

**St. Michaels Tourism Board**

**Public Meeting Minutes**

**April 13, 2010**

**Present:**

Chairman Jon Mason, members Rosemary Fasolo, Helen Van Fleet, Angela Eade-Spence, Langley Shook, Debbi Dodson, Advisor, Talbot County Office of Tourism, Administrative Clerk Sabrenia Yohn, Zoning Officer Deborah Renshaw and one member of the public. Member Bonnie Booth was absent.

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Mason called to order the meeting of the St. Michaels Tourism Board at 8:28 a.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building (Town Office), 300 Mill Street, St. Michaels.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Member Van Fleet made the motion to approve the minutes from the March 9, 2010 meeting. Chairman Mason seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Chairman Mason made a motion to change the order of the agenda to move Item #8, Requests for Exemptions to the Noise Ordinance, up to the next item for discussion. Member Spence seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor.

**Request for Noise Exemptions - Midnight Madness and WineFest:**

Chairman Mason said the Board had two requests for exemptions to the Town's Noise Ordinance, one from the Midnight Madness Committee whose event has been granted an exemption for the last three years and one from the WineFest Committee for their event April 23 through 25, 2010. Chairman Mason made the motion to grant Midnight Madness an exemption from the Noise Ordinance for this year's event. Member Shook asked if there could be discussion or did the chairman want the second first. Chairman Mason said there could be discussion first. Member Shook asked if there was a second. Member Spence offered a second.

There was a discussion among the members regarding the Midnight Madness event and Chairman Mason noted that the exception to the Noise Ordinance allows them to have a radio station remote broadcast for the evening on Talbot Street and allows them to broadcast the drawing through a microphone at 11:30 p.m. Member Van Fleet said that to her knowledge there had never been a complaint and also noted that many of the attendees at the event are from St. Michaels, so it is more of a community event. Following some additional discussion, Chairman Mason reiterated his motion which only covers the request for an exemption from Midnight Madness. Member Spence reiterated her second to the motion which passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor. Chairman Mason said the motion carries so that Midnight Madness has an exemption to the Noise Ordinance, and noted that the exemption is one of the Board's two exemptions that they can grant for the year.

Chairman Mason then opened the discussion regarding the request for a noise exemption from the WineFest Committee, noting that he had spoken with George Wilson of the WineFest Committee regarding their request on April 12, 2010. Chairman Mason added that WineFest wanted to have various locations of amplified music to which Mrs. Renshaw noted that while the exemption covers the event the amplified music is only permitted in the Central Commercial Zone. However, they could have as many un-amplified venues as they want regardless of whether it is

inside or outside the Central Commercial Zone. Chairman Mason said that Mr. Wilson is aware of this and accordingly Chairman Mason is proposing, subject to discussion, that the Tourism Board grants WineFest the exemption, with the stipulation that they stay within the letter of the law, which is the job of the Town and the Police to decipher and enforce. Chairman Mason then made a motion to give WineFest of St. Michaels an exemption to the Noise Ordinance for Saturday, April 24, 2010 only, as long as they stay within the requirements of the Noise Ordinance as it is deciphered by the Town Office and enforced by the Chief of Police. A lengthy discussion took place between Member Shook and Mrs. Renshaw regarding the Town's Noise Ordinance and the number of annual exemptions for amplified music in the Central Commercial Zone which is currently two events per year for only the amplified portion of the Ordinance, adding that they would not be exempt from the whole Ordinance. Member Shook asked if, under the Code, the Commission have the authority to grant an exemption to one entity for one event lasting more than 12 hours to which Mrs. Renshaw responded no, not as the Ordinance is currently written. Member Shook asked if the Commissioners had the discretion to spread the 12-hour event over several days, i.e., six hours one day and six hours another day to which Mrs. Renshaw responded no, the Ordinance specifically states that the exemption expires at 12:00 midnight on the day specified in the exemption.

There was discussion by the members that perhaps the Ordinance should be changed to allow six exemptions a year. Mrs. Renshaw explained that the Board would need to make a request to the Planning Commission for consideration of a text amendment to the Noise Section of the Code, (Section 216) to increase the number of exemptions allowed; that the Planning Commission would have to hold public hearings; and then make a recommendation to the Commissioners. Mrs. Renshaw estimated that it would take at least six months to go through the process. Member Shook offered to write the letter to the Planning Commission, and to consult with Mrs. Renshaw on the language. Mrs. Renshaw also suggested that the Board may want to consider whether they would want the exemption to apply to zones other than the Central Commercial Zone, for example the Mill or the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum properties which are not in the Central Commercial Zone.

Chairman Mason reminded everyone that there was a motion on the table to grant a favorable recommendation to give WineFest an exemption from the Noise Ordinance on Saturday, April 24, 2010 only, and that they must understand and follow the exemption as it pertains to the Town's Noise Ordinance. There was additional discussion of enforcement and other implications of the exemption. Member Shook asked Chairman Mason to withdraw his motion and he would make a new motion. Chairman Mason withdrew his motion. Member Shook made a motion that this Board grants a favorable recommendation to allow a one-time, 12-hour exemption to the WineFest event within the parameters of its authority to make such a recommendation, and therefore leave it to the sponsors of the WineFest to request from the Commissioners a broader, expanded exemption. Chairman Mason seconded the motion. Mrs. Renshaw said she was not sure that the motion would solve the problem. There was additional discussion of multiple amplified venues included in the exemption. Mrs. Renshaw said her concern was the other businesses, in and out of the Commercial Zone who are not identified as participants in the Winefest, who want to have music and be part of the event. Member Shook then suggested that the motion be changed to consider all of the participants in the Winefest event that day. Member Shook amended his motion to say that this Board forward a recommendation to the Commissioners, pursuant to Section 216-5 K 3 of the Town's Noise Ordinance, that the Commissioners grant an exception to the WineFest, but only after determining exactly what venues/businesses will be allowed to have amplified music. Member Fasolo seconded the motion. Chairman Mason called for a vote and the motion passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor.

