

St. Michaels Tourism Board

Special Public Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2008

Present: Jon Mason, Mr., Bonnie Booth, Vice Mr., Rosemary Fasolo, Ilene Morgan, Robert Richardson, Stuart Parnes, Helen Van Fleet, Rosemary Fasolo, Debbi Dodson, Advisor, Talbot County Tourism Board, Town Manager Cheril Thomas, Administrative Clerk Sabrenia Yohn, and one member of the public – Mr. John Booth.

Call to Order – Mr. Jon Mason called to order a special meeting of the St. Michaels Tourism Board to order at 9:00 a.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building, 300 Mill Street, St. Michaels, MD.

Review/Approval of Minutes from Last Meeting- Mr. Mason called for a motion to review and approve minutes of the last meeting at the next regular meeting. Ms. Fasolo made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Van Fleet, and which passed on a vote of 7-0.

Discussion of Board Operations - Mr. Mason called for a motion to add Town Manager Cheril Thomas to the agenda and to take her presentation out of order. Ms. Morgan made the motion, which was seconded by Ms. Fasolo, and which passed 7-0 in favor. Ms. Thomas then discussed the operation of Town boards and regulations for meetings.

Local Advertising - Mr. Mason opened a discussion on local advertising. Ms. Morgan gave a summary of the results of the survey of local businesses. There were fifteen respondents who expressed their interest in participating in winter advertising. Ms. Morgan said the advertising would cost participants \$50.00 and then the Tourism Board would fund the remainder of advertising costs. Ms. Dodson handed out a cost matrix for publications, which she had been asked to supply at the last meeting. Board members discussed the matrix information, and Mr. Mason suggested possibly forming a subcommittee to determine future advertising. He noted that there was money available though the fiscal year. Ms. Booth suggested that the Star Democrat advertising be allocated now.

Mr. Mason made a motion to spend \$1500.00 on Star Democrat ads for the week of January 18-23, 2009. Ms. Fasolo seconded it, and the motion passed on a vote of 7-0.

Mr. Mason made a motion to create a subcommittee for first quarter advertising, which was seconded by Ms. Booth, and which passed on a vote of 7-0. Volunteers for the subcommittee were Ilene Morgan, Bonnie Booth, and Jon Mason, with Debbie Dodson as an advisor. Ms. Booth then made a motion to approve the subcommittee composed of Members Morgan, Booth, Mason and Debbie Dodson as advisor. Mr. Mason seconded, and the motion passed on a vote of 7-0 in favor. The group then discussed local advertising opportunities for first quarter 2009.

Approval of Passport Program Memo/Development of Program Poster - Mr. Mason opened a discussion regarding the Tourism Board's Passport program and presented a sample memo for review and approval by members. Mr. Richardson made a motion to accept the memo and send it out. Ms. Booth seconded it. Mr. Richardson then said that the first sentence needed revision to be less negative, and Ms. Booth noted that a paragraph should be added that the Passport Program will restart in March. The motion to approve was withdrawn because the wrong document was reviewed.

Ms. Fasolo then made a motion for Jon Mason to send the correct passport memo to Mr. Richardson to review and send out. Ms. Morgan seconded it and the motion passed on a vote of 7-0.

High Net Worth Video for the SMBA Website - Mr. Mason said that the show had been canceled. Ms. Dodson said she would e-mail the website and let them know the status.

New Banner - Mr. Mason opened a discussion of a new Midnight Madness/Christmas in St. Michaels banner. Ms. Fasolo presented the group with a mock-up of a proposed new banner. It was noted that this year's banner was a disaster and needed to be re-designed. The members agreed to defer additional discussion to the next meeting.

Mr. Richardson proposed adding an agenda item - that he would like to purchase new URLs for ads. Mr. Richardson advised that ten URLs could be purchased for 2 years at a cost of \$200.00. Mr. Mason made a motion to purchase ten URLs for no more than \$200.00. Ms. Booth seconded it, and the motion passed on a vote of 7-0.

Town Visitor Center in Nature Trail Parking Lot – Ms. Fasolo said she wanted more details and clarification on the proposed parking lot. It was suggested that Town Manager Cheril Thomas be asked to join the next regular meeting of the Tourism Board to discuss.

Room Tax Distribution - A discussion of the Town's calculation regarding the room tax distribution and the Tourism Board's allocation was tabled until the next regular meeting of the Tourism Board.

Form and Protocol for Event Advertising - This agenda item was also tabled to the next regular meeting of the Tourism Board.

Announcement of Next Meeting - The next meeting regular meeting of the Tourism Board would be on Tuesday, January 13, 2009 at 8:30 a.m. However, because Ms. Morgan is not available on that date, there was a consensus that the meeting be re-scheduled for Monday, January 12, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.

Additional Discussion Items – Ms. Dodson opened a discussion on bicycle magazines and new bike signs with color matching trails. She also noted the possibility of getting "famous" people who have been on the trail, and including them in advertising. Ms. Van Fleet said she would work on getting a celebrity.

Ms. Booth said she would like to get a copy of the Washington Times for review.

Ms. Fasolo asked if ads should be eased at the St. Michaels Business Association function on January 18, 2009, along with the large banner. Ms. Dodson said she is on the agenda for the SMBA meeting to discuss advertising.

Adjournment - Mr. Mason made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:20 a.m. Ms. Booth seconded the motion, which then passed on a 7-0 vote in favor.

Submitted by: _____
Sabrenia L. Yohn,
Administrative Clerk