

CUMBERLAND COUNTY TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL

Meeting Minutes Notes

A meeting of the Cumberland County Tourism Advisory Council (C.C.T.A.C.) was held on Tuesday, February 8, 2022, via Microsoft Teams and/or teleconference call.

MISSION STATEMENT

To coordinate, educate, and promote tourism activities and destinations in Cumberland County and the surrounding Southern New Jersey region, in order to foster cultural, historical, and recreational activities and appreciation for the area and a better quality of life.

Present: Donna Longo
Lisa Jester
Marianne Lods
Lynn Timberman
Brad Scott
Jamie Warner

Guests: Omarey Williams, Shared Services Coordinator
Matt Pisarski, Planning Department Director/Head
Matt Horowitz, Recording Secretary
Wanda Riviera, Confidential Assistant

Commissioner Albrecht
Commissioner Pearson

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Lisa Jester, seconded by Donna Longo, and passed unanimously by the Council to approve the minutes from the January 11, 2022, meeting. Marianne Lods abstained, as she was not present at last month's meeting.

Discussion of Sponsorship Requirements

Mr. Williams explained included within the meeting packet was a formal document for sponsorships. It would help keep track of how money was spent and who sponsorships were given to throughout the year. Donna Longo asked if there should be a field for the total amount spent to see if there were matching funds. Jamie Warner stated that at least the amount spent on the marketing should be included, as it was most pertinent. Ms. Lods made a motion to approve, Jamie Warner seconded, and it was passed unanimously by the Council. Mr. Williams stated he wanted to thank the staff at The Authority for allowing the Council to hold their monthly meeting at their facility.

Discussion of County Broadband Initiative

Mr. Williams stated in the packet was an advertisement for the new Broadband Study. Mr. Williams explained that County residents must be connected to their home Wi-Fi, but parties could do the survey on any device, if it was connected to their home Wi-Fi. Ms. Jester asked what if someone lived outside of the County and Mr. Williams explained that they could do it from an in-County business and that it was a speed test to check connectivity. Mr. Williams asked that anyone having an event within the next 60-90 days, please, let staff know as they will be doing outreach to reach as many residents as possible. Ms. Lods asked if there was a deadline and Mr. Williams explained that within the next 60-90 days, as it was being funded as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) fund and there was a deadline to expend that money. Ms. Longo, also, suggested utilizing The Community Booth at The Cumberland Mall and have not only brochures and signs, but staffed hours, as well.

Review of Meeting with Southern Shore DMO/Dana Communications

Mr. Williams stated that he and Mr. Pisarski recently met with their counterparts in Cape May, as well as Dana Communications, who serves as the State of New Jersey's recreation and tourism marketing group. They collectively discussed the "marketing brand" that they would want to proceed with. If the Council wanted to continue with "Southern Shore," as Cape May was now branding as "Jersey Cape." Mr. Pisarski stated they discussed that there was not a lot of passion around the name "Southern Shore," as they were "the other shore" and it was a disservice to Cumberland and if anything, it should be "Southern Shores."

Mr. Pisarski explained that they were not "The Cape" and it did not really do their area any justice. Mr. Williams stated that The Bay Area often gets overlooked time and time again. Commissioner Pearson stated that Cumberland is "the other shore" and that they must focus on Cumberland as much as Cape May County. Ms. Longo asked if they were trying to disassociate from Cumberland. Mr. Williams stated "no," but that they needed to be associated more strongly than they were now. Mr. Williams said, maybe, an Underground Railroad corridor from Salem to Cape May Counties could work well. Mr. Pisarski stated that between the South Jersey DMO and the Gloucester DMO that the two DMO's need to work together better. Ms. Lods stated, maybe, Jersey Cape & Bay Shore as "the other shore" might not mean as much to other people from outside of the County.

Mr. Pisarski stated that Vineland doesn't associate themselves as part of The Bay Shore. They wanted to encourage the DMO to have their next meeting in Cumberland. Mr. Williams stated that each county has something that other needs, maybe, market it for a couple of days to enjoy both counties. Ms. Jester stated that, sometimes, entities cannot share services. Mr. Pisarski stated that The Millville Army Air Field Museum (MAAFM) was more on track with their marketing than the Cape May Naval Air Museum. Mr. Williams mentioned, maybe, they could do an Army/Navy event to play off the Army/Navy game. Mr. Pisarski said the budget was, also, discussed at the meeting; in the past, the grant had provided \$20,000.00. The last two years, it had been \$25,000.00 and this year, it would be \$37,500.00. Mr. Pisarski said, perhaps, there would be another amount coming down from the State. Ms. Lods asked if the SJDMO was still the highest funded DMO in the State. Mr. Pisarski stated he was unsure but could find out.

