

Minutes for Board Review
Kent Narrows Development Foundation
Board of Directors Meeting (in person & via Zoom)
February 28, 2023
FOR BOARD REVIEW

Board Members Participating

Joe Pomerantz, Vice Chair
Patricia Worns, Secretary
Victoria Hoffman, Treasurer
Jake Boulay
Sheryl Jaros
Justin Kiernan
Bill Oertel
Kelly Phipps
Jeff Smith

Absent with Notice

Mike Foster
Jason Ruth
Jason Tuel
Jody Schulz

Commissioner Liaison

Phil Dumenil

Guests

Scott Davies, Narrows Pointe Community
Mark Lacoste, Best Western

Queen Anne's County Staff

Steve Chandlee, QAC Parks, Recreation, and Public Landings
Heather Tinelli, QAC Economic Development and Tourism

Call to Order

Vice Chair Joe Pomerantz called to order the regular meeting of the Kent Narrows Development Foundation at 9:00 a.m. The meeting was conducted in person and via Zoom video call. He welcomed new Board member Bill Oertel of Harris Crab House and Harris Seafood. Harris has been in business for 75 years.

Public Comment

Bente Cooney of Plastic Fee QAC announced that on Earth Day, Saturday, April 22, a group from PFQAC will be leading a cleanup at Chesapeake Heritage and Visitors Center. She encouraged individuals and businesses to participate. The organization will supply the necessary equipment.

Patrick Perry of Kent Island Rotary announced that the group will be publishing the 2023 Outdoor Guide. The 80-page publication will include information and articles about outdoor recreation opportunities in Queen Anne’s County. A map of Kent Narrows will be included. Ad sales are underway. The guide will be available in late spring.

Minutes

RESOLUTION

Kelly Phipps made a motion to accept the KNDF meeting minutes of January 24, 2023. The Board unanimously approved.

Financial Report (Victoria Hoffman)

The following balances are from financial reports ending 2/28/2023:

- Shore United Checking Account: \$103,582.76 (Includes 70,963 of Safety First Grant)
- QAC/KNDF 570 Fund, due from QAC: \$217,559.04
- KNDF Amenities Fund, due from QAC: \$67,191.36. No projects that would contribute additional monies to this fund are in progress or planned.
- Chesapeake Charities Fund: \$8,063.88
- A meeting is set with the non-profit specialist at Accounting Strategies Group to review KNDF Statements to ensure that restricted and grant-related expenditures are easily tracked and that KNDF line items are up to date.
- KNDF will be eligible for grants associated with the All American Roads and the Chesapeake Gateways Program.

Commissioner’s Report

The Commissioners will be considering an increase in some recreational fees. The increases are as follows:

Ramp Fees

Queen Anne’s County Resident, from \$35 to \$40

Maryland Non-Resident, from \$70-\$75

Vendor permits, \$150-\$250

If enacted, the new fees will be effective Dec 1.

Boat Slips

Kent Narrows, Centreville, & Dominion will increase from \$750 to \$800 per month; if enacted, these will be effective on May 1.

Economic Development and Tourism

The Small Passenger Ferry Feasibility Study for the Bay Crossing is moving forward.

Several Statewide groups will be meeting in Queen Anne's County this year:
Maryland Planners Association will be holding its annual meeting in QAC
The Maryland's County Destination Marketing Organizations and the DMO for the City of Baltimore will hold one of their meetings in Kent Narrows in April.
The Maryland Association of County Administrators plans to hold their annual meeting in Queen Anne's County.

The QAC Economic Development and Tourism Office will be having a presence during the Bay Bridge Boat Show, April 14-16, at the Bay Bridge Marina.

The Travel and Tourism Advisory Committee has two vacancies; applications are currently being accepted.

Construction at the CHVC is slated to start on May 1. The offices will be open, but large group meetings must be held elsewhere.

KNDF, TTAC, and EDC meetings will be relocated until construction is completed. Gigi will be working to make arrangements for alternative sites for KNDF meetings, beginning in May.

Access to Ferry Point Park during the construction is still being determined. The dock area and all of the frontage will be closed until the construction is completed.

Director's Report (Gigi Windley)

Businesses Updates

The Hyatt Place Kent Narrows Hotel and Marina

A June grand opening is being planned in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce. Sugar Doodles is scheduled to open at the Boatel location in April.

Public Property Improvements

CHVC Site Improvement Project

The Project Booklet for the CHVC site improvement work has been released. Bids are due April 4. The project isn't likely to start before May. Stormwater management and erosion and settlement control were approved. The Critical Area Program Consistency report was received on February 7.

New Bike Rack

A new bike rack is being installed in the parking lot under the bridge on the west side. This was done using MTDA funds.

WVC Maintenance

Dennison Contracts

The Dennison Contracts were signed, and work began on the one-off contract. This contract covered the one-time work on all of the hillsides and the perimeters of the parking lots around the bridges. Trash was removed and all brush was cleared, beds were weeded and mulched. The

hillside bush hogging and brush removal took a solid two days. There was a lot of handwork required. The full cost will be \$5,300. This matches the estimate in the original proposal.

Delmarva Power Work

Poles are being replaced along the south side of 301/50 and north side of Rt 18. The board suggested that Gigi invite a representative from Delmarva Power to give an update on the construction projects in and around Kent Narrows.

