

Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes
August 12, 2013

The following individuals were in attendance:

Commission Members – Tourism Commission Chair and Council Secretary Mary Knight, Mayor Rick Meehan, Councilman Dennis Dare, and Councilman Joe Mitrecic, Tom Perlozzo, Chamber, Michael James, EDC. Staff members present were David Recor, City Manager; Donna Abbott, Tourism Director; Larry Noccolino, Convention Center Director; Lisa Osman, Tourism Department; Tom Shuster, Recreation and Parks Director; Frank Miller, Special Events. Also present Melanie Pursel, Chamber of Commerce; Susan Jones, HMRA; Greg Shockley, MTPB; and Andy Malis and Alison Fiorelli, MGH. Media representatives present were Zach Hoopes, Ocean City Today, and Joanne Shriner, Maryland Coast Dispatch.

The meeting was called to order by Mary Knight at 3 p.m.

Tourism Metrics Update

Donna Abbott handed out metrics reports for May and June 2013. She will present these reports to the Mayor and Council at the Work Session on August 27. Mary asked Susan Jones if HMRA could get zipcode information from hotels. Her board does not meet until after summer and will discuss then.

Wine in the Park

Chris Nokes and Jerry Hardesty introduced staff and said they were happy with the success of the first Wine in the Park in June and are working to increase promotion of next year's event. They want to develop a stronger partnership with hotels and businesses. They will be working with Nic Hills to promote the 2014 event. In 2014, Wine in the Park will run simultaneously with Art's Alive at Northside Park. Tom Shuster reported the dates will work to have it at Northside Park along with Art's Alive. Melanie Pursel offered to add a section in the 2014 Vacation Guide to better publicize the event. Susan Jones also offered to add the event to her online mailings. Tourism Director Donna Abbott said information about Wine in the Park could also be included in some of the Art's Alive promotions.

Action: Send email list of attendees from this meeting to Chris Nokes.

Enhanced CVB membership listings and ad serving on ococean

Alison Fiorelli provided a presentation on tiered membership listing options on the tourism website ococean for the Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB). Currently businesses pay \$200 for a CVB membership, which entitles them to a listing on the website among other benefits. In the proposal presented by MGH, a tiered membership would offer a means of offering more visibility on ococean. A four-tier system was presented, which would have options ranging from a basic business name and address listing, to having a more expanded description, to having a fixed placement ad at the top of the list. An option was also presented that businesses could purchase a fixed placement ad for one week at a time. Banner ad placements could also be an option for members.

Mary Knight suggested that we distribute a survey to current CVB members along with members of the Chamber and HMRA to see what the interest would be for a new membership and advertisements.

Action taken: MGH will develop the survey with Donna Abbott, who will report back results at the October Tourism Commission Meeting. Results and recommendations will then be presented to the Mayor and Council.

Updates from other Departments & Organizations

Melanie Pursel has been working with the Comptroller's office regarding schools starting after Labor Day news conference scheduled for August 15 on the boardwalk in front of the museum. She also announced that the Chamber's annual Emerald Ball will be held at the Clarion on September 6.

Susan Jones stated that Hotel Week is August 18-29 and that 33 hotels are participating.

Frank Miller announced that the Tall Ship Event is finalized. The ship will be arriving on August 20 and will be here through September 2. Visitors can tour the ship from 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., with certain nights having extended hours until 9:00 p.m. For more information, the website is tallshipevent.com.

Tom Shuster announced that day camps and sports camps were very strong this summer. There is a LAX tournament Thursday - Sunday, and there will be a basketball tournament inside the gym. He also announced that the Coca-Cola Polar Bears will be a new display added to the Winterfest of Lights this year.

Larry Noccolino announced that MACo is here this week. He also stated that the Convention Center has started awarding Outstanding Employee of the Month Awards. Staging for Phase 2 of the Convention Center Construction will start on August 27.

Andy Malis mentioned that Rodney was in town on July 9 and that MGH has posted video on Facebook of that day's activities.

Mayor Meehan announced that he will be attending the Welcome Ceremony for the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Convention on Thursday at 9:00 a.m. at the Convention Center. He also mentioned that there will be a celebration on Saturday, August 27, for the new boardwalk and the 25th year of beach replenishment.

The next meeting will be held on Monday, September 9 at 3 p.m. in the Community Meeting Room of City Hall.