

WICOMICO TOURISM AND CIVIC CENTER COMMISSION MEETING
JUNE 17, 2019
Minutes

The Wicomico Tourism and Civic Center Commission met in regular session on June 17, 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
Laura Soper
Bak Patel
Kathleen McLain
Sandy Fitzgerald-Angello

Staff Members

Steve Miller
Kristen Goller
Kevin Wright
Linda Lyons

With one spelling correction, the minutes from May 20, 2019 were approved as circulated.

Mrs. Goller led the meeting with the overview of the April Tourism Key Indicator Report. She noted that March Room Tax was up almost 4% and April showed a 1% increase. She is optimistic that May's number will show a YOY increase as well. Mr. Patel commented that May was a good month for hotels but June was struggling slightly. The transient visitation at the Visitor Center is currently around 15,000. Out year bookings are forecasting an economic impact of \$76,000,000 while current year projections are \$65,000,000. The question was raised where Wicomico County faired in Maryland regarding room tax percentage. Mrs. Goller would research and report back to the board. When asked where advertising money was being spent, she noted that the annual budget is divvied among various sectors, including group travel, sports marketing, festivals and transient.

Mr. Wright presented the Civic Center Key Indicator Report. He noted an increase in alcohol profits while concessions were trending down slightly. Highlighting the report, he pointed out that Trade Shows were downsizing and Religious events were showing a major deficit due to the Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic where no revenue is generated for the entire weekend. He continues to face challenges in finding quality people to fill vacant positions. With the increase of labor and food costs, concession profits have steadily decreased. Staff will review menu prices to cover the rise in operating expenses and make possible recommendations.

Mr. Miller presented the Maryland Stadium Authority/ Civic Center Phase II update. Staff met on May 30 for preliminary meetings with Crossroads Consulting. While on their facility visit, Crossroads Consulting recognized that the County has implemented many of their original recommendations from the 2012 Study. The "refresh" study should take four to six months to complete before next steps are determined.

Mr. Miller went on that the FY20 Budget process was very successful for the Department. Included among the Department's requests approved by the County Council were additional County funds to

make improvements to the WYCC, a third Marketing position will be added to expand Marketing efforts and the funding for the 7.5 Challenger project was approved.

With no additional old business, Mr. Miller distributed the Department's proposed five year goals for discussion. He stated that the board had provided input on the Mission, SWOT, and now the goals were being drafted. His plan is to have a draft of the overall 5 year plan to the board for preliminary review in the fall. One topic discussed was to have a common brand/logo for the County and/or the Department. Currently the Department utilizes multiple logos for individual divisions of the Department, festivals, programs and events which may create some brand confusion. If this path is pursued, the board recommended getting County Administration support to seek an outside consultant to advise on the best course. Mr. Miller noted that a consultant had been hired through grant funding to design a new logo for the Governor's Challenge Basketball Tournament. The suggestion was also made to perhaps seek a sponsor for the Civic Center building for naming rights. Mr. Miller asked the board to review the proposed Departmental Goals and provide feedback to him by the end of June.

With no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 pm

Meetings will resume in the fall.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted By,
Linda Lyons