



**Minutes
Tourism Board Meeting
June 13, 2019**

Present: Tara Coursey-Hill, Phil Liske, Don Mulrine, John Phillips, Cathy Schwab, Debi Sewell,

Staff: Ceres Bainbridge

Mr. Liske called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM in the absence of Ms. Delude.

Mr. Mulrine made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Phillips seconded it. They were approved by a unanimous vote.

Ms. Bainbridge gave the financial update, which is tight, but in line for finishing out the year. We will receive reimbursement for our ads in the summer this year and on July 1, we will receive our windfall from the county. Bill Clemens will come in for a few minutes to explain the budget and to meet the board at a meeting soon. Ms. Bainbridge said she will probably not attend the MATPRA Showcase this year to save some money and to avoid overexposure. The event takes place in Richmond, Virginia this year, and it is her belief that southerners rarely travel north to vacation, unless they are going to NY or DC.

Extra money saved on anything will be used to print a new, updated visitor guide this year and will look for ways to cut corners to squeeze that into the budget, including cutting most payments to a minimum for Ms. Mackel who occasionally helps out. John Phillips wondered if the visitor guide could be produced as an app. Ms. Bainbridge thought it could be made to be mobile friendly, just as our website is now. The cycling guide is our most popular brochure and we have several thousands left. It too might be made into a mobile app in the future.

Ms. Bainbridge informed Mr. Liske that he is one of the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area's Heritage Heroes for 2019. The event, which will be held at the visitor center in Denton, overlaps with the Lavender festival where he will have his animals. But he and his wife will make it as soon as they can. She encouraged all of the board members to attend.

Mr. Liske told the board that Outstanding Dreams Farm is included on an agricultural tour being established by Wicomico County Tourism. This is another opportunity for the counties to work together.

Ms. Bainbridge has hired Thacker Productions to take pictures for an agricultural brochure. Don Mulrine said the Maryland Department of Agriculture covered three farms in Caroline County on their television show, and they may have good pictures of those farms. He also reminded her of the 4-H Fair and the Threshermen's Show as agriculturally oriented events and photo-ops. She asked all of the board to send her their thoughts on agricultural tours. She'd like to get a grant to make this tour an app.

Ms. Bainbridge suggested that the board just send her their ideas about events or ads or markets or projects, so that we can act on them when feasible. That way, they would all reside in one file.

The Tourism Office has to find a new office, soon. In addition to being invited to move to Legion Road, she mentioned it to Sue Simmons at Recreation and Parks and to Jen at the Arts Council about space in the FACES building. New members of the board asked why Tourism couldn't move into the Denton visitor center. Mr. Mulrine explained why that is not an option based on politics. It was agreed that it is a very unfortunate situation. When she met with Mr. Goldman, he made it perfectly clear that it would be a serious mistake for

Tourism to move into that building. Ms. Sewell suggested working asking other organizations to join up with us and to offer political support when it's necessary. She wants to be ready to go when it's time and has asked the Historical Society to please make a plan to remove their possessions from the warehouse area as soon as possible.

John Phillips suggested that we let the Commissioners guide us to the place where they want us to be. He acknowledged that we need to align ourselves with partners who do have their support, including the Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development, and/or Recs and Parks. Maybe the county can help us to move if we ask. Or, we may want to hold off on making that decision until the building is sold. Perhaps the new owners would want Tourism to stay there. There are also markers that will need to be moved, most likely to the other side of the river.

Ms. Bainbridge explained to the board that Jeremy Goldman told her to produce an economic statement proving that Tourism was worth it. She began with adding up the MHAA donation of \$3000 over 12 years which resulted in \$800K in grants to organizations in Caroline County. She will also include the tax card from the State Office of Tourism's economic development study and the number of visitors to the State Parks, as well as website visits.

John Phillips suggested to invite the new Director of the Arts Council, Jen, and Jaimie from Recs and Parks to join the board. Ms. Bainbridge wondered about Cat Evans, too. Ms. Sewell suggested asking Kathy Mackel to join the board, instead of working occasionally for the office. All agree that she would be an excellent member.

Don Mulrine made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Liske seconded it. It was approved by unanimous vote at 8:53.