MINUTES

Kent Narrows Development Foundation
Board of Directors Meeting
Chesapeake Heritage and Visitors Center
May 28, 2019

Board Members Present
Jody Schulz, Chair
Joe Pomerantz, Vice Chair
Mike Harris, Treasurer
Pat Worns, Secretary
Michael Foster
Victoria Hoffman
Sheryl Jaros
Walt Thompson
Peggy Young

Board Members Absent with Notice
Jerry Dammeyer
Sue Kamp
Justin Kiernan
Jason Ruth

Commissioners
Phil Dumenil

Guests
Sherriff Hofmann

KNDF Staff
Gigi Windley, Executive Director

QAC Staff
Nancy Scozzari, Parks and Recreation

CALL TO ORDER
With a quorum of directors in attendance, Chair Jody Schulz called to order the regular meeting of the Kent Narrows Development Foundation at 9:09 a.m. Approval of reports were tabled until a quorum could be present.

PUBLIC COMMENT
None

COMMISSIONER DUMENIL
New appointments will be made to the Bike and Pedestrian Board, the Board of Appeals, and to the Housing Authority.

The Commissioners will consider drafting a letter to the SHA to ask for a temporary closure of the left turn on eastbound Rt. 50 lane at Main Street in the vicinity of the Queenstown Outlet Center. The closure would be in effect only on Sundays.
REPORT FROM PARKS AND RECREATION
Nancy Scozzari reported that construction of the Cross County Connector Trail is on schedule. The County is hoping for an opening date of late this year.

The seasonal Park Rangers will begin their work on July 1. There are a total of eight rangers, two of which are full time.

Matapeka State Park is the only park in Queen Anne’s County where the water is tested, so all County Beaches are “swim at your own risk.” A case of Vibrio virus was reported by a visitor to Matapeka Park.

Since there appears to be increased attendance at Ferry Point and Terrapin Park, the Parks Department is looking into also having the water at these parks tested. Real-time testing is not possible. It takes several days for the test to come back, and by that time, conditions have changed. Visitors are advised to observe water conditions carefully and wait at least 48 hours after a rainfall before swimming.

Discussion followed about how the County can be prepared for growth at our beachfront parks.

Sheriff Hoffman commented that there is an increase in drug use in the more secluded areas of the trails in the North County parks.

UPDATE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM
Ashley Chenault reported that Chesapeake College is developing a tour guide and hospitality training program. Talbot County Tourism and Queen Anne’s County Tourism will be advisors on the program development. She reported that a two-day training is being developed by Robert C. Thompson, the theatre instructor at the College. His guide experience includes giving ghost tours in Gettysburg.

Bulldog Bikes and Floats out of Annapolis has opened a branch in in Stevensville and will bring bikes to its customers.

A handout was distributed that outlined tourism statistics for the County plus a list of advertising buys in national and regional publications along.

Peggy Young suggested that it would be helpful to see the number and geographic profiles of the inquiries resulting from the ads.

The Tourism Office hosted a tour for Canadian writers who were passing through our area. They took a boat tour of the Kent Narrows. Jill Gleason, a freelance travel journalist, is writing an article on the area for Select Traveler Magazine. The Office also is working with a historian who is interested in producing a podcast series on African American history.

In an effort to attract bus tours to the County, the Tourism Office sent representatives to the American Bus Association’s marketplace. The office also helped CBEC with the recent Birding by Boat Tours.

Ashley will be representing Queen Anne’s County at the US Travel Association’s IPW in Anaheim in June. Ashley will support the State of Maryland and the Eastern Shore’s efforts at the event. The County will not have individual operator appointments, but will be grouped with other destinations. She said that she attempts to develop business in the German travel markets and in those markets that Capital Region USA is targeting.

An extended discussion followed on the nature of, and value associated with the IPW event.

Gigi clarified that IPW was not categorized as a group tour attraction event, but one that facilitated a wide variety of global travel sales including individual travel, business meetings and incentive travel, and some group and student travel. The inbound travel trade event attracts delegates from more than 70 countries.

