

King George Tourism Advisory Committee Regular Meeting Minutes

January 22, 2020

Call to Order, Roll Call:

The King George County Tourism Advisory Committee Regular Meeting was called to order at 3:03 pm. Members present were Bob Baird, David Zabelsky, Don Smith, Dee Strauss, Jeron Hayes, and Warren Veazey. Justyn Cox was absent. Michele Washington (staff) and Nick Minor, Director of Economic Development & Tourism were also in attendance. Guests were Joan Waters from Jazz In The Country and Pastor Larry Robertson from Mount Bethel Retreat Center.

Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

Application for Tourism Funding – Jazz In The Country

Jazz In The Country, Inc. submitted an application to assist Mt. Bethel Retreat Center with upgrading their two existing buildings with energy efficient indoor lighting. It was noted that Jazz In The Country was not an owner of Mt. Bethel, but a fundraising organization established to promote a specific event at the Mt. Bethel facility. They felt that modernizations to the buildings would better prepare Mt. Bethel for the hosting of community events, while increasing its utilization. Replacing the indoor lighting would also greatly improve the energy efficiency of the facility. Mt. Bethel, in partnership with Dominion Energy, qualified for incentives that lowered the overall cost of the proposal by \$2,800. Jazz In The Country requested funding in the amount of \$6,200 for energy efficient indoor lighting at Mt. Bethel Retreat Center.

The TAC felt that, even though the application had a capital expenditure element to it, replacing the lighting would increase the usage of Mt. Bethel and enhance the experience for those utilizing the space. The TAC recommended full funding of \$6,200 for the replacement of the indoor lighting at Mt. Bethel Retreat Center. Don Smith made the motion to approve the application. Warren Veazey seconded. All members were in favor and the motion passed.

Approval of Minutes – November 2019:

Warren Veazey made the motion to approve the November 2019 Meeting Minutes as written. David Zabelsky seconded. The minutes were approved as submitted.

TAC Members Activity Reports:

Dee Strauss reported that the Charlie and the Chocolate Factory play started that night at the high school and would run through Jan. 25. Approximately eight hundred elementary school students would arrive at the high school over the next few days to view a shortened version of the play. The Fall Festival Committee was scheduled to meet on January 23 with Wil Gravatt and Michele Washington from the 300th Anniversary Advisory Committee to collaborate ideas about this year's Fall Festival. Ms. Strauss also reported that she had thirty students that were to compete in the DECA State Leadership Conference held in Virginia Beach on February 28-29.

Jeron Hayes continued planning the 4th of July celebration at Dahlgren and had contracted the band, Third Stream Giants, to perform. She was working to secure a second band for the event. Ms. Hayes mentioned that there was a meeting the previous week among the Dahlgren Heritage Museum, King George Historical Society, and Ralph Bunche Alumni Association which discussed a cooperative effort on a number of different levels. The Museum was planning their Murder Mystery Dinner Theater fundraiser for April 24th at the King George Citizens Center and their first STEM event would be on January 24th.

Don Smith reported that the King George Chamber of Commerce had talked to Chris Clarke and George Milsaps about the 2020 census coming out on April 1st. The Chamber was working hard to get the word out about the census to help increase participation. The next Chamber meeting would be held on February 24 with John Shore as the guest speaker.

Warren Veazey reported that he was planning the Dahlgren Trail ½ Marathon on February 22 along the western 6.55 miles of the DRHT. He stated that eighty runners had already signed up for the race. Mr. Veazey mentioned that the Sheetz-to-Sheetz Trail Run was scheduled on March 7, 2020. The untimed, 14 mile run was for charity, with the majority of the course being along the Dahlgren Railroad Heritage Trail. Mr. Veazey also reported that he was working with Wil Gravatt in planning the June and August 300th Celebration events.

David Zabelsky reported that the My Place Hotel was progressing quickly and planned a mid-April opening date. He received the 2019 room occupancy data for the Holiday Inn Express, as well as, for the competition in the area. Mr. Zabelsky stated that the competition had continued its growth in occupancy by 3.5 %, while the Holiday Inn Express had an occupancy growth rate of 13%.

