

**Talbot County Tourism Board
Meeting Minutes
February 8, 2023**

I. Call to Order

The Tourism Board met via Zoom videoconference. Chairman Judy Bixler called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Members Present: Jessica Bellis, Judy Bixler, Tad duPont, Ron Engle, Ian Fleming, Kristen Greenaway, Mary Kellogg, Harold Klinger, Amy Kreiner, Mark Salter, Jeff Schneider, and Cassandra Vanhooser

Members Absent: Angela Eade, Keasha Haythe, Michael Hoffmann

Guests: David Breimhurst, Holly DeKarske, Deena Kilmon, Patrick Rofe, Clay Stamp

Staff Present: Krista Boothby

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes – January 11, 2023

Ms. Bixler presented the minutes from the January 11, 2023, meeting. Mr. Fleming made a motion to approve the minutes with Ms. Kellogg seconding the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Special Guest – Patrick Rofe, St. Michaels Community Center, Hospitality Training Program

Mr. Rofe expressed thanks to community for support of the St. Michaels Community Center capital campaign. As quantified through community surveys, the center has developed a workforce development program with an advisory committee, and in partnership with Chesapeake College. The emphasis is on the 12-week culinary training along with life skills and is open to all Talbot County adults. The program will also expand to include front of house training starting with server and bartender tracks. Internships will be available.

IV. Chairman's Report – Judy Bixler

Introduction of New Board Member: Ms. Bixler welcomed new Tourism Board member Tad DuPont, St. Michaels Town Commissioner.

Taste of the Eastern Shore, February 9: Culinary event with state legislators. Ms. Bixler and Ms. Vanhooser will attend.

Tourism Day, February 10: This is a day of advocacy for the industry statewide. Ms. Bixler and Ms. Vanhooser attend on behalf of Talbot County.

V. Director's Report

Visitors Center Construction: Ms. Vanhooser explained that the Town of Easton will begin construction on the historic building at 11 S. Harrison Street that currently houses the Talbot County Visitor Center. She asked for discussion and guidance on how the board would like to proceed regarding the future of the Visitor Center. After discussion concluded, Mr. Schneider made a motion to launch the feasibility study with Ms. Bellis amending the motion to include that current Talbot County Visitors Center staff vacate the current location. Ms. Greenaway second the motion, which passed unanimously.

Visitor Center Feasibility Study: Ms. Vanhooser reported that the Request for Proposal is being drafted.

Frederick Douglass Website: Ms. Vanhooser reported that she has worked with The Design Minds to bring the current FrederickDouglassBirthplace.org website into alignment with the branding at the park and on the new Map/Guide. The site will launch within the next month.

Bike Map Redesign: Talbot Thrive, a group that advocates for safe multimodal transportation alternatives, has approached Ms. Vanhooser about redesigning the Talbot County Bike Map. This project will take place within the coming year.

Byway Meeting: The nine counties on the Eastern Shore along with the three Heritage Areas have formed an alliance and are working on an interpretive plan for the Chesapeake Country All-American Road. That project should be completed early in 2023. Talbot County will host the Mid-Shore's public meeting in March.

VI. Manager's Report

TourTalbot.org Website Launch: Ms. Boothby stated that the updated website launched on January 17 and is running smoothly. She noted that event producers can begin submitting events via the "Submit Your Event" link on the site's footer.

What's New in 2023: Ms. Boothby asked for board representatives to send press releases and "What's New in 2023" news to her for media purposes. Please send to kboothby@talbotcountymd.gov

VII. Town Representatives and Board Members

Representatives from each of the towns reported on news and events taking place in their jurisdictions. Other Board members shared insights on happenings in their businesses, nonprofits, or industries.

VIII. Upcoming Meetings

Ms. Vanhooser noted that Councilwoman Haythe was absent because she serves on the MACo legislative committee. In previous years, the board has changed its meetings to accommodate Ms. Price's schedule. Ms. Vanhooser suggested that the Board make the same concession for Ms. Haythe. There was no objection to the proposal, and the meeting date for the next meeting was changed to March 7.

Taste of the Eastern Shore, February 9
Tourism Day, February 10
Tourism Board Meeting, March 7
Tourism Board Meeting, April 12
Tourism Board Meeting May 10
National Travel and Tourism Week, May 7-13

IX. Adjournment

Ms. Bixler called for a motion to adjourn. Ms. Bellis made the motion to adjourn, and Mr. Fleming seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:34 a.m.