Kent Narrows was represented at IPW when Washington, D.C., was the host city in 2017 because Capital Region USA was involved in hosting familiarization tours associated with the event. In 2016, Queen Anne’s County
provided funds to host a special Maryland promotional event for selected IPW delegates at the National Harbor. The long-term goal associated with an ongoing presence at IPW is to have regional and local businesses and tours featured in travel-trade products that will result in increased visitation and travel spending.

Since a high level of expertise is needed to convert international leads locally, it is cost prohibitive for small destination marketing organizations to attend on an ongoing basis, especially when the travel costs to reach and attend the show is high.

The KNDF relies heavily on the expertise provided through the Maryland Office of Tourism Development and CRUSA to get the word out on Kent Narrows. Gigi suggested that the best thing the KNDF and the County could do is to ensure the reps are well educated on our destination. The Maryland Office of Tourism Development and CRUSA will be distributing the promotional ads and links to the Kent Narrows attractions at the event.

The most recent visit from an overseas travel trade delegation to the Kent Narrows was brought through Loudon County, VA in cooperation with the MD Office of Tourism. The KNDF and the QAC Chamber facilitated a tour stop at Harris Crab House for United Airlines and South Korean operators. That tour was brought by the head of travel trade relations for the Maryland Office of Tourism.

Maryland was “travel ready” for this group because they produced promotional films in the Korean language to support the State’s targeted efforts with this group. Destinations in Kent Narrows and Queenstown were featured in those films as a result of the KNDF’s work with the Maryland Office of Tourism Development.

Gigi will supply a comprehensive regional list of past leads to Ashley prior to this year’s IPW event.

The Kent Narrows display in the Visitors Center was moved. Jody suggested that the Kent Narrows displays be front and center — the first thing that visitors see.

SHERIFF HOFMANN’S PRESENTATION
The Sheriff stated that the Kent Narrows area is a safe place. He distributed a comparison of the call statistics for the area. Calls for service to the Kent Narrows Waterfront are down significantly between from May 2018 to May 2019.

The Sheriff suggested the positive change could be attributed to local businesses increasing their own safety and security initiatives. Also to the addition of more Park Rangers during the summer season and for a longer period of time.

The Sheriff stated that the security at Red Eye’s and The Jetty appears to be preventing negative behaviors in the area.

Last year there were:

8 suspicious activity reports
10 residential alarms
3 thefts (from vehicles)

The office is not seeing a lot of new heroin users in the County, but they are seeing an increase in overdosing by people who have been on heroin and opiates for a long time. Also they are seeing substance abusers who are getting out of jail, using again, and overdosing because the drug that is being sold on the street now is more deadly. First responders are now carrying Narcan on a regular basis to revive those who overdose.

He expects to see more overdoses this summer because recreational cocaine is being cut with fentanyl and is no longer being sold in a pure form.

Often, overdose patients don’t get access to recovery programs because they leave the hospital before the help team arrives.
The Sheriff noted that cell phone apps are facilitating the purchase of both illegal drugs and body parts directly to people’s doors through the dark web. The dark web accounts for most of the illegal activity on the web and it is difficult to monitor. Queen Anne’s is one of the few counties that will seize phones when an overdose occurs. Phone messages often give law enforcement officials clues for further investigation.

Sheriff Hoffman is seeing good cooperation from businesses in the Kent Narrows in regard to reporting illegal or suspicious activity.

Victoria Hoffman suggested that when the new connector trail opens up, a more watchful eye will be needed to patrol the new elevated boardwalk trail and trail head at Long Point Park.

Jody Schulz reported that a tractor trailer was stopped overnight in the Fisherman’s lot which is private property and he had a difficult time getting the truck to leave. Jody wanted to know his rights as a property owner. The Sheriff stated that the property owner has the right to ask that the vehicle be removed. If they refuse to move, the business may call the Sheriff; if they still refuse leave, they can be arrested.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT
Gigi Windley reported on the following:

WVC IMPROVEMENTS
Cross County Connector Trail
The trail construction work continues. Most of the work that caused the road closings in the WVC is complete. The KNDF fielded and helped to resolve complaints from local businesses related to the construction. Most complaints this month were mainly related to the construction equipment taking up employee parking spaces in the public lot. She thanked Shane Moore at the County for helping to successfully resolve the issues.

