

**Talbot County Tourism Board
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, November 15, 2017
8:30 a.m.**

101 Marlboro Avenue, Suite 53, Conference Room #1, Easton, MD 21601

I. Call to Order

Chairperson Judy Bixler called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Board Members Present: Judy Bixler, John Booth, Ian Fleming, Tracy Johns, Dolores Jones, Harold Klinger, Jeff Schneider, Al Silverstein, Cassandra Vanhooser and Kimberly Weller

Board Members Absent: Kelley Cox, Angela Eade, Laura Price, Ben Simons

Recording Secretary: Candace Harris

Visitors: Ryan Snow

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from the October meeting were presented. Jeff Schneider moved that the minutes be accepted as written. Harold Klinger seconded the motion, which passed by unanimous vote.

III. Old Business

Hotel/Motel Board Position: Ms. Vanhooser spoke with Waitman Vanorsdale who is the General Manager of the Fairfield Inn. She asked Mr. Vanorsdale if he would be interested in joining our board in the hotel/motel position. Mr. Vanorsdale is very excited about the opportunity and would like to join the board. Ms. Vanhooser recommends to the board that Mr. Vanorsdale be accepted in the hotel/motel position on the board. Mr. John Booth motioned to accept Mr. Vanorsdale for the board position and Mr. Al Silverstein seconded the motion. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

At-Large Position: Ms. Vanhooser reported that Mary O'Donnell our new Assistant County Attorney has addressed the situation and the legislation is moving forward and will hopefully be done by the first of the year.

IV. New Business

Travel Tourism Summit: Ms. Vanhooser gave a report on the Travel & Tourism Summit. Ms. Bixler stated that Ms. Vanhooser won an award for the MATPRA

Conference. Ms. Vanhooser stated that the CBMM won an award for the Edna Lockwood Restoration project.

Ms. Vanhooser asked Kim Weller, Judy Bixler if they wanted to report anything about the meeting. Tracy stated that she learned some interesting things from the meeting. She stated that 65 % of people do not listen to videos anymore, and marketers should use captions. She also stated that videos should be no longer than 8 seconds. It was suggested to use Facebook Live everyday. Another interesting fact that she learned is 50% of people are mobile or smart phone users now, but the future is Alexia. You have to make sure your Google my location and map are up to date in order to maximize Alexia. If all businesses in Talbot County keep their Google listings up to date this will strengthen the Talbot County brand. Tracey also asked the question: How are you listening to your audiences? She said that it is very important to respond to people who contact you, i.e. "Thank people for reviewing." She said if you want attention, you have to give attention.

Al Silverstein mentioned a Regional Google and Facebook workshop at Chesapeake College. It is free at 8 am on December 6th. The five regional chambers are sponsoring it. Mr. Silverstein passed out a flyer for all board members.

Drone Program: Ms. Vanhooser reported that we presented at the County Council meeting at Andy's request about our drone program. Sam is a FAA licensed drone pilot. We have bought a drone for the department and will be working on our video library. We prepared some frequently asked questions to pass out to council. Council was very excited about it. The council voted for us to continue to pursue this and have an operations manual created by a third party. We will be using it for marketing purposes only. We cannot fly in the Easton airspace. This is another tool for our department for marketing purposes. Kim Weller asked where she could get a copy of the regulations. Tracy Johns stated that you could find a link to the FAA guideline on the CBMM's media page.

Enterprise Zone on Tilghman Island: The County Council voted on the legislation that allows us to submit our application for an enterprise zone on Tilghman Island. The enterprise zone identified on Tilghman Island is 85 acres primarily the waterfront, Knapps Narrows, Tilghman Island road to Harrison's. This will incentivize people to invest into those properties. They would get a 10-year real property tax credit and income tax credit for the number of new employees. The County did not set a minimum for investment or employees. This will go to the Maryland Department of Commerce, and Commerce has to designate it. Without this legislation, Commerce will not consider the application.

Property Access Clean Energy (PACE): Legislation is proceeding for this incentive program. You can borrow money from an independent lender and have the payment assessed on your property tax. The bill will come from the County for this investment in your property. Many people really interested in the program. Ms. Vanhooser expect this legislation to be enacted no later than the first part of 2018.

V. Comments:

Al Silverstein reported that the Planning Commission's recommendation on the new zoning category for Port Street will come before the Town Council next Monday, and they will start taking comments from the public. Kim Weller reported that three new businesses will be coming to St. Michaels. Jimmy & Sooks, Galley Restaurant, and Sunnyside Shop which is a women's clothing store. She also reported that St. Michaels will be having a Daffodil Festival in April of 2018. Tracy reported that the CBMM has a new Vice President of Operations. There is also potential big project with the State of Maryland to rebrand the boat yard as a shipyard. There are plans to expand the railway. Ian Fleming reported that Pope's Tavern, Capsized and Sandaway will be closed for the winter months.

VI. Town Reports

Representatives from each of the towns reported on news and events taking place in their jurisdictions.

VII. Next Board Meeting

The next board meeting will be our Christmas party and is scheduled on Tuesday, December 12, 2017. Ms. Vanhooser will get back to the Board with the time and location.

X. Adjournment

Ms. Bixler thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. Harold Klinger motioned for adjournment and Jeff Schneider seconded. The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:15 a.m.