

**Talbot County Tourism Board  
Meeting Minutes  
September 14, 2022**

**I. Welcome, Call to Order**

Chairwoman Judy Bixler called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

**Members Present:** Jessica Bellis, Judy Bixler, Angela Eade, Ron Engle, Ian Fleming, Mary Kellogg, Harold Klinger, Amy Kreiner, Laura Price, Cassandra Vanhooser

**Members Absent:** Kristen Greenaway, Michael Hoffmann, Mark Salter, Jeff Schneider

**Staff Present:** Krista Boothby

**Guests:** Michael Robertson and Jason Kay, MediaOne North America; Clay Stamp, Talbot County Manager; Frank Divilio, Talbot County Council; Holly DeKarske, Easton Economic Development Corporation

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 11, 2022**

Ms. Bixler presented the minutes from the May 11, 2022, meeting. Ms. Eade made a motion to approve the minutes with Ms. Kellogg seconding the motion. Minutes were approved.

**III. Presentation: Michael Robertson and Jason Kay, MediaOne North America**

The Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism (EDT) has been working with MediaOne for three and one-half years as its digital marketing agency. Mr. Robertson and Mr. Kay provided a presentation of the company's strategy and outcomes for EDT.

**IV. Director's Reports**

**DMO Marketing Grant**

Each year, every Destination Marketing Organization receives a marketing grant from the Maryland Office of Tourism. The grant program was legislated by the 2008 Tourism Promotion Act. Ms. Vanhooser reports on this each year when the grants are awarded. Talbot County's grant typically ranges from \$50,000 to \$80,000.

In 2022, the State Legislature approved a \$10 million increase for the Maryland Office of Tourism Development, with \$8 million earmarked for tourism marketing grants. Ms. Vanhooser announced that Talbot County's award for FY 2023 is \$513,511. She is working on several campaigns that will benefit all of Talbot County, including an arts promotion and a towns promotion.

### **Maryland Rural Economic Development Fund**

Much of the summer was devoted to making recommendations for the Rural Economic Development Fund. A number of tourism-related projects were funded. Those include the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's New Visitor Center, Pre-Development Engineering and Design for the Frederick Douglass Park on the Tuckahoe, a strategic plan for economic development and tourism, and a feasibility study for a new Talbot County Visitors Center.

### **Frederick Douglass Eagle Scout and Girl Scout Projects**

Easton Boy Scout Brian Warner has been working with Ms. Vanhooser for a number of months to complete the tourism deliverables for the Frederick Douglass Mural for his Eagle Scout Project. The project includes developing an interpretive panel for the mural, the installation of benches along the rail trail, repairing the fence, and cleaning up the landscaping.

Autumn Redman took on a Frederick Douglass Geocaching Trail in Easton as her Girl Scout Gold Project. The trail will debut at Frederick Douglass Day in September. Ms. Vanhooser noted that it has been wonderful to have young people involved with developing products for historical interpretation.

### **Accommodations Tax**

Ms. Vanhooser reported that a several counties have gone directly to AirBNB and VRBO to collect accommodations tax. Though Ms. Vanhooser has broached the subject with County leadership in the past, there has been no interest. This may be something that the Tourism Board wishes to pursue with the new County Council. No action was taken.

## **V. Manager's Report – Krista Boothby**

### **Visiting Journalists**

- ✓ Olivier Barthez, French CRUSA representative, and Philippe Orain, Chief Editor of Michelin Editions and Air France Magazine, June 3, 2022
- ✓ British Influencers Scott Tisson and Dave Brett, June 13 - 15, 2022
- ✓ Jennifer Merrick, *Canadian World Traveller*, July 21 - 23, 2022

## **Marketplace and Conference Attendance**

- ✓ Maryland Motorcoach Association Annual Group Leader Travel Showcase: September 26-27, 2022 in Salisbury, MD
- ✓ Capital Region USA Global Travel Exchange: October 10-12, 2022, in Washington, D.C.
- ✓ MATPRA Marketplace: October 18-20, 2022, in State College, PA
- ✓ Maryland Travel & Tourism Summit: November 14-16, 2022, in Ocean City

## **Restaurant Guide**

Ms. Boothby reported that the second iteration of the Talbot County Restaurant Guide go to print in October.

## **VI. Town Reports**

Representatives from each of the towns reported on news and events taking place in their jurisdictions.

## **VII. Comments from Board Members**

- Ms. Bixler announced that the Tourism Board has vacancies to fill and is in need of a vice chairman.
- Board members reported on news and events taking place with their organizations.

## **VIII. Comments from the Public**

- Mr. Divilio expressed thanks to the Talbot County Tourism Board and their staff for their hard work to make Talbot County a great place to live and visit.
- Ms. Price expressed she is honored to have been part of such a productive board. She has been travelling the state and has found nothing compares to what we have here.
- Mr. Stamp thanked Ms. Vanhooser, Ms. Bixler, and the Tourism Board for their hard work.

## **IX. Upcoming Meetings**

- Tourism Board Meeting, Oct. 12, 2022
- Tourism Board Meeting, Nov. 9, 2022
- Coffee and Conservation at the Waterfowl Festival, Nov. 11
- Maryland Travel & Tourism Summit: November 14-16, 2022

**X. Adjournment**

Ms. Bixler called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Bellis made the motion to adjourn; Ms. Kellogg seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.