

WICOMICO TOURISM AND CIVIC CENTER COMMISSION MEETING
APRIL 15, 2019
Minutes

The Wicomico Tourism and Civic Center Commission met in regular session on April 15, 2019. Chairman Delano called the meeting to order at 11:05 am. The following board members and staff were present:

Board Members

Mike Delano, Chairman
Larry Dodd, County Councilman
Bak Patel
Laura Soper
Bill Chambers

Staff Members

Steve Miller
Chuck Rousseau
Kevin Wright
Kristen Goller
Linda Lyons

The minutes from March 18, 2019 meeting were approved as circulated.

Mrs. Goller led the meeting with the Tourism Key Indicator Report. She noted the continued declining trend of room tax. January and February were significantly down. She budgeted flat numbers for the year, but continual decreases for the remainder of the fiscal year would threaten to move room tax to under \$1M. Mr. Patel confirmed that the STR Report for his properties showed a down trend. He noted the importance of focusing on this trend and expressed support for bringing additional events to the area. He did note that April appeared better so far.

Mr. Wright presented the Civic Center Key Indicator Report. March, April and May are heavily booked with entertainment. He went on to say that due to labor costs, catering and concessions profits were trending down. He noted how concession purchases can cross months which can affect the overall monthly profits tied to an event on the report. Alcohol net profits were trending up. He stated that the liquor license includes beer, wine and hard liquor. The decision to date has been to offer beer and wine at events. The County is consider adding liquor sales to the alcohol selection at select events to potentially boost margins.

Mr. Miller presented an update on the Civic Center Phase II discussion from the previous meeting. A letter was sent to the Maryland Stadium Authority to request a "refresh" of our 2012 Crossroads Study. The County has requested the Stadium Authority contribute one half of the funding for the refresh report, which can be used to evaluate the feasibility of Phase II. The Stadium Authority board recently approved the County's request and has submitted the requested to the House and Senate finance committees for funding approval. If the County proceeds with a refresh of the study, it would take approximately 4-6 months to complete. The Phase II would include the 30,000 square foot expansion on the Midway side of the building, estimated cost \$15M-\$20M.

Mr. Miller expressed the need of the support from the State for building funds. He continued to say that through the MAASA partnership, we've supported Ocean City with room nights so he feels this regional approach would benefit not just the County, but the region as well as the State.

Mr. Miller led the discussion on the Department's Strategic Plan. His intention is to build an overall Strategic Plan that covers a five year vision and outlook. He would like feedback from the Board members. The planned timeline includes a Division Mission Statement Review and development of an overall Department mission statement, which will be presented at the April board meetings. Notes for a Departmental SWOT will be shared at the May meeting. The Department goals will be discussed at the June Board meeting. The Mission/SWOT/Goals will be vetted with staff over the summer of 2019 and a draft of the plan will be presented to the boards in the fall. Once board feedback is received, the plan will be vetted with the County Administration and County Council. The goal is to have a plan adopted by the end of 2019. This plan will cover 2020 – 2025.

The Civic Center's mission statement proposals were presented for discussion. Suggestions were made regarding finding a similar terminology to replace "Quality of Life" and noting the Civic Center as a multi-purpose facility. Revisions will be made and forwarded to Board members prior to the next meeting for review. Feedback from the Recreation and Parks Board will also be obtained.

Mrs. Goller announced the annual Tourism Reception will be held Thursday, May 2, 2019 at the Civic Center from 5 pm – 7 pm. They will once again partner with the Salisbury Chamber of Commerce's Business after Hours. She handed out the award descriptions and requested nominations from the board members to her via email.

Final discussion was an overview of the Jersey Boys show cancellation. There were issues with the show out of the Department's control. The concerns initially raised from the tour group were handled in a timely manner, however, the County's communication to the patrons waiting outside was not to the standards we expect from ourselves. Mr. Miller will be approaching the County Council to repurpose money saved from a Perdue Stadium project to apply towards a new public announcement system and video board which would assist with external communications to the public.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:05 pm.

Tentative next meeting will be held May 20, 2019.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by,
Linda Lyons