

**RECORD OF MINUTES
DARE COUNTY TOURISM BOARD
THURSDAY, MAY 18, 2017
9:00 A.M.
OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
MANTEO, NC 27954**

ATTENDING: Susie Walters, Chair; Leo Holland, Vice Chair; Tonia Cohen, Secretary; Stuart Pack, Treasurer; Ervin Bateman, Assistant Treasurer; George Banks, III, Bambos Charalambous, Mike Hogan, Wally Overman, Pat Weston, Martha Wickre, and Jay Wheless, Legal Counsel.

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Myra Ladd-Bone, Nancy Caviness.

STAFF:

Lee Nettles, Executive Director
Diane Bognich, Director of Administration
Lorrie Love, Tourism Sales and Events Manager
Amy Wood, Clerk to the Board/Administrative Specialist

OTHERS: Eric Kaplan, Hatteras Island Ocean Center; Philip Ruckle, The Coastland Times, and Robert Rosenberg.

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. The Board then recited the pledge of allegiance, followed by a moment of silence.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Mr. Holland moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Hogan seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Pack moved to approve the April 20, 2017 meeting minutes. Mr. Holland seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Eric Kaplan spoke about the Hatteras Island Ocean Center, damages from Hurricane Matthew, changes to exhibits, and plans for future exhibits. Eric Kaplan asked the Board how to proceed as his grant term ends June 31, 2017 and at their April meeting, the Board voted to freeze Short Term Restricted Fund awards and extensions.

STEERING COMMITTEE REPORT: Mr. Overman reported on the Highway 12/US 158 Intersection Traffic Management. Officers from the Towns of Duck, Southern Shores, and Kitty Hawk, and the Dare County Sheriff will assist with traffic control, with a rotating schedule, for 12 Saturdays during the season.

At 9:15, Mr. Pack moved to open the public hearing for the proposed fiscal year 2017-2018 budget. Mr. Bateman seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Pack asked for comments from the public; no comments were made, nor were there any written comments. There being no comments, Mr. Pack moved to close the public hearing. Mr. Charalambous seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously. The public hearing closed at 9:16 a.m.

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT: Mr. Pack reviewed the meals and occupancy receipts received. Receipts for fiscal year 2016-2017 are up 3.05 % over 2015-2016 actual receipts.

Mr. Pack asked if the Board members had any questions or comments about the proposed budget. There were none and he noted that the Budget & Finance Committee would be meeting in June and would have an updated budget to present at the June meeting.

GRANTS AND LOCAL PUBLIC RELATIONS: Ms. Wickre reviewed the following recommendations from the committee:

- Award an Established Event Developer Grant in the amount of \$27,000 to the Dare County Arts Council for Fiscal Year 2017-2018. This grant is for the Surfalorus Film Festival, OBX Veterans Week, Artrageous, and Rock the Cape. Mr. Hogan moved to award Dare County Arts Council \$27,000 for Fiscal Year 2017-2018. Mr. Holland seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.
- Ms. Wickre moved to establish June 15 to September 7 as “peak season” for grants. Mr. Pack seconded. During discussion, the Board noted that the date change impacted two events would be impacted but it as they were new events, there was potential that the dates for the events could change. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.
- Ms. Wickre moved to terminate the Established Event Developer (EED) Grant program and to fulfill any remaining EED contracts through 2018-2019. Mr. Holland seconded. Ms. Wickre noted that staff had spoken to EED recipients and let them know they could continue their contract or they could cancel the contract and apply for an Event Grant. Additionally, there would still be two application windows [August and February] and there would be no grant monies given up front, all reimbursement would happen upon completion of the project. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

All of these changes are effective immediately.

OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU UPDATES: Lee Nettles:

- Noted speeches made at COA Hospitality Program commencement, The Lost Colony, and Dowdy Park
- Thanked staff and Board members for participating in the Tourism Summit
- White paper detailing how the meals and occupancy taxes are collected and distributed and the Board/Bureau uses those funds. He encouraged Board members to take some of the papers back to their respective organizations
- Social media/Public Relations Interns started work. The interns will receive their assignments, do their writing outside the office rather than working inside the office
- Noted that June 5, 2017, was the final day for all construction work at The Soundside
- Internet, Inquiry and Visitation numbers

Lorrie Love noted attendance at Travel South Showcase in March and plans for Aaron and Lorrie to attend US Travel’s IPW Marketplace for press and tour operator appointments. There will be an Outer Banks familiarization (FAM) tour for UK [IPW] participants after this marketplace. She also noted one-on-one meetings with area industry partners, informing them about the Bureau, how it promotes Dare County, and opportunities available to partners.

