

# 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, January 11, 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  
Jamie Warner  
Lynn Timberman  
Brad Scott

**Guests:** Omarey Williams, Shared Services Coordinator  
Matt Pisarski, Planning Department Director/Head  
Matt Horowitz, Recording Secretary  
Wanda Riviera, Confidential Assistant  
  
Marie Gallo, Commercial Township Representative

### Approval of Minutes

Lynn Timberman requested a motion to approve the November 9, 2021, meeting minutes. A motion was made by Donna Longo, seconded by Lisa Jester, and passed unanimously by the remainder of the Tourism Advisory Council (T.A.C.) members present.

### Annual Report for 2021

Omarey Williams said staff had put together a joint Annual Report for both Tourism Advisory Council & Recreation Commission. Highlighting a few specific items: Mr. Williams explained it contained the 2021 Final Budget, how the Southern Shore Region DMO grant was re-granted to organizations, the billboard marketing campaign, and hand-out brochures to be distributed at future events. It additionally mentioned events staff attended throughout 2021 and social media for Cultural & Heritage, Recreation, and Tourism all being combined online into ExploreCumberlandNJ.com. ExploreCumberlandNJ's Facebook page had just under 3,000 Likes/3,0004 Followers and 602 Followers on Instagram.

### Draft Budget for 2022

Mr. Williams mentioned the 2022 Cumberland County Tourism Advisory Council Budget – PROPOSED/Draft featured everything carried over from 2021. He explained a few additional items included social media post boosting and updating the Explore Cumberland tri-fold paper brochure. Mr. Williams stated the Southern Shore DMO Grant could award them with anywhere from \$37,500-50,000.00, which was significantly higher than in years past.

### **Work Plan for 2022**

Mr. Williams explained the Council's Work Plan for 2022 would include seeking out new and diverse organizations to fund for marketing to help increase the outreach of Tourism. Mr. Williams mentioned the USDA Specialty Crop Grant the Council was able to successfully attain. In addition to the brochure, Mr. Williams was hoping to fund a re-design of the ExploreCumberlandNJ.com website, as well. He explained outreach events across the County would continue this year and the Departmental image/video bank would be increasing to be used as marketing materials. Mr. Williams set a benchmark goal to achieve at least 3,000 Likes on Facebook and 650 Followers on Instagram by the end of 2022.

### **Discussion of Eagle Fest**

Matt Pisarski said while an in-person Eagle Fest event had been planned, it was decided there would be a hybrid Eagle Fest this year with both in-person and virtual components. He said registration would be held outside in a heated tent, inside audience seating would be socially distanced, the day's speakers would be both video recorded and livestreamed, and there would be a limited number of exhibitors within the event space. Mr. Pisarski explained masks would be required inside The Firehall and social distancing would be encouraged throughout the day's programming. Mr. Pisarski said food would still be sold out of The Firehall. He was unsure of what numbers would look like due to the Coronavirus/COVID-19 Omicron Variant. Mr. Pisarski clarified Eagle Fest would be held on Saturday, February 5, 2022, at The Mauricetown Firehall.

### **Departmental Updates**

Mr. Pisarski said, regarding the Southern Shore DMO Grant, the Department had intended to meet with their counterparts in Cape May in December 2021, which was, then, pushed back to the beginning January, and had since been re-scheduled until January 25<sup>th</sup>. They hoped to nail down and iron out how exactly the distribution of the DMO Grant funds would go. Mr. Pisarski mentioned he had a conversation with NJ DEP and a representative from Division of Tourism, who scheduled a meeting to discuss how Cumberland County could better promote its outdoor recreation. One potential event could be an annual DEP Sportsman Expo, which they had considered having be a traveling program. They were looking at moving it to the Holly Farm property in Millville and were fairly confident they still wanted to make said move. It was unclear if this could happen in 2022, but if so, this is what DEP would like to do. Mr. Pisarski said this event would bring in about 10,000 people annually and if it were to move locations to Holly Farm, it would be there for about three years prior to re-locating. Mr. Pisarski explained they were expecting a lot of activity across the Department in 2022.



### **Tourism Advisory Council Member Updates**

Ms. Jester stated the Millville Army Air Field Museum (M.A.A.F.M.) was featured on the front cover of the latest edition of The Cumberland & Salem Guide showcasing their new interpretive murals funded by the Cultural & Heritage Commission. Ms. Jester said an updated 2022 events calendar for the M.A.A.F.M. was recently sent out. They were continuing their ongoing World War II Lector Series throughout 2022.

Ms. Longo explained Home Goods would be opening on March 17, 2022, outside of The Cumberland Mall. They would be hosting a hiring event from mid-February through the end of the month, although, Ms. Longo did not know how many people Home Goods intended to hire. Saturday, January 15<sup>th</sup> was National Gift Card Day and The Mall would be hosting a small event in the center court with trivia games and gift card giveaways.

Mr. Scott said the New Jersey Motorsports Park had their best year since opening in 2021. Their 2022 events calendar would include three “mud runs,” food truck festivals, multiple monster truck shows, and their well-attended free concert series. Mr. Scott said the NJMP would have job fairs beginning in February and were looking to fill about 100 hourly positions and seeking out 3-4 salary managers. Mr. Scott said the film commission was coming to visit the NJMP to take photographs the following day. On a somewhat related note, Mr. Pisarski added producers from Ghost Hunters were potentially looking to film at The Gibbon House in Greenwich.

Ms. Warner said Downe Township had done their 2022 events calendar, as well. It included events affiliated with the Downe Township Green Team, Historical Society, various commissions, and related societies. Some of these events were the Bear Swamp Walk, a Green Team Clean-up, and the Horseshoe Crab Festival.

Ms. Timberman said the members of the Zoo Board had chosen not to hold a January meeting, while essential items were tended to by emailed vote. The Zoo had gotten a new roof installed on their Primate Building. Boston ferns were recently donated by a member of the community, which would help the primates feel like they were still outside. Ms. Timberman added all the other animals were doing well and staying warm through the winter weather. The Zoo was open every day until 4:00p.m. through the spring and Ms. Timberman invited everyone to come visit.

### **Correspondence**

In Marianne Lods’ absence, Mr. Williams shared a letter from Ms. Lods on behalf of the Millville Development Corporation/Glasstown Arts District. Ms. Lods’ letter outlined what they had done throughout 2021 with their received Tourism Marketing Grant.

### **New Business**

Mr. Williams said a goal for the year was to take a good look at the criteria for organizations receiving such a Marketing Grant. He mentioned discussing what potential organizations

would need to apply for a Marketing Grant and guidelines to report back on results. It would help the Council, then, market the grants out to other organizations. Mr. Williams said the better they could expand the Marketing Grants, the better the Council could promote Cumberland County. He would be sharing tentative criteria at the next T.A.C. meeting to help make everything more uniform for both discussion and approval.

**Adjourn**

Ms. Timberman said, in closing, she just wanted to say Rest in Peace to Jay Pierce, whom many of the Council members knew. A motion to adjourn the January 11, 2022, Tourism Advisory Council meeting was made by Ms. Jester, seconded by Mr. Scott, and passed unanimously by the remainder of the Council. Ms. Timberman said she would see everyone next month and wished they all have a safe and happy next few week.