Harris Aquaculture Project
Jason Ruth has moved several tanks to the old Angler’s property which is across from The Big Owl and on the southeast side of the Kent Narrows Drawbridge.

Maritime Related Initiatives
A date for a meeting with James Wood is being set to address the issues we the Foundation discussed the March and April meetings.

Cross County Trail Grant
Due to the uncertainty in our funding match from the County, the grant application for the Cross County Connector Trail Map was delayed until the next grant cycle in January of 2020. The grant is written and ready to go. A memo went out to Parks discussing the timeline for the submission of the grant. New letters of support will be needed.

TIF/MuniCap
The Tax Increment Financing proposal continues to be worked on at the County level.

ISSUES
Disruption under the Kent Narrows Bridge
The KNDF worked with county and law enforcement officials to eliminate a road rally event and other disruptive motorsports events under the bridge. Sheriff Hofmann’s office was most helpful resolving the dangerous situations caused by these gatherings, advising them about obtaining an event license in Maryland, and sending them elsewhere.

Speed Limit on 18/Main Street
The Speed Limit Reduction Memo that was sent in August of 2018 went again to the Commissioners and Todd Mohn for action. Commissioner Dumenil will follow up on the request.

United Shellfish Building Collapsing
An e-mail went to Planning and Zoning to see if anything has changed since our last inquiry about this property.

“No Parking” Signs on Rt. 18
The missing “No Parking” signs on Rt. 18 were reported to the County. The ones that were askew on Wells Cove Road were straightened.

LEGISLATIVE ITEMS AFFECTING THE WVC
State legislation passed a bill that will affect short-term rentals. It’s specifically aimed at Airbnb and other online platforms that offer short-term rentals. The bill requires that the appropriate taxes be paid to state and local authorities. The bill (SB 599) goes into effect June 1 of 2019.

PROJECTS
Economic Impact Study
Additional information was supplied to the Beacon Group on investment into the WVC by government entities. The KNDF has a meeting scheduled in early June to go over the results.

Walkway between the Jetty and Bridges Needs Attention
Walt Thompson submitted photos of the county boardwalk between the Jetty and Bridges. Weeds are prevalent throughout and most, if not all the bollards, need painting. He suggests that we encourage the county to have a schedule to spray weeds early in the spring and check it monthly if we want this to look good. The area was nice when it was first completed but it is not being maintained properly.

PROMOTIONS
Online Updates
The KNDF Website and Facebook pages were updated on an ongoing basis to alert travelers to the closures and detours at Exit 42 as a result of the Trail construction. Summertime events including two fishing tournaments were also added.

Pad Map
Designs created for the new concierge maps are complete. Four versions of the map will be printed. A generic map for the district will be printed, as well as maps designed to orient visitors from each of the hotels.

Maritime Heritage Grant
We received an extension from the County for the banners to stay up until this fall. Final paperwork and changes related to the completion of the project will be submitted this month. The Stories of Kent Narrows website is being “built out” as time allows.

Gigi and Nancy have been working on developing and placing the wayfinding sign project. The presentation was tabled to a later date due to time constraints.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
The Commissioners approved the $10,000 transfer from the 570 fund.

A request went to Jonathan Seeman on the following:

1) providing us with a more detailed statement on the KNDF 570 fund that includes dates of withdraws and deposits.

2) estimates on when the deposits will go in to the fund and projections on amount of funds that will be collected for 2020.

3) seeking a more efficient way to accelerate the transfer of funds.

The approval of the April minutes and financial report was tabled until the June meeting due to a lack of a quorum by the end of the meeting.
ADJOURNMENT
Pat Worns moved to adjourn the meeting; Sheryl Jaros seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.
The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

The next meeting of the Foundation is scheduled for 9 a.m. Tuesday, June 25, 2019, at the Chesapeake Heritage and Visitors Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Georgeanna (Gigi) Windley, Executive Director
Kent Narrows Development Foundation

Certification
I hereby certify that these are a true and correct copy of the Minutes that were adopted by the Directors of this Foundation on 6/26/2019.

[Signature]