

**RECORD OF MINUTES
DARE COUNTY TOURISM BOARD MEETING
THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2015
9:00 A.M.
PRIMARY KEEPERS QUARTERS
CAPE HATTERAS LIGHTHOUSE
BUXTON, NC**

ATTENDING: Tim Cafferty, Chair; Susie Walters, Vice-Chair; Nancy Caviness, Secretary; Tonia Cohen, Ernie Foster, Leo Holland, Natalie Kavanagh, Donny King, Wally Overman, and Jay Wheless, Legal Counsel.

EXCUSED ABSENCE: Dorie Fuller, Treasurer; Ervin Bateman, Assistant Treasurer; Sheila Davies, and Martha Wickre

STAFF:

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

OTHERS: Mark Dowdle, Deputy Superintendent; and Jeff Goad, Acting District Ranger for Buxton/Hatteras Island; National Park Service, Outer Banks Group; Philip Ruckle, The Coastland Times, and Dennis Robinson, Midgett Realty

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. Ms. Caviness seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Mr. Holland moved to approve the minutes from the February 26, 2015 meeting. Ms. Walters seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Mark Dowdle greeted the Board and introduced Jeff Goad, who is the Acting District Ranger for Buxton/Hatteras Island.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: The Chair reviewed the Firework Grants. Mr. King moved to award the following Fireworks Grants:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avon Property Owners Association | \$9,712.50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Kill Devil Hills | \$10,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Manteo | \$10,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Town of Nags Head | \$10,000 |

Ms. Walters seconded. Mr. Holland asked if this was the normal amount requested. Mr. Nettles noted that the Town of Manteo requested a bit more so they could move the fireworks onto a barge in the sound. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT CONTINUED:

The Board discussed the MOU between the Dare County Tourism Board and Town of Nags Head, the history of the property purchase, what it would take to buy out Nags Head and what would happen if the Board did not approve this MOU [the current MOU would remain in effect]. Following discussion, Ms. Cohen moved to approve the MOU between the Dare County Tourism Board and Town of Nags Head as presented, and noting that this did not prevent any potential future consideration of a buy out of Nags Head. Ms. Walters seconded. There was no further discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

The Chair reviewed Board Member and Staff attendance at the North Carolina Governor's Conference on Tourism and that the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management plans to hold a second meeting regarding offshore oil and gas in Dare County. Mr. Overman noted that there will be a presentation regarding the outer continental shelf at the April 6, 2015 Dare County Board of Commissioners meeting.

BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT: Diane Bognich reviewed the meals and occupancy receipts received. Receipts for fiscal year 2014-2015 to date are up 3.84% from the same time period in fiscal year 2013-2014.

OUTER BANKS VISITORS BUREAU UPDATES: Lee Nettles reviewed:

- Spring 2015 Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Newsletter
- Tourism Summit speakers, to include an update on the yearlong visitor profile
- Art & Soul contest held promoting the Bureau's Instagram account
- Final interviews with agencies for responsive website design for outerbanks.org, and nearing selection of firm
- Inquiry, fulfillment and visitation numbers
- Interviewing candidates for the Events & Marketing Assistant position

Aaron Tuell reviewed an upcoming trip to Canada, intern interviews, recent articles and upcoming press trips.

Lorrie Love reviewed her recent trade show in Shreveport and released the agenda for the Tourism Summit in May.

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

NEW BUSINESS: Mr. King moved to approve Resolution 2015-1, Dare County Tourism Board Resolution Supporting Late August to Early June School Year (attachment A and on file). Ms. Cohen seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS: Mr. King reviewed Taste of the Beach 2015. Mr. Overman reviewed the County Commissioners plan for a quarter cent sales tax increase, which would be used for dredging of Oregon and Hatteras Inlets and would have sunset provision tied to the new Oregon Inlet Bridge and removal of the old bridge. Mr. Overman discussed how the proposed redistribution of taxes throughout the state would negatively impact Dare County. The goal is to have a hopper dredge in Oregon Inlet at least 340 days of the year. Mr. Overman thanked the Board for the funds supplied in December 2014 for dredging and noted that Dare County Commissioners were working to get a dredge in while the weather was good.

