

April 14, 2009

Present:

Chairman Jon Mason, Helen Van Fleet, Stuart Parnes, Debbi Dodson, Advisor, Talbot County Office of Tourism, Ilene Morgan, Rosemary Fasolo, Commissioner Donna Hunt and Administrative Clerk Sabrenia Yohn.

Call to Order:

Chairman Mason called the meeting of the St. Michaels Tourism Board to order at 8:33 a.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building, 300 Mill Street.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Mason noted that the town website was now posting Tourism Board minutes, and then called for a motion to approve minutes of the March 10, 2009 meeting of the Tourism Board. Mrs. Van Fleet made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Parnes seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 4-0. (Member Ilene Morgan joined the meeting following the vote.)

Discussion Regarding "New" Town Seal and Implementation:

Chairman Mason opened a discussion regarding using the Town seal as a logo for the website for the passport program. After discussion, because the language on the Town seal logo cannot be changed, Ms. Fasolo's last design will continue to be used. It was also noted that there was still nothing to link to on the website and a back page was needed.

Discussion Regarding Proposed Permanent Banner Design and Location:

Chairman Mason opened a discussion of banners to advertise town events. Commissioner Hunt presented a display sample wooden sign and noted that the approximate cost of a full sized display frame would be \$200.00. Mr. Parnes said that size was critical to the banner display. Ms. Fasolo said the actual banners across the highway and the proposed banner for the side of the roadway gave the town a more "village" feel as opposed to a "corporate" feel to the more formal sign. Chairman Mason asked Commissioner Hunt to get specific objections from the Commissioners to the proposed fabric banners. The board members agreed to discuss options further and then reconvene.

Advertising Update:

Debbi Dodson passed out sample advertising that recently appeared in various magazines. She noted that \$3,500.00 was remaining for the current fiscal year's advertising budget. Ms. Dodson said she had approved \$2,500.00 in matching advertising dollars and that additional ads would need to be placed by June 30, 2009. Ms. Dodson also noted that there are now different URLs on ads to track. Ms. Fasolo gave an update on URLs and suggested moving to sub-domains with Internet Connections instead of URLs. She also noted that it is not possible to go back and get prior tracking data from the URLs.

Ms. Dodson said she had made revisions to the Food and Wine Festival Survey form and passed around copies for review.

Arts and Entertainment District Main Street Maryland and Heritage Districts:

Debbi Dodson opened the discussion of this topic and asked if Andrea Vernot could be added to a Tourism Board future agenda to make a presentation on Main Street and Arts & Entertainment districts, as well as provide information on resources for businesses. Ms. Dodson said she would contact Ms. Vernot for any presentation materials she could provide in advance.

Talbot County Bicycle Maps – Debbi Dodson said there was a meeting at the Tidewater Inn on May 20, 2009 with Kelly Benefit Strategies, who would be coming to endorse the County's bike trails. Ms. Dodson also said that Bicycle Vermont had inquired about tours because they have an interest in promoting wellness tours. Ms. Dodson reviewed other upcoming events including Annual Marketing Day on June 2, 2009 at which Talbot County would present tourism awards.

MML Convention Booth:

The members discussed the upcoming Maryland Municipal League convention in Ocean City and made suggestions for give-aways and the booth and using passport cards to obtain contact information. Mrs. Yohn will work with Ms. Fasolo to obtain passport cards and Town brochures to hand out during the convention to participants.

Old Business:

Event Funding Form - Chairman Mason opened a discussion of the proposed cover letter for the Event Funding Form and said that he will work with Mrs. Yohn to create a draft letter.

New Business:

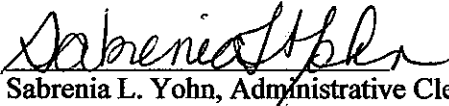
- Mrs. Morgan presented the Board with a letter from Carol Parlett of the St. Michaels Business Association, which referenced total costs of \$15,770.20 for the distribution of 100,000 teaser rack cards and that the Business Association was asking for funding from the Tourism Board to help offset this cost. Ms. Fasolo noted that the three companies being used for distribution have unique URLs so they can be tracked. Chairman Mason said he would like to know the amount of funding that will be available to the Tourism Board from the Commissioners of St. Michaels' fiscal year 2010 budget before making a decision on contributions to the Business Association. Debbi Dodson said that she and Vice Chairman Bonnie Booth were working on the marketing plan to be presented to the Commissioners for 2009. Commissioner Hunt noted that the public hearing on the Commissioners' 2010 budget is scheduled for April 22, 2009 and the amount of funds being budgeted for the Tourism Board will be included in the discussion.
- Chairman Mason opened a discussion regarding the member vacancy on the Tourism Board and the prior decision of the Board to ask Carol Parlett to fill the vacant Business Association Executive Director position. Chairman Mason said Carol Parlett's schedule does not enable her to sit on the Tourism Board, especially since the Business Association has no plans to hire an Executive Director replacement at this time. Chairman Mason also noted that the Board should be considering other changes in membership, as the terms of Rosemary Fasolo and Ilene Morgan expire in June 2009, and Mrs. Morgan has indicated she will not seek another term. Chairman Mason said he would like the Commissioners to decide. Chairman Mason made a motion to send a letter and resumes to the Commissioners requesting that they vote on an SMBA candidate for the Tourism Board seat. Mr. Parnes seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Board Comment:

Rosemary Fasolo praised the work of Debbi Dodson on advertising, and suggested that ad campaigns have longer terms.

Adjournment:

Rosemary Fasolo made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 a.m. Chairman Mason seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Submitted by: 
Sabrenia L. Yohn, Administrative Clerk

Date: 5/12/09