

Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes
November 10, 2014

The following individuals were in attendance:

Commission Members – Tourism Commission Chair and Council Secretary Mary Knight; Mayor Rick Meehan; Councilman Dennis Dare; Michael James, EDC; G. Hale Harrison, HMRA; Brett Wolf, Chamber of Commerce. Staff members present were Jennie Knapp, representing the City Manager; Donna Abbott, Tourism Director; Larry Noccolino, Convention Center Director; Lisa Osman, Tourism Department. Also present were Melanie Pursel, Chamber of Commerce and Scott Lenox, Fish In OC. 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.

Approval of Minutes

The vote was unanimous to approve the minutes from the September meeting.

Fishing In OC

Scott Lenox of Hooked on O.C. did a presentation on Fishing In OC, a marketing concept to promote fishing in Ocean City. Scott approached Donna Abbott several months ago with a proposal to market Ocean City as a destination for fishing similar to how Golf Getaway markets with the co-op of all the golf courses. Scott had appeared before TAB, but while TAB liked the concept they felt it was more of a marketing opportunity instead of a new event and requested he go before the Tourism Commission. Scott proposed attending trade shows to promote fishing and sought Ocean City as a partner. Scott has solicited support from the local fishing industry including marinas, charter boats, restaurants and hotels. He requested town support of \$15,000 and in exchange the town would be represented at trade specific fishing shows in prime target areas, receive a logo on the trade show booth, have tourism videos at shows, the Ocean City logo on the front cover of a fishing planner guide, link from the fishinoc.com website to the town's tourism website, access to emails acquired at the shows and distribution of Ocean City guides at the shows.

Donna said there was \$10,000 in the current year's budget for consumer travel shows, which could be used. The Tourism Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the Mayor and Council support this initiative with a \$10,000 contribution and the use of some of the tourism department's booth materials.

Updates from other Departments & Organizations

Convention Center

Larry Noccolino reported there has been much progress made within this last week on the PAC construction. Continuing site tours of the PAC. Maryland Tourism and travel Summit will be held at the Convention Center this week. Resort Gift Show is moving in

this week. Gearing up for the Holiday Shoppers Fair. As of this past Friday, a few hundred tickets have been sold for the Texas Tenors on December 10.

Chamber of Commerce

Melanie distributed copies of Ocean City's Voice for Business newsletter to all attendees. Melanie distributed a handout for Delmarva's Space Coast promotion.

HMRA

G. Hale reported that Susan Jones is at Burley Oak with representatives from approximately 80 hotels and restaurants, trying to promote Ocean City as a craft beer destination. HMRA is hosting a dinner meeting at the Princess Royale on November 20. The guest speaker will be the State Tourism Director, Margo Amelia.

EDC

Michael James reported that he took a tour of the new Performing Arts Center and it looks wonderful. EDC is partnering with the Worcester County Economic Development Office in holding an event in the PAC in December called the 2014 Economic Development Summit. This will be the first event held in the PAC.

Tourism

Donna presented recommendations on a few interactive projects. She feels the PAC needs to have a microsite and MGH has also recommended adding a trip planner to the tourism website, which will offer prospective visitors an improved way to plan their visits to Ocean City. Funds are in the budget. Donna and Larry agreed that a microsite is needed for the Performing Arts Center, with all the new events that will be scheduled.

Also, last year, we lost some Tourism web cams due to new security on the boardwalk. Donna has identified a new place for a new webcam that will be solely for Tourism, and a local business may be interested in sponsoring it to cover some of the costs. G. Hale Harrison also offered the Harbor Watch location for a webcam. Donna will follow up on webcams.

The next Tourism Strategic Planning Session will be held on November 24, and will run most of the day.

Michael James made a motion to adjourn. Councilmember Dare seconded. The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m. The next Tourism Commission meeting will be held on January 12 at 3:00 p.m. in Room 214 at the Convention Center.