Lorrie Love noted Aaron Tuell’s attendance at the North American Travel Journalist Association (NATJA) Conference in Chapel Hill, NC and the FAM tour for some of the attendees of NATJA. Lee Nettles discussed the importance of the Influencer and FAM trips.

Mr. Hogan asked about the portion of the [NC] Senate budget that would eliminate the Director's position at Jennette's Pier. It was noted that this issue came up last year but died in committee, and that both Dare County and the Town of Nags Head had passed resolutions, this year and last, opposing the elimination of this position. Staff asked the Board if they wanted to take a position on this issue and the resolution from Dare County regarding House Bill 867.

Ms. Weston moved to adopt a resolution opposing the elimination of the Director's position at Jennette's Pier. Mr. Banks seconded. During discussion, Legal Counsel reminded the Board to keep the resolution focused on the impact on tourism and visitors that eliminating the position would have.

Staff noted that in order to pass the resolution, the Board would have to meet again before June as voting by proxy was not allowed, unless they gave the Chair the authority to approve the resolution. After discussion, Ms. Weston withdrew her motion. Mr. Banks withdrew his second.

Ms. Weston moved to authorize the Chair, with advice from Legal Counsel, to draft a letter opposing elimination of the position. Ms. Wickre seconded. The chair was asked to share the letter with Board members, and to send the letter to County and hospitality lobbyists, representatives of Dare County and the legislative committees. Legal Counsel advised the Board that the letter should pertain to tourism concerns and he also reminded the Board to only respond to the letter if they had comments or corrections for the letter. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Wickre moved to write a letter stating the Board's opposition to House Bill 867 due to the impact it would have on the visitor experience. Mr. Hogan seconded. The Board asked the Chair to share the letter and to send it to the proper legislators. Legal Counsel's previous direction was echoed with this letter as well. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS: The Chair noted the Hatteras Island Ocean Center Extension Request and the request made earlier in the meeting for clarification on how to, or not to, proceed with the project. Legal Counsel noted that the Board, in April 2017, had voted to freeze all Short Term Restricted Fund future awards and extensions and that the Board could move to unfreeze or to not take any action at all.

Mr. Bateman moved to table the matter. Mr. Holland seconded. Legal Counsel reminded the Board that they could not table the matter since it was still "frozen." Mr. Bateman withdrew his motion and Mr. Holland his second. The Board discussed the project and extension request, the option to have the grant expire and then HIOC could re-apply, and whether or not they felt secure in releasing the grant awards and extension. A majority of the Board members did not feel secure enough to release the grants until after the state budget passed.

Mr. Bateman moved to send the matter to the Steering Committee. Ms. Wickre seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

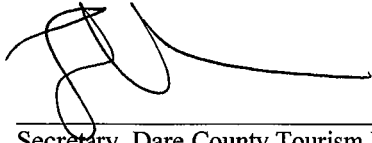
NEW BUSINESS: There was no new business before the Board at this time.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: Mr. Hogan gave kudos to the Tourism Summit. Staff was asked to share the "Apptastic" presentation from Jim Spellos. Mr. Holland noted his attendance at the Flying Pirate 5k. Ms. Wickre reminded the Board that Dare Day was June 3 and noted there were posters for the members to take with them. Chair Walters reviewed the Dowdy Park Grand Opening and future plans for the park. She also read the vision and mission statements for the Board, noting the impacts, good or bad, of tourism and what it means to the county.

SET DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be Thursday, June 15, 2017 at 9:00 a.m. The meeting will be held at the Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Administrative Offices on Roanoke Island.

Mr. Holland moved to adjourn. Mr. Charalambous seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

ATTESTED:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Secretary, Dare County Tourism Board