Filming In Cumberland County Update

Mr. Pisarski said within the meeting packet was a print-out of the new database cataloging film projects across Cumberland County. He reviewed the films that would be shooting in the County, as well as various dates and locations. Mr. Pisarski stated he actively receives requests for locations and sends out ideas and photos of locations and waits to hear back from the location scouts. They would be building and adding fields to the database as it continues to grow. Mr. Pisarski stated Ms. Longo reached out to a contact with the Sheriff's Office to see how they would go about notifying all law enforcement agencies that filming would be happening, as to avoid disruptions from the public. It was shared the Sheriff's Office would be talking it over internally and they might end up having an officer located at the site of each film shoot. The Filming in Cumberland County Update would stay on the agenda every month, so staff could update the Council every month. Mr. Pisarski stated to keep in mind not every movie that inquires will shoot, but the ones who do may need extras and they would be marketing that component for them, as well. Jamie Warner asked if Mr. Pisarski wanted recommendations and he stated "yes" and any photos that she may have. Ms. Longo asked if they had started to send in photos to the film website and Mr. Pisarski stated not yet, but staff hope to start doing it soon and asked the Council members to submit any photos of possible locations within the County.

Departmental Updates

Mr. Pisarski said staff were working on film-related projects, broadband matters, and actively updating the events calendar, amongst other projects. He stated there were now over 3,000 Followers on the Explore Cumberland NJ Facebook page. Mr. Pisarski explained there were a variety of developments happening with marijuana cultivation across two sites in Vineland and one site in Bridgeton. Mr. Pisarski expressed he felt expertise in farming and low property costs was directly feeding the growth of the marijuana cultivation.

County Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Pearson stated that she was excited with all the growth happening across the County. Commissioner Albrecht stated he was excited to see all the growth and stated that they had a lot of natural resources within the County to offer. He stated that it was the Commissioners' job to help the Council get things done. Mr. Pisarski stated Hans Lampert offered to have the hospital scenes that the film scouts wanted done at his property. Ms. Longo offered that the Greenwich Marina would be a good "haunted" site. It was mentioned a location scout from Silver Star wanted to come and see Vitality Pastures owned by Mike Adamucci in Lower Hopewell. Multiple locations were brainstormed and mentioned, as well as site photos planned to be taken by Council members.

Tourism Advisory Council Members Updates

Ms. Warner stated that the Horseshoe Crab Festival was scheduled for Saturday, May 14th at the State Marina in Fortescue. She explained Downe Township were actively looking for food truck vendors to book for the day's event.

Ms. Longo mentioned HomeGoods would be opening at the Cumberland Mall on Thursday, March 17th. The Easter Bunny would be at The Mall soon for Easter, as well as a Mad Hatter Tea Party sometime in March/April.

Ms. Lods was busy scheduling events. The Levoy Theatre was now back to full capacity with many events booked. Ms. Lods said the new non-profit Hands Up Silent Theatre, who taught deaf and hearing-impaired theatre arts to children, had two shows booked for July.

Ms. Jester agreed with Commissioner Pearson that all the energy and enthusiasm was wonderful. She mentioned the 80th anniversary of The Millville Army Air Field was upcoming and had mugs made and brought them with packets and calendars. The Air Field was approached by the Blue Angels & Thunderbirds, but they chose the Dover Air Force Base instead. Ms. Jester had hired a new grant writer, as well.

Lynn Timberman said The Cohanzick Zoo was quiet, but people were still there every day walking through. The Zoo staff was actively doing needed repairs. Ms. Timberman said trees had been trimmed, the animals were status quo, and they were still trying to get the water wheel working again. The Zoo's educational coordinator had been doing inside programming for the kids and they were still holding birthday parties.

Mr. Pisarski stated they did receive a grant to re-do the bridge on the Raceway and it will be wheelchair accessible. He mentioned a possible Cultural & Heritage sponsorship for signage to memorialize the Covered Bridge, as it will not be mimicked. They had received a grant for trail development across from the Fairground. They will form a committee to make sure that they are constructed with use by everyone in mind on all three miles of trails. Bridgeton has 13 miles, which is equal to Parvin State Park. Mr. Pisarski said a potential future project may be to link the trails within the County.

Commissioner Albrecht stated his goal was to make a County park. The Fairgrounds' midway had been re-paved, the restrooms were re-done, and the grandstand area still had some work to be done. The County Fair was happening the first week of July. The County was looking to use some of the American Rescue Plan (ARP) money to rehabilitate the electric and ticket booth. After the Fair in July, people could inquire about the use of the Fairgrounds. Staff would be giving them applications and would be not taking money but would pencil in each event. Ms. Jester suggested making a communal County Tourism board where flyers could be placed.

When it warmed up, Mr. Pisarski suggested the Council do a walk-through of the new improvements to the Fairgrounds and the trails that will be developed. Ms. Lods asked if there were empty seats on the Councils. Mr. Pisarski stated the County Commissioners were considering candidates and staff have some ideas; hopefully, by March, they would have some names to share. Ms. Jester suggested that, maybe, a theatre representative would be good. Mr. Pisarski suggested a Bayshore area representative, a Lighthouse representative, and a winery or brewery representative. He currently had a pool of candidates, but the Commissioners needed to see who the best representative would be. Ms. Lods asked where

the next meeting would be held. Mr. Williams said it would be held at The Authority as of right now, where they could be held permanently, if the Council liked the space.

Adjourn

A motion to adjourn the February 8, 2022, Cumberland County Tourism Advisory Council meeting was made by Ms. Jester, seconded by Ms. Warner, and passed by the Council.