

**Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
February 22, 2017 at 2:00 p.m.  
25-A Market Street, Onancock, Virginia 23417**

Commissioners in Attendance

Larry LeMond, Northampton Cty Board of Supervisors,  
Chairman  
Steve Potts, Bill's Restaurant, Vice-Chairman  
Paige Addison, CBBT  
Carol Evans, Cape Charles House B&B  
Blake Johnson, Island House

Staff Present

Kerry Allison, Executive Director  
Mary L. Mears, Welcome Center Manager  
Allan Burns, Industry Relations Manager  
Laurie Chamberlain, Operations Specialist

Guests Present

Elizabeth Dodd, Northampton Chamber of Commerce  
Russell Jones, Mayor, Onancock  
Evelyn Shotwell, Chincoteague Chamber of Commerce  
Caroline Bott, AN-PDC

1. Call to Order

- LeMond called the meeting to order at 2:09 p.m.

2. Consent Agenda

- LeMond asked that the consent agenda and financials be approved. Addison so moved, Johnson seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Participation

- Dodd: Cape Charles Town Council has approved a brewery in Cape Charles. On Wednesday, Jon Schallert visits Cape Charles for destination bootcamp workshop and lecture.
- Shotwell reported January numbers were up 16-21% on all social media sites; their visitor guide requests are up 36% over January of 2016.

4. Welcome Center Report

- Visitor Counts: January ran about 41.2% behind 2016 and about 2.8% over 2016. The Welcome Center was closed January 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> due to the blizzard.
- Staff: Howard Scott, a lifetime Eastern Shore resident, has joined the WC as a new volunteer, soon as paid staff.
- Facility: Continued work on a strategic Welcome Center plan to identify short and long term changes. This plan will be enriched by information gleaned from the upcoming VTC Welcome Center March conference.
- Consumer Email: The Welcome Center is playing a new role in building the consumer email dbase. Sign up is offered at the Welcome Center via tablet. A means to mount the tablet to the front counter for security and easy access for visitors is in the works.
- Office Activity: CBBT is including our Welcome Center staff and volunteers in their April CPR classes.
- Most frequently asked questions by visitors: Are we in Maryland? Where can I find a seafood restaurant? How do I get to I95 south? How do I see the ponies?

5. Operations Report

- Signage: ES Signs submitted an estimate to renovate the large sign outside the Welcome Center. The cost is \$1,016.20, same cost as the Fisherman's Island sign. He will complete both projects this spring. LeMond asked for a motion to approve the expenditure: Potts so moved, Evans seconded and the cost was approved unanimously.
- Xenith CD: It has been rolled over into a new account with new signers, under the new EIN.
- 501(c)(6): Working with Karen Crockett on a checklist for protocols.
- Office Equipment: Costs remain low with color copier at Welcome Center, about \$114/month with color copies costing only \$6.87 last month.
- Tourism Summit: Meeting at ESCC March 8 to discuss arrangements for the April 11 event.

- Maps: Updating pad maps and advertising in folding maps for 2017.
- ED health insurance: Researching new insurance to roll over from COBRA in April 2017.
- Audit: Monday February 20.

#### 6. Industry Relations Report

- Welcome Center revenue is running about \$12,000 below budgeted levels due to late invoicing. Karen Crockett, Inc. hired a new accountant in the spring of 2016 and much time has been spent familiarizing her with the ESVATC billing system.

#### 8. Executive Director Report

- January 2017 compared to January 2016: Website Unique Visitors: +97%; Website New Visitors: 72%; Website Top Five Cities: VA Beach, DC, Suffolk, Norfolk, Cape Charles; Website Top Five Pages: Home, Events, Map, Do, Stay; Wordpress: +12%; Facebook: 21,808 likes to date, +1% from prior month.
- There are 71% more events listed on the website than in January 2016.

#### 9. Old Business

- Allison reported on costs of producing the 2017 guide, with a net profit of about \$25,000, but this is preliminary only until all bills are submitted and paid. .

#### 10. New Business

- Evans discussed having Board members attend more community meetings and present data on Tourism Commission economic development successes.
- Allison discussed plans for the upcoming Tourism Summit April 11; starting search for full-time content producer.

#### 11. Matters by Commissioners

- Potts reported on activities in Chincoteague from Christmas to Valentine's Day.
- Evans reported on the new brewery in Cape Charles; she is going to be on the committee to begin the preliminary Main Street program.
- Johnson reported that there is a new Wachapreague billboard north of Painter; Eileen Joeckel was instrumental in obtaining VTC grant for Wachapreague.
- Addison reported on the new hospital, saying the Shore is lucky to have such an excellent facility here.
- LeMond reported that he and Gordy met with Accomack County's administrator to iron out the county joint resolution. There will be a total of eight commissioners on the ESVATC: One BOS member from each country, and six commissioners – all must be involved with a tourism-related business on the ESVA.

#### 12. Adjournment

- LeMond stated the next meeting will be Wednesday, March 22 at 2:00 p.m. with a workshop meeting to interview job candidates at 12:00 p.m., and asked for a motion to adjourn. Addison so moved, Potts seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

These minutes have been approved by:

/s/ Larry LeMond

3/22/17

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Larry LeMond, Chairman

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Date