

WICOMICO TOURISM AND CIVIC CENTER COMMISSION MEETING  
MAY 20, 2019  
Minutes

The Wicomico Tourism and Civic Center Commission met in regular session on May 20, 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  
Stephanie Willey  
Laura Soper  
Mike Getzey  
Ed Urban  
Bak Patel  
Bill Chambers

Staff Members

Chuck Rousseau  
Kevin Wright  
Kristen Goller  
Linda Lyons

The minutes from April 15, 2019 were approved as circulated.

Mr. Delano commented that the Tourism Reception was exceptional and commended the board for awarding the Betty Gardner award to Kathleen McLain.

Mrs. Goller led the meeting with the Tourism Key Indicator Report. She noted the increase in room tax for the month of March while occupancy was trending down 4% with a dip in room demand. The STR Report forecast was flat for the month of April. Visitation at the Welcome Center is still declining. Merchandise sales were slightly up for March. Mr. Delano raised the question if AAA would recommend the Welcome Center in their travel literature now that the Route 13 corridor was complete. Mr. Urban pointed out the figures noting the breakdown of sales between Sports Marketing and Group Sales. He noted that over the past eight years Sports revenue has quadrupled while Group Sales showed a decline from \$10 Million to \$2 Million. Mrs. Goller explained the recession has effected the number along with the shift of Dog Show revenue from Group Sales to Sports Marketing. The comment was made of the importance to protect the Sports business and to continue to focus on diversifying as well. The comment was made regarding Chincoteague considering raising their room sales tax to fund EMT Services. Ocean City is also considering raising their tax. Mr. Delano stated he did not favor the shift of Wicomico County Room Tax from Tourism to fund something else.

Mr. Wright presented the Civic Center Key Indicator Report. He noted that alcohol and catering net profits were trending up. He pointed out that user fees will fluctuate with Broadway Show refunds. He continued that they will still pursue Broadway Shows that don't mind performing in an arena.

Mr. Rousseau presented an update on the Civic Center Phase II discussion. He told the board that the State approved the funding for a "refresh" of the 2012 Crossroads Study. Maryland Stadium Authority agreed to split the funding for the study. Crossroads Consulting will be conducting the study once again. This report can be used to evaluate the feasibility of Phase II. He continued that preliminary

meetings were planned for the end of the month. The study is estimated to take approximately 4-6 months. Once the report is complete it will be presented to the Board. The Phase II would include the 30,000 square foot expansion on the Midway side of the building, estimated cost \$15M-\$20M. Mr. Rousseau went on to discuss the SWOT analysis. He explained that the analysis was to take into account the entire department. The board members agreed that the key strengths had been addressed. The discussion then moved to address weaknesses. Improved technology was noted. Ms. Willey suggested that a digital advertising was less expensive than commercials. This advertising could include targeted campaigns. The suggestion was made that rather than sending sales reps to trade shows for limited minutes of exposure, perhaps identify key organizers and bring them to the county to actually see what the area has to offer. Among the threats, Mr. Rousseau stated that there was still difficulty finding key people to fill key positions that have remained open.

Department Goals was the next discussion. It was noted the Department has many very strong tournaments, such as USSSA Softball Tournament and Governor's Challenge. The board stated the need to build on these events and continue to research for other events that could grow to be successful.

In general news, the board shared in the positive publicity for the 7.5 Challenger project.

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

Next meeting will be held June 17, 2019

Minutes Respectfully Submitted by,  
Linda Lyons