

Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes  
January 13, 2014

The following individuals were in attendance:

Commission Members – Tourism Commission Chair and Council Secretary Mary Knight, Mayor Rick Meehan, Councilman Dennis Dare, Councilman Joe Mitrecic; Chris Trimper , HMRA; Michael James, EDC; Gregg Shockley, MTDB. Staff members present were City Manager David Recor, 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 were Melanie Pursel, Chamber of Commerce; Susan Jones, HMRA and Andy Malis, MGH. Media representatives present were Zach Hoopes, Ocean City Today; and Joanne Shriner, Maryland Coast Dispatch.

Mary Knight called the meeting to order at 3 p.m. She announced that we would go into a closed session at the end of the meeting to discuss next year's campaign.

Approval of Minutes

Councilman Joe Mitrecic made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 4, 2013 meeting. Councilman Dennis Dare seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

Ping Pong Summer

Donna announced that the movie Ping Pong Summer is at the Sundance Film Festival scheduled for January 18. She asked if anyone has any ideas or suggestions on how we might promote the movie. Mary Knight suggested Facebook and other social media avenues. Mary stated that out of the top 15 films, that Ping Pong Summer is #11, which is really positive. Donna mentioned that the producers may hold a local premiere at some point and there may be other promotional opportunities at that time.

Updates from other Departments & Organizations

Chamber of Commerce

Melanie announced the release of the 2014 Vacation Guide, which was delivered to the Convention Center and the Chamber of Commerce on December 23. She distributed a vacation guide to all attendees. Melanie thanked Donna Abbott and Lisa Osman for their assistance with getting the vacation guide completed. On Wednesday, Melanie will be meeting in Annapolis with elected officials. Her committee will be going over their top priorities for the state legislative session including support for the state tourism budget, in addition to the post-Labor Day school start date and the minimum wage rate issue.

Melanie and Susan announced a grant for business training had been awarded.

Economic Development Committee

Michael James announced that the next EDC meeting will be held on February 5 at the Carousel, and the Superintendent for Worcester County Public Schools will be the guest speaker. The Mayor thought it would be a good idea to have a lot of people at the meeting that support the post-Labor Day school start to express their opinion. The Mayor stated that if the post-Labor Day school start was to be put on the statewide referendum, he thinks it would win.

#### Maryland Tourism Development Board

Greg Shockley reported the task force studying a post-Labor Day school start calendar is ready to forward a recommendation to the legislature in support of Maryland schools beginning after Labor Day. School superintendents in Maryland are against the post-Labor Day school start date. With any luck, by mid-February the bill will be in legislature and we can move forward. Michael James noted legislators across the state should hear from their constituents in support of the bill.

#### HMRA

Susan Jones stated that the next HMRA Board meeting will have OCPD Chief Buzzuro in attendance as a follow-up to the October meeting that he attended. The HMRA dinner will be held Thursday evening at Fresco's. The HMRA Trade Show will be held on March 9-10 at the Convention Center, and Susan's staff has been very busy selling booths for the show. There will be close to 400 exhibit booths in all three halls. The Food Network's Chef Steve Weiss will be doing a sugar demonstration at the show. The Red, White and Brew Stage will be located in the Dockside Hall, including culinary demos, mixology discussions and WOCM's Battle of the Beaches Orange Crush Battle. Trip Advisor is coming to do a seminar.

#### OCDC

Chris Trimper stated the State of Maryland approved the Ocean City Sustainable Community Plan. This should result in funds for some of OCDC's projects.

#### Tourism Department

Donna mentioned that the RFP for the Tourism Strategic Plan went out and was also sent to the State's list of candidates who participated in their strategic plan RFP process. Donna has received some questions and some interested feedback from that list. She also sent it to the short list of finalists who competed for the Volusia County tourism strategic plan. Proposals are due in on January 28. She hopes to have a good group of submissions to review.

#### Convention Center

On Wednesday, Larry will visit the Performing Arts Center at Chesapeake Community College in Wye Mills. Now in the third month of construction and things are moving right along. The Convention Center is continuing to make upgrades to the Wi-Fi Internet system. On Tuesday, there was a flood due to a frozen pipe that busted. The entire lobby was flooded and the staff did an excellent job cleaning up. The Officer of the Year Banquet, which was being held in the ballroom, was only delayed about 30 minutes due to the flood. Larry commented on an article that he had read in one of the local papers

about Ocean City's off-season. The article stated that Ocean City may not be a year-round resort. Larry begged to differ and stated that between September 15 and January 20, the Convention Center has only four open weekends.

#### Recreation and Parks

Tom Shuster mentioned that there will be a Super Bowl Golf Tournament on February 2 at Eagle's Landing Golf Course. The St. Patrick's Indoor Soccer Tournament brings 160 teams to Ocean City over four weekends. Dates for the tournament are Feb. 21-23, Feb. 28-March 2, March 7-9, March 14-16. From his perspective, things are pretty busy in the off-season.

#### Special Events

Frank Miller reported Winterfest was very busy this year. The average daily attendance was higher than 2012. He is extremely happy with those results. The New Year's Eve crowd for fireworks was very successful this year and seemed to be larger than last year. The Mayor mentioned that several people approached him at the New Year's Day Open House and stated how much they enjoyed the fireworks. Frank stated that his department is busy planning for Springfest. Frank distributed a Special Events Flyer to all attendees.

Councilman Mitrecic made a motion to go into closed session to discuss the 2014 advertising campaign. Councilman Dare seconded the motion.

After conclusion of closed meeting a motion made by Chris Trimper and seconded by Councilman Dare to request the Mayor and Council write a letter in support of Worcester County acquiring property in Showell to have more athletic fields as this would benefit the county and Ocean City in attracting sports events. The vote was unanimous.

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m. The next meeting will be held on February 10 at 3:00 p.m. in Room 214 at the Convention Center.