Bob Baird reported that the Historical Society's 2019 Christmas ornament of Woodlawn Plantation was still available and they just received the proof for the 2020 ornament of the County's 300th Anniversary Logo. He hoped the ornament would be available for purchase within the next six weeks. Mr. Baird mentioned that a reprint of the King George County Cookbook would be out in the spring and that the Society had officer elections in December.

300th Anniversary Celebration:

Bob Baird – Update on 300th Anniversary Committee

Bob Baird reported on the upcoming Commitment to Education – CTE Event on February 10th. He clarified that the event was open to all and not limited to people with school-aged children. Mr. Baird mentioned that a new event was added to the 300th Celebration on March 1st. The event was in combination with the L. E. Smoot Memorial Library to honor its 50th Anniversary.

New Business:

Standards of Conduct

TAC members agreed to the terms and signed the Standards of Conduct form.

Development of Comprehensive Marketing Spreadsheet for 300th Anniversary Events

Nick Minor presented a social media marketing strategy to the TAC. The TAC felt that it was an introductory pitch and not an integrated proposal of the type of work to be accomplished. Without more detail, they felt that they were not in the proper position to discuss the proposal. There was also concern on who would provide the content to the contractor. Mr. Minor stated that he did not have the time or the staff to properly market the county as a whole, but the contractor would. The TAC felt that, from first look, the proposal was more than what they asked. They wanted to help promote the 300th Anniversary events. They expected a calendar of what social media channels would be utilized, who was in charge of each, and when they were scheduled to be released for the various 300th Anniversary events. The TAC suggested that Mr. Minor consider hiring full-time staff, paid with TAC funds, to work on tourism marketing efforts. The TAC was also concerned that their tourism website had not launched and felt the website completion should hold first priority.

Year End Report Write-Up for TAC Accomplishments and Explanation of Tourism Funds for County Website

The TAC asked for staff to provide a draft for the committee to edit.

Anticipated Acquisition and Use of Roseland Road House and Adjacent Woodland

A section of land and two-story, Buckler House on Roseland Road were part of 5.8 acres King George acquired from the Virginia Department of Transportation, in exchange for Wayside Park being lost to the new bridge over the Potomac River. Since this property was in exchange for Wayside Park and would be part of our park system, the restrictions from the National Parks and Land Program would be transferred to the newly acquired property with the Buckler House. The county could not sell or move the house, and the building must be used by the general public for outdoor use, recreation, or a historical purpose. One solution suggested was to use the Buckler House property as a museum that could display artifacts and stories from the Ralph Bunche Alumni Association, KG Historical Society, and Dahlgren Heritage Museum. It was also suggested as the most practical new site of the Dahlgren Heritage Museum, if the current site was lost to changes to the new bridge's route.

Discussions Between Ralph Bunche Alumni Association, KG Historical Society, and Dahlgren Heritage Museum

The Chairman of the TAC felt that this topic was covered thoroughly in previous discussions.

Old Business:

Amendment to TAC Charter to Allow for Remote Meeting Attendance

Bob Baird requested staff to draft an appropriate amendment to the TAC Charter that paralleled the language from the Board of Supervisors' Charter on operating procedures. David Zabelsky made the motion to adopt an amendment to the TAC Charter allowing for remote meeting attendance that mirrors the Board of Supervisors' Mandate. Dee Strauss seconded the motion. Discussion took place to add the verbiage, "To allow for quorum purposes". All members were in favor and the motion passed.

Discussion of Application for Tourism Funding Submittal Process and Timelines for 2020

It was determined that it would be best for the TAC to accept and review applications as they came in and then allow Dr. Young and Nick Minor to determine the time that the applications would be presented to the Board of Supervisors. Nick Minor stated that it was not necessary to add an appeals process to the application. Declined applicants would be referred to call him and he would walk them through amending their applications.

Status Report on Anticipated Funding Request for Expansion of King George Christmas Displays

It was suggested that staff consider reaching out to General Properties to request an Application for Tourism Funding to enhance and update the Christmas displays for the 2020 tree lighting. Staff agreed to do so.

Adjournment

David Zabelsky made the motion to adjourn the meeting of the King George Tourism Advisory Committee. Warren Veazey seconded. All members were in favor and the meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Michele K. Washington, Administrative Assistant

Signature: _____

Date Approved: _____