

**RECORD OF MINUTES
DARE COUNTY TOURISM BOARD
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2018
9:00 A.M.
OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES
MANTEO, NC 27954**

ATTENDING: Myra Ladd-Bone, Chair; Wally Overman, Vice-Chair; Pat Weston, Treasurer; Bambos Charalambous, Assistant Treasurer; Tonia Cohen, Secretary; George Banks, III, Nancy Caviness, Webb Fuller, Mike Hogan, Chris Nason, Bobby Owens, David Pergerson, Jeff Pruitt, and Jay Wheless, Legal Counsel.

STAFF:

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

OTHERS: John Griffin, Chicamacomico Historical Association; Mary Helen Goodloe Murphy, *The Coastland Times*; and Sandra Dowdy.

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: Ms. Weston moved to approve the agenda. Mr. Charalambous seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Fuller moved to approve the August 16, 2018 meeting minutes presented. Mr. Charalambous seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: There were no public comments made.

STEERING COMMITTEE: The Chair reviewed the following recommendations from the Steering Committee:

Short Term Restricted Fund Grant Extension Request: The Chair reviewed the request, noting the delay was due to Hurricane Florence. Mr. Pergerson moved to grant an extension to the end of December 2018 to the Friends of the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum. Mr. Nason seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

Natural, Historic, and Cultural Grant Recommendation: The Chair reviewed the recommendation from the Steering Committee to award \$70,000 to the Chicamacomico Historical Association for the purchase of adjoining land, and to allow Chicamacomico Historical Association to hold a note not to exceed \$10,000 funds, if needed. Ms. Weston moved to approve the award. Mr. Banks seconded. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT: Ms. Weston reviewed the meals and occupancy receipts received. Receipts for fiscal year 2018-2019 are up 4.36% over 2017-2018 actual receipts.

OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU UPDATES: Lee Nettles reviewed:

- Message Management before and after Hurricane Florence, both locally and statewide. Staff is also working to make appearances on local television shows to let folks know the Outer Banks is open and lots of events are happening for them to attend.
- Statewide tourism expenditures were release reflect positive growth of tourism in Dare County. Unfortunately, Dare dropped to fifth on the list due to the growth in Buncombe County (Asheville).
- Food Truck Showdown was much smoother than the first and staff looks forward to the next one.
- Internet, fulfillment and visitation numbers. The Grand Re-opening of the renovated Wright Brothers National Memorial Visitors Center was postponed. A new date will be announced.
- Ms. Weston noted that she had spoken with the National Park Service about a video that had played in the Weather Station and better signage for the welcome center located in the Weather Station. Lee Nettles noted that, in the past, the Park Service had tours of the weather station and that a neighboring business had offered to place signage on their building to help point visitors to the welcome center.

OLD BUSINESS: There was no old business before the Board.

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

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: Mr. Fuller noted he was hearing the visitation at hotels and restaurants was down due to Hurricane Florence, noting that the Outer Banks was being lumped in with other areas that were closed even though the area was not damaged and asked that the Bureau work with the state to get the message out that Eastern North Carolina was open to visitors. Mr. Fuller also asked if it would be worthwhile to spend additional money for advertising in feeder markets. Mr. Charalamabous noted that his business was picking up. Mr. Nason wondered if the rental companies were willing to reach out to residents in affected areas to offer them housing. Lee Nettles noted that, while similar, the issues were separate, and noted that he has been working the with NC Tourism Office to get the word out that the Outer Banks was open and that we were helping out our neighbors to the south. He also noted the timing; it was the first week of “off season” and that it was the start of the fall advertising campaign and that it was a matter of patience at this point. Ms. Caviness suggested moving the alternate routes and directions to a more eye-catching location.

Ms. Weston noted some beach accesses in Avon were using MobiMats and encouraged other areas to use them.

Mr. Fuller brought the conversation back to the “We are Open” advertising message post storm and asked if anything had been decided regarding additional advertising. Several board members noted that the fall campaign was starting and that if the area wasn’t open, the campaign wouldn’t be running and that much of what Mr. Fuller wanted to see happen was happening behind the scenes. Lee Nettles will reach out the State Tourism Office and the Governor’s Office to see what else can be done. The Board discussed expanding the advertising areas to include those feeder markets for areas impacted by Hurricane Florence. The Board reached consensus to wait and see before adding any additional money for advertising.

The Board took a break. Ms. Caviness was excused at 10:30 a.m. Mr. Owens was excused at 10:45 a.m. The meeting resumed at 11:09 a.m.

THE SOUND SIDE EVENT SITE FUTURE PLANNING SESSION: Lee Nettles reviewed the history of the site, from purchase to the plan to use the site as an event site for 10 years, which is more than half way through. He encouraged the Board to refresh its thinking with regards to the site and reviewed the following directions which would affect the longer-term use:

- Build a stand-alone building to accommodate larger indoor events
- Acquire the land directly to the north
- Acquire the two properties directly north
- Spend money to fix up South Beach Grill or get rid of the building, or sell the property
- Buy the Town of Nags Head share of the property

The Board discussed the pros and cons of each option and the reasonings behind them. Mr. Charalambous moved to have Steering Committee create a proposal regarding the request from the Town of Nags Head to buy the Town's share. Mr. Fuller seconded. Mr. Overman asked to add to the motion, but Legal Counsel asked Mr. Overman to make his a second motion. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

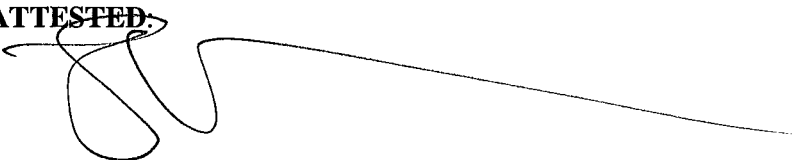
Mr. Overman moved to have staff submit RFP's for a company to do economic/feasibility studies for the options. Mr. Pergerson seconded. Mr. Nettles asked if the Board wanted to see the proposed costs. Mr. Overman amended his motion to bring the proposed costs of the study back to the Board. Mr. Pergerson seconded the amended motion. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

SET DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be Thursday, October 18, 2018 at 9:00 a.m. in the Curtis H. Creech Memorial Boardroom, Outer Banks Visitors Bureau, One Visitors Center Circle, Manteo NC.

Mr. Fuller moved to adjourn. Mr. Pergerson seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

ATTESTED:



Secretary, Dare County Tourism Board