michaels Business Association. Member Booth made the motion to approve the St. Michaels Business Association website agreement reflecting \$95.00 per hour for website updates and their invoice. Member Eade-Spence seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor. Member Booth then made a motion to approve payment of the Pixel Post invoices. Chairman Mason seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 4-0 in favor, with Member Fasolo abstaining.

Old Business:

- a. **Get-Away Program Update** – Member Eade-Spence said the first drawing had taken place and the first guests arrived this weekend, with gift certificates totaling \$5,000 this time. Members discussed the possibility of press releases in the Star Democrat and/or in a paper local to the winners. Member Eade-Spence said the next drawing is on December 30, 2009. Distribution of passport cards and re-supply is being handled by T. J. Pecorak. Get-away venues were discussed. Member Booth said that giveaways should be restricted to St. Michaels businesses. Chairman Mason asked Ms. Dodson to do a press release for the next drawing in Washington, D.C. area newspapers, including the next drawing date
- b. **Banner Program Proposal to the Commissioners** - Chairman Mason said this topic has been reviewed by the Commissioners and their position had not changed, therefore, this topic should come off of future meeting agendas. Member Fasolo commented that Choptank had hung the Fall Into St. Michaels banner perfectly.
- c. **Stories of the Chesapeake/Maryland Heritage Areas Authority Grants** – Ms. Dodson said that after the first of the year, she would like to come before the Commissioners with

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representatives from this organization. A letter from the Tourism Board to the Commissioners asking for time on the agenda will be drafted by Ms. Dodson.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Mason presented articles with Denton and destination Easton branding tag lines, and reminded the Board that St. Michaels is competing for tourism dollars on the Eastern Shore and needs to do all they can to stay ahead of the game.

Comments from the Public:

John Booth of Five Gables Inn suggested that perhaps some of the money not being used for the Food and Wine Festival could be donated to the fireworks project. Member Booth said there will be a wine fest that will get that support. Chairman Mason said that the fireworks group could come to the Tourism Board for funding for advertising and that the necessary request form is on the Town's website.

Announcement of Next Meeting:

Chairman Mason announced that the next meeting of the Tourism Board would be December 8, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.

Adjournment:

Member Booth made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Member Fasolo seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor at 10:30 a.m.

Submitted by:  Date: 1/20/2010
Sabrenia L. Yohn, Administrative Clerk