

St. Michaels Tourism Board

Public Meeting Minutes

January 12, 2009

Present - Chairman, Jon Mason; Vice Chairman, Bonnie Booth; Rosemary Fasolo; Ilene Morgan; Robert Richardson; Helen Van Fleet; Stuart Parnes; Administrative Clerk Sabrenia Yohn; Valerie Sunderland, St. Michaels Art League, and Mr. John Booth. Debbie Dodson, Advisor, was absent. Note: Not all members were present at the start of the meeting.

Call to Order – Mr. Mason called the meeting of the St. Michaels Tourism Board to order at 8:30 a.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building, 300 Mill Street, St. Michaels.

Approval of Minutes – Mr. Mason called for a motion to approve minutes from meetings on December 9, 2008 and December 17, 2008, with changes. Mrs. Van Fleet made the motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Fasolo, and which passed on a vote of 4-0 in favor.

St. Michaels Art League Presentation – Mr. Mason introduced Valerie Sunderland, a past President of the Art League and this year's chairperson for "Paint the Town Day." Mrs. Sunderland gave an overview of the day and planned events. Mrs. Sunderland suggested that businesses participate by contributing baskets, donating to scholarships, offering to put paintings in store fronts, etc. The members also discussed ways the Tourism Board could help promote the event. Mrs. Sunderland asked about the possibility of an over-street banner. Mrs. Sunderland concluded by providing her contact information.

Winter Advertising Program - Mrs. Morgan said that the Star Democrat had a cooperative advertising opportunity, the cost of which could be shared by realtors and other businesses to encourage tourism to the area. Mrs. Morgan said the deadline to participate was January 14th, with ads to run on January 18 and 23, 2009. The members also discussed ad messaging, budget and ad production and design. Mr. Mason made a motion to have Pixel Post put ads together, including layout, design, format, etc. Mrs. Booth seconded the motion and the motion passed on a vote of 5-2, with Members Richardson and Fasolo abstaining. The members also discussed sending information to all Business Association members encouraging them to stay open over the President's Day weekend.

Passport Program – Mr. Mason opened a discussion on the need to post past winners and drawings and to address page design and budget. Mrs. Booth noted that the web page should also be re-designed. Mr. Richardson volunteered to get a design cost for the passport page from Internet Connections. Mr. Mason noted that the second drawing had not yet happened and that the spring rollout will include four stamps. Mrs. Booth said her priority was getting names and e-mail addresses. Mr. Parnes suggested that perhaps the program should be turned over to the businesses. Mrs. Morgan said the program should stay with the Tourism Board to maintain the database, and Mrs. Booth agreed. It was noted that all merchants are participating in the program. Mrs. Fasolo opened discussions of postcards for the next three months - Romantic (February), St. Patrick's Day (March), and Food & Wine (April).

St. Michaels Tourism Board
01/12/09 Meeting Minutes

Other Advertising – Mr. Mason opened the discussion. The members discussed other advertising issues, but tabled discussion of the Talbot County Office of Tourism report to a future meeting. It was noted that the MAC visit took place on January 8, 2009 and was a success. Mr. Mason will send ads to Mr. Richardson for inclusion in the St. Michaels Business Association binders. Mrs. Morgan also made a suggestion about putting business association information in empty store fronts in town.

Bike Trail Celebrity - Mrs. Van Fleet said she was working on a celebrity candidate for the Bike Trail promotion.

URL Purchase – Mr. Mason opened the discussion noting that the URL change had been approved and billed.

Future Discussion Items:

- Funding for Passport Page on SMBA website – Mr. Mason said the Business Association should bring a funding request for an update of the Passport Page to the Tourism Board and the Board will take the request to the Commissioners. Mrs. Booth asked if there would be a bidding process. Mr. Richardson said the total estimate for the upgrade was approximately \$8,000.00, but that he needed to confirm the estimate.
- Mr. Mason noted that the issue of a standard form and protocol for making requests for event funding should be tabled to a future meeting as it would need to go to the Commissioners. Mr. Parnes offered to create a form that the Board could use.
- Room Tax – Mr. Mason said he had talked to Town Manager Cheril Thomas about possible funds available to the Tourism Board from the Town's room tax and amusement tax allotments. Mrs. Thomas had said the Tourism Board could "ask" for any amount they want. Further discussion of this topic was tabled to a future meeting.
- Clear Channel Advertising – Mr. Mason said this topic should be on a future agenda to keep it in the Board's scope of work.
- Trailhead Parking issue – Mr. Mason stated that he needed to follow up with Mrs. Thomas regarding the background on this project.

Other Business:

- Chesapeake Life – Mr. Mason noted there was a cooperative ad opportunity with Talbot County - \$382 for 1/6 of page in Chesapeake Life. The ad would promote Talbot County as a travel destination. Mr. Mason said the County was also looking for four businesses to contribute to a full page ad.
- Meeting Dates - Mrs. Booth inquired about the availability of Debbie Dodson to participate in a Tourism Board meeting. Chairman Mason said he would contact her. The members also discussed January 26th, 27th or 28th as possible next meeting dates.

Adjournment - Chairman Mason made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 a.m., which was seconded by Bonnie Booth, and which passed on a vote of 7-0 in favor.

Submitted by: _____
Sabrenia L. Yohn, Administrative Clerk

Date: _____