



Tourism Development Advisory Board

Audio recordings of the Tourism Development Board meetings can be found at <https://www.kentcounty.com/committees/tourism> click on the ‘Recorded Meetings Tab’.

April 20, 2021

The meeting was held virtually on TEAMS.

Board Members Present: Sandy Scott (Chair), Casey Carroll, Suzanne Einstein, and Ingrid Hanson and Dolores Jones.

Board Members Absent: Chikki Shajwani.

Also in Attendance: Jana Carter, Tourism Manager; Katie Wright, Economic Development Manager, Economic & Tourism Development; and Shelley Heller, County Administrator.

Ms. Scott called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Ms. Scott requested motions to approve the minutes from the January 19, February 16, and March 16, 2021 meetings. On motions by Ms. Einstein and seconded by Ms. Carroll, the Board unanimously approved the minutes.

Ms. Carter provided an update on tourism advertising for the remainder of FY2021. Advertising will continue to include a mix of print, digital, radio and social media advertising to reach the target markets. The transit marketing campaign will start in May.

Ms. Carter reported that the Visitor Guide was forwarded to the printer for processing expected delivery in May for distribution to local tourism partners and state-run visitor centers. Ms. Wright has created a display to include a QR code that will be given to several businesses throughout the county providing virtual access to the guide.

Ms. Carter reported on several tourism projects. The State Office of Tourism has assigned an intern in partnership with the 400 Years of African American History Commission to research Network to Freedom (NTF) sites in Kent County. Ms. Carter reported that the intern has located the site of Harriet Shepherd’s escape and the NTF application is nearing completion. There has been an increase in requests for information on the Chesapeake Country All-American Road and Ms. Carter is working with the Chesapeake Country All-American Road Marketing Committee to fulfill requests.

Ms. Carter provided an update on grant reporting. The Calendar Year 2020 Advertising Grant report and the Fiscal Year 2021 Interim report have been submitted to the State Office of Tourism for review and processing.

Ms. Wright provided the Board with an update on Economic Development projects. The Kent County Photo Contest is open and will conclude on June 30. The contest is structured to provide awards at the amateur and professional level and is being advertised on social media. Job listings created to assist business in seeking candidates for vacant positions are performing well. Ms. Wright stated that once the state of emergency has been lifted, options are being explored to host a job fair.

Ms. Wright and Ms. Carter have been working collaboratively on print advertising for the transit marketing campaign as well as a regional campaign with Cooperative Living magazine.

Ms. Wright reported that the Restaurant Grant is open until April 26, 2021 and that the Lodging Grant will open at 8 a.m. on April 26. She stated that more information will be coming about the nonprofit grant program.

Ms. Einstein stated that the Rock Hall visitor center is undergoing a minor renovation (painting, new flooring, etc.) in preparation to reopen before May 30, 2021. She stated that the center needs a brochure holder or rack system and a storage cabinet.

There was a question regarding the status of the Kent County Visitor Center. Ms. Carter stated that the center is currently not open; there have been conversations with the Town of Chestertown regarding re-opening in May 2021 prior to Memorial Day. Ms. Carter will keep the Board updated.

Ms. Heller stated that the Commissioners approved Code Home Rule 4-2021 allowing the creation of the Economic and Tourism Development Commission. The merger will take effect within 45 days, effective May 21, 2021.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Ms. Carroll, seconded by Ms. Einstein, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 a.m. The Board agreed to meet again on Tuesday, May 18, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. in person with the virtual Teams option.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jana Carter, Tourism Manager