Chairman asked Mr. Overman how the Board could help the Commissioners with this bill. Mr. Overman responded that he hoped that the industry would be as vocal as they were opposing the proposed occupancy tax bill.

Ms. Walters asked if the funding received outside the sales tax increase for dredging would be annual. Mr. Overman said yes. Ms. Walters noted she hoped that all Commissioners would support the tax increase so all parties would “have skin in the game” and asked if the County Commissioners or County Manager would send out an email to the Towns to let them know of the meeting and ask for support. Ms. Kavanagh asked what would happen with dredging Hatteras Inlet when the sales tax increase was gone. Mr. Overman noted that he did not know at this time but it would not be forgotten.

Mr. Overman also suggested that the Dare County Commissioners might request additional funds for dredging from the Tourism Board in the future.

SET TIME, DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING: April 23, 2015 at 9:00 a.m. at the Ocean Boulevard Restaurant, 4700 N. Virginia Dare Trail in Kitty Hawk.

Mr. Holland moved to adjourn. Mr. King seconded. There was no discussion and the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

Attested:

Secretary, Dare County Tourism Board

**DARE COUNTY TOURISM BOARD RESOLUTION SUPPORTING LATE AUGUST TO EARLY
JUNE SCHOOL YEAR**

WHEREAS, the travel and tourism industry is a vital component of North Carolina's economic stability as the benefits of tourism touch each the state's 100 counties; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, domestic travelers spent a record \$20.2 billion, up from \$19.4 in 2012, an increase of 4.1 percent and, this record spending supported more than 40,000 North Carolina businesses and directly supported nearly 200,000 jobs across the state; and

WHEREAS, direct tourism employment continues to grow in lodging, dining, retail and activity sectors to help serve visitors, especially in Dare County; and

WHEREAS, tourism related jobs in Dare County employ students as well as teachers for employment each summer; and

WHEREAS, studies show starting school in late August produces as much as \$1 billion each year in economic growth through increased tourism-related sales; and

WHEREAS, the timing of the annual school start date has a direct impact upon the ability of employers to hire high school students and teachers for summer employment; and

WHEREAS, the school year historically began after the Labor Day holiday, thereby providing quality family time for summer vacations in July and August; and

WHEREAS, a majority of other states have late August with no discernable impact on student learning or test scores; and

WHEREAS, many state legislators have entered office since SL 2004-180 was voted in with bipartisan support and may not be familiar with the continuing need for this important law; and

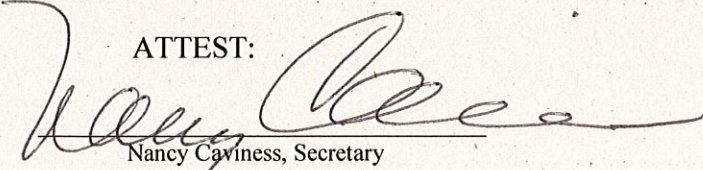
WHEREAS, several local bills have been filed recently which would greatly weaken SL 2004-180, threatening tourism economies and the wellbeing of families; and

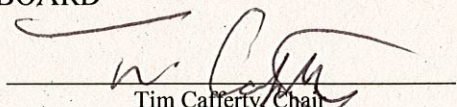
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Dare County Tourism Board reaffirms its support for SL 2004-180, the existing law requiring schools to open to students no earlier than August 25 and end no later than June 10.

ADOPTED THIS 26th DAY OF MARCH 2015, by unanimous support of the Dare County Tourism Board.

DARE COUNTY TOURISM BOARD

ATTEST:


Nancy Caviness, Secretary


Tim Cafferty, Chair