

Currituck County Tourism Advisory Board

Minutes of Meeting

July 12, 2010

The Tourism Advisory Board met on Monday, July 12, 2010, 5:00 p.m. at the Historic Currituck Courthouse, Currituck. The following members were present: Don Cheek, Janice Farr, Paul Robinson, Lori London, Vivian Simpson, Petrina Ramey, Dan Scanlon, Paul O'Neal, Diane Nordstrom and Irina Coccetti.

REGULAR MEETING

- Item 1: **Call to Order** – Don Cheek called the meeting to order.
- Item 2: **Approval of Agenda** – Janice Farr made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Vivian Simpson. Motion approved: 6-0.
- Item 3: **Public Comment** – Commissioner John Rorer spoke on the issue of the county possibly changing its policy to allow alcohol to be consumed at county parks. He asked that the public – including the Tourism Advisory Board members – share their opinions on this proposed change.
- Item 4: **Approval of May 11, 2010 Minutes** – Janice Farr made a motion to approve the minutes as written; seconded by Lori London. Motion approved: 6-0.
- Item 5: **Discussion on Minimum Quality Standards for Promoting Businesses** – Diane Nordstrom requested the Tourism Advisory Board establish guidelines for minimum quality standards in regards to the department promoting businesses. Ike McRee, County Attorney, suggested that the Board and staff review the current policy for brochure distribution and website promotions, and include language to address minimum standards. Janice Farr suggested that the guidelines also require businesses to be in good standing with the appropriate regulatory agency and/or business association that governs that business. Paul O'Neal recommended that guidelines from the Better Business Bureau be used as a benchmark. Mrs. Nordstrom was directed by the board to meet with Mr. McRee prior to the next TAB meeting and update the existing guidelines. The board will review the guidelines at its next meeting.
- Item 6: **Discussion on Giveaways at the Visitor Information Centers** – Diane Nordstrom explained that she has been approached by several businesses wanting to give away items (such as fruit from a farmer's market) to visitors to the Welcome Center and Visitor's Center. She expressed her concern as to the liability the county might assume with allowing items to be given away, in addition to making sure that county Health Department regulations are followed. Paul Robinson said insurance could be required of the businesses to limit the county's liability. Lori London and Paul Robinson volunteered to serve on a committee to further explore the matter. The committee will meet prior to the next TAB meeting.
- Item 7: **Discussion on Promotions & Events Coordinator Position** – With the approval of the 2010-11 operating budget, the department has received approval to hire a

full time Promotions & Events Coordinator. Diane Nordstrom asked that the TAB establish a committee to review the job description and finalize the guidelines for the new Marketing Assistance Program (replacement for the Support of Funds Program). Janice Farr, Lori London and Don Cheek volunteered to serve on this committee.

Item 8: **Tourism Director's Report / Marketing Coordinator's Report** – Copies of the approved 2010-11 budget were given to the board members.

Diane Nordstrom reported that there were 1,057 visitors to the Welcome Center in Moyock this past Saturday.

Mrs. Nordstrom also gave an update on several projects that the department is working on with the Outer Banks Visitor's Bureau. She also announced that Don Cheek has volunteered to host a cookout to bring together the TAB and OBX Visitor's Bureau Board. A date will be set soon.

Mrs. Nordstrom said the July 4th fireworks event was a success and perhaps the best attended event in its 18 year history.

Irina Coccetti gave each board member a copy of the new Currituck Outer Banks Visitor's Guide. She also announced upcoming Fam and press tours being organized by the department and the Hampton Inn in Corolla, as well as an upcoming feature on UNC-TV that highlights several mainland Currituck businesses.

Our State Magazine editor, Elizabeth Hudson, recently spent two days in Currituck getting story ideas, said Mrs. Nordstrom. The Oceanfront Grill at Corolla Light Resort was featured in a recent issue of the magazine.

Michele Ellis gave an update on the MORE Card program, reporting that 44 businesses have signed up to participate.

Stuart Chamberlain reported that the tourism website is receiving an average of 2,300 visitors to the site per day, and that 3,400 people have thus far signed up to "like" the tourism department's Facebook page.

Item 9: **Board Members' Report** – Petrina Ramey announced that the temporary Historic Corolla Village markers were erected prior to the July 4th holiday.

Don Cheek introduced three Corolla Light interns who attended the meeting.

Mr. Cheek also read the following letter and asked that it be placed in the official meeting minutes:

To: Currituck County Tourism Director and Staff
cc: Currituck County Commissioners & County Manager
From: Don Cheek, Chair of County Tourism Committee
Date: July 12, 2010

The purpose of my letter is to compliment the Tourism Department and their director, Diane Nordstrom, for all of the hard work they do for Currituck County. It is great to see the results of their hard work recognized by their peers at the recently held Tourism Leadership Conference. What an honor to win six awards (four Platinum and two Gold). The Tourism Department has come a long way in a very short time. The accomplishments they have achieved over the years are incredible. Hits to the website increased over 200% from last year, and recent editorial coverage secured by the Tourism Department exceeded \$1 million in value (largely due to expanded public relations programs such as hosting the editor from Our State Magazine, video crew for nation TV spot on the Corolla Wild Horses and much more). Visitors to the Welcome Center increased by over 50% from last year and over 85,000 visited the two centers last year. That is great “face to face” contact with visitors.

I appreciate the support and trust the Commissioners have given Diane and her department. As all of us know, it takes a great team working together to be successful. Diane and her staff, the Commissioners and the Tourism Committee make a great team! I consider it an honor serving on the Tourism Committee with a great group of talented community leaders and I truly appreciate all of the support the Commissioners have given the Tourism Department in the past and look forward to continued support in the future.

Sincerely,
Don Cheek

Janice Farr recognized Stuart Chamberlain for being on the cover of the STS Marketing College application.

Lori London commented on the recent July 4th Independence Day Celebration held in Corolla and recognized all of the county departments for their work on making the event a success. She also stated that the sandwich board signs in Corolla were placed in an orderly line.

- Item 10: **Other Business** – The Board members discussed holding their next meeting on August 9, 2010.
- Item 11: **Adjourn** – Motion to adjourn made by Janice Farr; seconded by Paul Robinson. Motion approved: 6-0.

Minutes approved August 9, 2010.

Don Cheek, Chairman

Diane Nordstrom, Secretary