**Approval of Invoices:**

Chairman Mason approved two invoices from Pixel Print & Post; one for printing in the amount of \$62.50 and one for design/typesetting of the e-postcards in the amount of \$280.00.

**Over the Street Banners:**

Chairman Mason called upon Ilene Morgan and Mrs. Renshaw to open the discussion regarding over-the-street banners. Mrs. Morgan said she wanted to resurrect an alternative banner display, possibly Commissioner Hunt's proposal from a prior Tourism Board meeting, in light of the fact that over-the-street banners are no longer allowed since the Midnight Madness banner came down last year and Choptank said they would no longer install them. Mrs. Renshaw said she had met with the Commissioners, and the Planning Commission in workshops, and with businesses. As a result of those meetings, the Planning Commission will be presenting the Commissioners with sign alternatives which include festival banners which will display up to three events at a time and also special events signs. Member Spence asked about costs and Mrs. Renshaw responded that costs of the various sign alternatives had not yet been determined. Member Fasolo said that size of the signs was a major issue for the Tourism Board. Mrs. Renshaw recommended that the members make their preferences known to the Commissioners. At the suggestion of Chairman Mason, Ilene Morgan offered to draft an opinion letter for the Tourism Board's approval to be sent to the Planning Commission which outlined the Tourism Board's preferences with regard to size. Mrs. Renshaw noted that the event signage could be located on the north and south ends of Town and either on private or public property. Member Shook also referenced the use of the Pascal property on the south end of Town for signage.

Chairman Mason departed the meeting at 9:20 a.m. and turned the meeting over to Member Spence. Member Van Fleet asked about the boundaries for the Central Commercial Zone. Mrs. Renshaw identified the boundaries of the zone and provided the Board with a map that could be distributed to business owners.

Mrs. Renshaw continued her presentation regarding signage with a discussion of wayfaring signage. Mrs. Renshaw said that the Planning Commission has made recommendations to the Commissioners that wayfaring signs be approved, that the maximum size limit should be 16 feet, and that the Business Association and the Tourism Board should work together to make recommendations at public hearings on what the signs should look like, where they should be positioned, and estimated costs. Mrs. Renshaw offered suggestions on what wayfaring signs in other locales had to offer, and the members discussed ideas and options. Member Shook said he had some estimates on costs, depending on content, and that he could possibly recommend graphic artists who would do the work at no charge. Mrs. Renshaw said the first public hearing that would include the wayfaring signage issue was scheduled for May, but that the Board should plan on submitting their letter regarding event signage as soon as possible.

**Advertising Update:**

Debbi Dodson provided a review of recent advertising and said she would be presenting and more detailed update at the next meeting, including budget information. Ms. Dodson said that the Restaurant Week event was quite successful with effective promotion and advertising. Ms. Dodson said the closing event, which included the showing of "Big Night", was very well coordinated and tickets were sold out. Ms. Dodson said that The Oaks deserved great praise for their handling of a very elegant opening night. Ms. Dodson concluded her presentation by noting that the participating restaurants praised the event, some were overflowing with business, and others wanted to do the event twice a year in November and in March.

**Photography Update:**

Member Shook noted prior to departing for another meeting that the Museum's photographer, Mr. Harp was ready to do a photo shoot at no charge. Member Fasolo said she had sent a photo shot list to Member Shook which includes proposed seasonal photos as well and that she would e-mail the list to all the board members for their comments and input and asked that this topic be put on the agenda for further discussion at the May 2010 meeting.

**Getaway Program Update:**

Member Spence said she would pick up postcards from Pixel Print & Post and that the Getaway committee was moving forward with Aida Leisure's idea for a "Greenbook" savings book for St. Michaels, and that Ms. Leisure has agreed to fund the project initially. Member Spence said the committee will provide information on costs by the next meeting. Ms. Dodson requested that on the next batch of cards, a line for a phone number be added because attempts to contact the last winner by e-mail were unsuccessful. Ms. Dodson added that if a winner could not be contacted by all means available and did not respond within seven (7) days of being contacted, that a new winner should be drawn.

**Comments from the Public:**

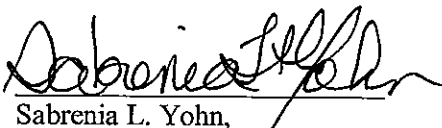
There were no comments from the public.

**Next Meeting Date and Time:**

Member Fasolo asked when the next e-blast should be scheduled and Ms. Dodson proposed sending one at the end of May to advertise June/July events and that the date should be discussed at the next meeting. Ms. Dodson also proposed that a discussion regarding the retail vacancy on the Tourism Board be discussed at the next meeting in May, and noted that there were three individuals who had informally expressed interest in serving - Clive O'Donagher, Mary Ann Yost of Rupert's and Jane Virgil, of Oyster House. Member Spence said she would raise the issue with the Business Association. Ms. Dodson also asked about absences and departures from the Tourism Board meetings and suggested that the time of the meeting be changed to see if that would be help. The members agreed to discuss this at the May meeting. Member Spence made the motion to change the meeting time. The next meeting was set for May 11, 2010 at 8:30 a.m.

**Adjournment:**

Member Spence made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 a.m. Member Fasolo seconded the motion which passed by consensus vote.

Submitted by:  Date: 5/11/10  
Sabrenia L. Yohn,  
Administrative Clerk