

St. Michaels Tourism Board

Public Meeting Minutes

June 2, 2009

Present:

Chairman, Jon Mason; Rosemary Fasolo; Ilene Morgan; Stuart Parnes; Helen Van Fleet; and Debbi Dodson, Advisor, Talbot County Office of Tourism; and Administrative Clerk Sabrenia Yohn. Vice Chairman Bonnie Booth was absent. One member of the public was present - Mr. John Booth.

Call to Order:

Chairman Jon Mason called the meeting of the St. Michaels Tourism Board to order at 8:35 a.m. in the meeting room of the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building, 300 Mill Street, St. Michaels, Maryland.

Approval of Minutes:

Chairman Mason called for a motion to approve minutes for the May 12, 2009 meeting of the Tourism Board. Rosemary Fasolo made the motion. Helen Van Fleet seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor.

Advertising Update:

Advisor Debbi Dodson provided an overview of advertising that has run since June 2008 to the present. Ms. Dodson noted that the Talbot County Tourism office had expended all of its funding for the year and was over budget by \$48.25. Ms. Dodson said of the \$45,000 advertising budget provided to the St. Michaels Tourism Board, all but \$10,424.00 has been expended. Ms. Dodson noted, however, that two additional ads and an outstanding invoice would be paid for from that sum, which would leave \$1,826.00. Ms. Dodson said the Board could determine how they would like to use the remaining funds, but that the amount must be expended by the end of June or it would be forfeited. Ms. Dodson said all bills would be submitted to the Town, along with a marketing plan and a report of goals achieved by the Board this year.

Ms. Fasolo reported on event funding. She noted that fifty percent of the funding went to the Tourism Board and fifty percent to the person/organization requesting the funds, which Debbi Dodson tracks. Ilene Morgan asked if unique URLs were being used for tracking. Ms. Dodson said initially, the URLs were linked to the main website and were not being tracked. She noted however that URLs utilized in May and June can be tracked. Ms. Fasolo said that unique URLs had been purchased by the St. Michaels Business Association from GoDaddy but was not being used. Mr. Mason and Ms. Fasolo said they were using unique sub-domains that are tracked by publication.

Ilene Morgan said the co-chairs for Midnight Madness had asked about advertising for that event. Ms. Fasolo suggested that event advertising be placed on the agenda for another meeting, along with a discussion of branding and campaign ads. Mr. Mason said this discussion should take place in the next couple of weeks and suggested that the meeting on June 15th be devoted to this issue.

Discussion re: Election of Board Chairman, Tourism Board expiring terms, and Tourism Board vacancies:

Mr. Mason opened a discussion on nominations for the Tourism Board. Ilene Morgan nominated Jon Mason to continue as Chairman and Mr. Mason indicated that he was interested in remaining in the position. Ms. Fasolo seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 4-0 in favor. Mr. Mason recommended that Rosemary Fasolo remain as at-large member and that Helen Van Fleet remain as the bed and breakfast representative. There was consensus from members Stuart Parnes and Ilene Morgan. There was also a consensus of the Tourism Board members that Angela Wade-Spence be recommended for the SMBA vacancy created by Richard Richardson.

Old Business:

- **Event funding form and cover letter** – Mr. Mason said he had approved the cover letter and that Sabrenia Yohn would put the letter and the Event Funding Form on the Town's website. Mr. Mason also said the availability of the cover letter and the Event Funding Form would be announced via the Business Association's minutes. Mr. Mason called for a motion to approve the cover letter and form. Ms. Fasolo seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor.
- **Annual Report to the Commissioners** - Debbi Dodson provided a draft marketing plan for everyone to review and then discuss at the June 15, 2009 meeting. Ms. Yohn noted that the Tourism Board funding for Fiscal Year 2010 from the Commissioners of St. Michaels was in the amount of \$130,405.00. Mr. Mason, Ms. Dodson and Ms. Yohn would work on a draft report for the June 15th meeting.
- **St. Michaels Business Association Rack Cards** - Ilene Morgan and Stuart Parnes noted there had been no decision on this matter at the last meeting. Mr. Mason opened the discussion of rack cards. The members discussed available advertising funds, distribution of the cards by the Business Association, printing costs and distribution responsibilities. Ms. Morgan noted that the rack cards were a cost-cutting measure in order to avoid printing the full Visitor's Guide due to lack of funds and a decrease in members in the Business Association. John Booth of the Five Gables Inn and Spa inquired why there were two ads for Tilghman Island activities on the rack card. Mr. Mason suggested this should be discussed at the June 15th meeting. Ms. Dodson advised that there was approximately \$5,000.00 available from fiscal year 2009 funds that could be applied for advertising costs. However, Ms. Dodson also suggested the Board could do additional advertising in the Washington Times with the funds. Ms. Morgan then asked Ms. Dodson for her opinion of the rack cards. Ms. Dodson said that while she acknowledged the value of rack cards, she believed there was more value in direct advertising. Helen Van Fleet said rack cards do get the Town's name out there. Mr. Parnes said he thought the information on the card was vague and did not reflect a standard of quality for advertising. The discussion concluded with a motion by Mr. Parnes to make a \$2,500.00 contribution to the St. Michaels Business Association. Ms. Van Fleet seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor. Ms. Fasolo noted that going forward the Business Association would need to request funding using the Event Funding Form and submit the request earlier in the year.
- **URL Usage** - There were no additional comments.
- **Website Agreement between the St. Michaels Business Association (SMBA) and the Tourism Board** – Mr. Mason opened a discussion of the Website Agreement. Ms. Fasolo

asked if there had been any payment, and noted that she believed that the Business Association never brought it before the Board. Responding to a question by Mr. Mason, Ms. Fasolo said she believed there had not been any updates as requested by the Tourism Board. Mr. Mason said the issue needs to go before the complete SMBA membership. Ms. Fasolo suggested that the issue be taken up at the June SMBA meeting and, if approved, the SMBA would send an invoice to the Tourism Board.

- **Passport Cards** – Mr. Mason opened the discussion, noting that the program needed to be re-invigorated by putting cards on counters, i.e., physical implementation and website backup. Ms. Fasolo suggested that the program needs an administrator and noted that the expiration date and monthly drawings deadlines on the existing card inventory was outdated. Mr. Mason suggested that a request be made to the SMBA for an ambassador for the program.

New Business:

- **Banner Approval** – Mr. Mason said that there would be an update on the banner application process at the June 15, 2009. Debbi Dodson said she would get an update on the passport program in time for the meeting.

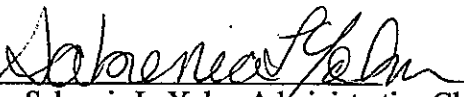
Announcement of Next Meeting:

Mr. Mason said the next meeting of the Tourism Board would be Monday, June 15, 2009 at 8:30 a.m.

Adjournment:

Rosemary Fasolo made the motion to adjourn. Ilene Morgan seconded the motion which passed on a vote of 5-0 in favor at 10:03 a.m.

Submitted by:


Sabrenia L. Yohn, Administrative Clerk

Date:

6/15/09