A light pole was knocked down as a result of a car accident. It was reported and repaired.

Broadband

It was also suggested that an update on Broadband service expansion be reported through the Broadband Advisory Committee. Heather will follow up with this.

Litter Removal Improvement on State Highway Property

SHA has allocated 30% more money for highway litter removal through Operation Clean Sweep.

Promotion

Ad in Destination Maryland

The state's 2023 Travel Guide has been published and our half-page ad is in it, along with our listing in the back of the book.

Delmarva Life

A discussion occurred related to the Delmarva Life Proposal for spring. The board decided that because of the construction happening this summer, it would be better to do this in the fall, or in spring 2024.

Travel Guide

The update is in process, and a bid will be sought for a 48-page guide, so each marina can be featured on its own page.

Eastern Shore Heritage Grant, Trail Map

Meetings are set with the designer and with some of the those who can help provide heritage-related content.

Wayfinding Signs

A meeting is scheduled with James Wood to go over design, placement, and messaging.

Events

Watermen's Event Feasibility

The Watermen's Association, KNDF, QAC Tourism, and the Yacht Club collectively determined that holding a Watermen's Day this fall would put a strain on all organizations involved. The event committee will work to determine another date that allows more time for pre-planning.

7th Annual Chesapeake Bay Motoring Festival

The event takes place on Saturday and Sunday, June 10-11, on the lawn of the Kent Island Yacht Club. It showcases a unique grouping of antique, classic, hot rod and sports cars, along with antique and classic speedboats, yachts, and more.

Event tickets are good for a two-day admission, with each day including live music, local seafood, a selection of food trucks, libations, vendor tents, and more. Children under 12 get in free with an accompanying adult. For a limited time, early-bird, discounted two-day tickets can be purchased on the festival's website.

A radio-controlled regatta has been added as an extra feature.

The Kent Narrows Shantytowns exhibit is on display at Chesapeake College. QAC Tourism Office is working on getting the exhibit in the Chesapeake Heritage Center.

Text Amendment Update

A request for a Citizen's Text Amendment #23-02 related to the Jemal Property was received by the County in February. It is similar to the one introduced last year. KNDF will be asked to review.

Parks, Recreation, and Public Landings (Steve Chandlee)

The plans for the July 4 fireworks are underway. The Department is working to secure the Jemal property at the old outlets for parking, so people can tailgate and watch the fireworks. The event will be similar to the one in 2020.

OLD BUSINESS

Accommodations Tax

HB 931 (Delegates Hartman, Ghrist, Otto and Adams, introduced February 10)

The County Commissioners wrote a letter that Wicomico County requested of Queen Anne's and other code counties on the shore. The letter confirms that the Commissioners do not object to enabling legislation to raise the cap for accommodations tax from 5% to 6%.

This bill is currently in committee. It authorizes code counties (including Queen Anne's) on the Eastern Shore to set a hotel rental tax rate up to 6%. Under current law, the tax rate for these counties is capped at 5%. The bill would take effect July 1.

By law, all code counties must be in unanimous support of the increase before legislation can move forward at the State level. Worcester County sought the support of the affected Counties through MACO (Maryland Association of Counties).

The legislation is enabling, meaning it will allow the affected counties, including QAC, to raise the tax cap to 6%. It does not mean the taxes in the other counties would be raised upon the passage of the bill. The counties would have to have hold public hearings in order for the increase to occur.

In summary, even if the State legislation passes, it gives QAC the ability to raise the tax in QAC. It cannot increase without adjustment to the County tax code. That adjustment must have unanimous consent from the Commissioners.

Victoria Hoffman wanted to go on record as expressing concern that if an increase in the tax is discussed at the County level, a more careful analysis must be done in terms of how the tax is apportioned or earmarked, and parts of it should support visitor services in areas that are highly visited. Concern was also expressed that the tax only applies to hotels and not short-term rentals, creating an unfair taxing situation for hotels.

Talbot County is not affected. The tax in Talbot County is 4%. That is currently 1% less than Queen Anne's County and it will be 2% below QAC if at some point QAC raised it. If an increase were allowed in Queen Anne's County, it would make hotels less competitive in pricing, especially for business and other groups.

NEW BUSINESS

Gigi reported that other bills are also active in the General Assembly that would allow new taxes on home amenities.

SB691/ HB694 creates an amenities sales and use tax that will allow homeowners to rent out amenities such as a swimming pool.

Victoria suggested that the County be proactive in identifying the challenges posed to Queen Anne's County in the event that the legislation passes.

Joint Strategic Planning Exercise

A discussion occurred on how to move forward in implementing the Community Plan. The Board suggested a conversation with Todd Mohn, so that buy-in can occur with partner agencies. Cost for hiring a facilitator can also be explored. The Community Plan will need to begin to include transportation overlays related to the clean energy initiatives.

Other

Gigi updated the board on what she learned at the Rural Development Conference related to electronic vehicles and the impacts associated with expansion. A discussion followed on the special attention needed for charging stations around areas that are near water.

Hard copies of the Kent Narrows Community Plan were made available to board members.

Adjournment

RESOLUTION

Victoria Hoffman made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 10:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Georgeanna (Gigi) Windley,

Executive Director
Kent Narrows Development Foundation

Certification:

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of the Minutes that were adopted by the Directors of this Foundation on March 28, 2023.

Patricia P. Worns, Secretary, KNDF