



Travel And Tourism Advisory Committee

**Business Meeting Minutes for March 14, 2023**

**I. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum:**

The meeting began at 8:06am and the following Active Committee Members were present:

Eric Hoffman  
Dolores Jones (Zoom)  
Katherine Bonner  
John Anderes

Not Present:

Brian Truitt  
Derek Janes  
Jody Schulz  
Michelle Brink-Pringle  
Gail Owings

Staff Present:

Heather Tinelli, Director, Economic & Tourism Development  
April Plummer, Travel & Tourism Marketing Specialist  
Lisa Gallow, Office Coordinator (Zoom)

Supporting Members Present:

Gigi Windley, Executive Director, Kent Narrows Dev. Foundation  
Ashley Genova, Godfrey's Farm

**II. Approval of Agenda and Minutes:**

Due to low member attendance and the inability to meet a quorum, the March Agenda and February Meeting Minutes were not able to be approved.

**Economic & Tourism Development**

Heather Tinelli, Director  
425 Piney Narrows Rd.  
Chester, Maryland 21619  
Telephone: 410.604.2100  
Fax: 410.604.2101

**County Commissioners:**

James J. Moran, At Large  
Jack N. Wilson, Jr., District 1  
Patrick McLaughlin, District 2  
Philip L. Dumenil, District 3  
Christopher M. Corchiarino, District 4

- III. Department of Economic and Tourism Development Update:** Heather Tinelli, Director of Economic & Tourism Development, provided an update for the committee:
- A.** The department continues to attend weekly meetings for the Ferry Feasibility Study. Ms. Tinelli was included in the RFP Committee which has chosen and contacted the contractor. Things are moving forward quickly, and they anticipate the project to begin within the next month.
  - B.** Eight MD Counties, including Queen Anne's County applied for the Destination Development Grant to acquire funds that could be utilized to link all the counties that have access to the bay in a collaborative effort to market their tourism assets. The group was awarded \$250,000 through the grant.
  - C.** The department is currently working with the Stevensville A&E board to submit their 10-year Redesignation Application to the MD State Arts Council. They are requesting an increase/change to the district boundaries to include some areas/businesses that are an asset to the district but currently located outside the district boundaries.
  - D.** Ms. Tinelli has submitted the FY24 Budget to the QAC Commissioners. She has asked for an increase of \$25,000 to the Tourism Marketing Budget which would bring it to the state average of 175,000 for Maryland Counties.
  - E.** MD Office of Tourism has gone before the state to ask for an overall increase in the Tourism Marketing Budget. Last year, Governor Hogan designated 8 million to MD County Tourism offices to help local tourist regions to market and recover from loss during COVID. The increase has made an incredible difference and they would like to request for the same funding this year. QAC state budget for Marketing funds was increased from \$39,000 to 236,000 which enabled them to market to other regions with more diversified campaigns.
- IV. Old Business**
- A.** Committee Vacancies and Absences- Ms. Tinelli shared an updated on current members that will not be renewing the positions on the Travel & Tourism Advisory Board Committee
    - 1) Jody Schulz and Brian Truitt will not be renewing their Membership. Ms. Tinelli has sent out notices for the openings and has received some applications for the positions. The Committee will review the applications and choose applicants to present to the QAC Commissioners for approval.
    - 2) Derek Janes with Chesapeake Bay Beach Club has been unable to attend meetings regularly. The committee believes it is important to have the business included and would like Ms. Tinelli to ask him if there is someone that could potentially take his place on the committee.
    - 3) John Anderes suggested they move the meeting time to 9:00am to offer a More convenient time for members and possibly better attendance.

**V. New Business**

**A.** Sales & Use Tax Analytics Review- April Plummer provides a presentation which reviewed current and past statistics for both state and QAC Sales and Use Tax details.

1) Maryland Tourism Sales & Use Tax

- a. FY 2018- 479 million (July 2017 through June 2018)
- b. FY 2019-499 million (July 2018 through June 2019)
- c. FY2020-428.1 million (July 2019 through June 2020)
- d. FY 2021-294.1 million (July 2020 through June 2021)
- e. FY 2022-615.8 million (July 2021 through June 2022)

2) Percentage of Hotel Tax that comes from QAC Hotels, Bed & Breakfasts and Short-Term Lease facilities:

- a. Hotels-94.39%
- b. Bed & Breakfast-.34%
- c. Short Term Lease-5.41%

**B.** List of local upcoming events in QAC:

- 1) Boat Show- QAC is a sponsor for the Boat Show which has benefits to include access to emails for exhibitors and ticket holders to market local hotels, tourist attractions, restaurants etc. QAC Logo will be prominently displayed, they will have a booth and giving out tote bags containing promotional giveaways, visitor guide and literature from local businesses that would like to be included. The Boat Show will in a local night and concert on Friday evening, an additional concert on Saturday night with a beach bar and the addition of new family/kid friendly activities.
- 2) Kent Island Day
- 3) Chesapeake Bay Motoring Festival
- 4) Drink MD
- 5) July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration & Fireworks
- 6) Bash By the Bay
- 7) Bay Paddle
- 8) Peach Festival

**C.** All American Road Initiative Meetings- Ms. Plummer stated there will be three meetings offered that will include both an Open House Format as well as a Presentation to discuss the signage, maps and what will be highlighted and included on the AAR. The meetings will take place in Salisbury, Easton and Galena.

**D.** Highway Signage- Mr. Hoffman spoke about the issue with the county not having any state issued "Blue Exit Signs" that highlight local businesses in the county. He stated that QAC is the only county that does not utilize these signs and use of the signs could substantially increase visitors along the highway which is a lifeline to our local businesses. Ms. Windley stated that state legislatures are current reviewing signage and it made be a good time to advocate to local government for support and change.

**VI. Member Reports/Announcements-**

**A.** Kent Narrows Development Foundation- Ms. Windley provided an update for the TTAC Committee Members:

- 1) Ms. Windley testified on behalf of tourism to increase the annual MD Tourism Budget increase.
- 2) Knot 10 will have a Boat Expo in Kent Narrows for 3 weekends this spring. The weekends will be April 21-23, April 28-30 and May 5-7.
- 3) SHA has initiated a Highway Clean Up Campaign so we should be seeing a significant improvement in the trash issue along the highways in the region.
- 4) The Motoring Festival will take place at the KI Yacht Club on June 10th-11<sup>th</sup>.
- 5) The Concours d'Elegance car Show will take place at the KI Yacht Club on September 22<sup>nd</sup> -24<sup>th</sup>.
- 6) Kent Island Rotary Club is producing their annual Outdoor Guide.
- 7) Sugar Doodles will be opening in a space located at the Boatel.
- 8) KNDF is producing a Heritage Trail map for Kent Narrows area.

**VII. Next Meeting-** The next meeting date is scheduled for Tuesday, April 11, 2023

**VIII. Adjournment-** The March Travel & Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting was adjourned at 9:03am.