

WICOMICO TOURISM AND CIVIC CENTER COMMISSION MEETING
January 9, 2023
Meeting Minutes

The Wicomico Tourism and Civic Center Commission met on January 9, 2023 in its regular session. In Chairman Chambers' absence, Ms. Weer called the meeting to order at 11:05 am. The following board and staff members were in attendance:

Board Members

Chris Hall
Laura Soper
Christy Weer
Tessa Jarvis
Dave Ryan
Micah Stauffer
Brad Mogan
James Winn (County Council Representative)
Rachel Root (Miles Media Representative)
Hunter Landon (WBOC)

Staff Members

Steve Miller
Katie Rouse
Kristen Goller
Niki Wheatley
Linda Lyons

The motion to approve the minutes from September 19, 2022 was made by Mr. Stauffer and seconded by Mr. Hall. They were passed unanimously as circulated. Mr. Winn was introduced as the new County Council Representative for the Board.

Rachel Root with Miles Media opened the meeting with the results from the June 19, 2022-November 18, 2022 Tourism Marketing Campaign. She highlighted the campaign details:

- Objective: Create awareness and inspire increased visitation
- Budget: \$336,398.00
- Timing: 6/19/22-11/18/22
- Primary Drive Markets: MD, DE, DC, VA, NJ, NY, PA & OH
- Demographics: Travelers with spouses, young children or friends, leisure and vacation seekers

The overall results are positive and within or above marketing standards but the final in-depth review of expenditure report will set the direction for a potential spring campaign. The next steps for the campaign will include:

- Evaluating of the advertising creative, including ability to affect likelihood to visit
- Analyzing those who have visited and/or likely to be affected by the advertising vs. those who are not
- Providing data to drive future campaign strategy by comparing the effectiveness of the various media tools
- In-depth review of expenditure report and effectiveness survey
- Evaluate and compare target markets and audiences to media and expenditure report results
- Plan Spring 2023 plan-updating target markets and audiences based on research and data findings

- Develop new media plan and flowchart
- Outline and develop new creative asset needs for media placement
- Utilize audience modeling based on previous campaign first-party data captured

Mr. Miller presented an update on a few ongoing capital projects. Harmon field construction was temporarily paused due to the weather but the site work is nearly complete. Once the temperatures warm up materials will be poured for the actual court pads. Lights will be installed later this month. Weather depending, the goal is to have the park open in April or sometime in the spring.

Mr. Miller went on to provide updates on the Youth and Civic Center Exterior Renovation Project. There was a kick-off meeting last month with Becker Morgan. The design will be finalized in the next 6-months with the goal of producing bid specifications by next summer. The EDA grant deadline is for Spring 2025 completion. In addition to the exterior projects, four new video boards are currently being installed in the Arena at the Civic Center. These are larger boards and will give the venue an opportunity to provide live camera feeds, scoreboards, sponsorships and a more modern look.

Mrs. Goller presented the Visitor Center/Leonard's Mill Project. A dog park is being proposed for the property at Leonard's Mill where the pavilion and softball field are located. This is believed to be the only dog park on Route 13. Staff are exploring use of EDA funds filtered through the State's Tourism office to help fund the project, among other possible sources. The projected completion of this project would be the end of fiscal year 2024.

Mrs. Goller continued with Tourism Division updates. After a two-year hiatus due to COVID, the Governor's Challenge was held December 26-30. The basketball tournament brought 110 teams with a new level of competition. The Civic Center concessions brought in over \$50,000 in revenue over the week. The STR report was on track for a bad month, but the Governor's Challenge week helped salvage the month for many hotels. The F & T Cheer event will be held this weekend and MD State Wrestling is also on the upcoming 2023 calendar. The Visitor's Guide has been revamped without paid advertising and to save costs, now has a 2-year shelf life. A new website will be launched and the new tourism marquee is in place with new branding. Due to historically low visitation during the winter months, Welcome Center hours will change to 9 am to 4 pm until March with maintenance every other day.

In Mrs. Jones' absence Mr. Rousseau provided brief updates for the Civic Center. Staff is coming off a very busy holiday season with activities getting back to pre-pandemic levels. Two of the larger holiday parties included the City of Salisbury and Pohanka. Dinner shows continue to draw attendees. Upcoming January events include the Lone Star Championship Rodeo and Monster Trucks & Thrill Show. Globetrotters and Mercy Me are booked for March.

With no further discussion the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 pm.

Next meeting is scheduled March 20, 2023.

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by:
Linda Lyons