

# CUMBERLAND COUNTY TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL

January 10, 2023  
Meeting Minutes Notes

A meeting of the Cumberland County Tourism Advisory Council (C.C.T.A.C.) was held on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, in a hybrid format with availability both in-person and virtually.

## 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:** Lynn Timberman \* (May 2023)  
Donna Longo \* (May 2023)  
Lisa Jester \* (February 2024)  
Brad Scott / Justin Kamm (May 2025)  
Marianne Lods \* (February 2024)  
Jamie Warner \* (March 2024)  
Nancy Patterson Tidy \* (May 2023)  
Commissioner Doug Albrecht, Director \*  
Commissioner Donna Pearson

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

*Note: Asterisk (\*) indicates members present at the aforementioned meeting.*

### Approval of Minutes Notes – November 15, 2022

Ms. Timberman thanked everyone for their attendance and asked for a motion to approve the November 15, 2022 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Ms. Longo, seconded by Ms. Lods, and passed unanimously by the Council to approve the November 15, 2022 Tourism Advisory Council (T.A.C.) meeting minutes.

### Annual Report for 2022

Mr. Williams quickly recapped items from the Annual Report for 2022 and said \$13,500.00 had been spent from the Southern Shore Regional DMO (SSRDMO) on marketing efforts. He said the advertising budget for the annual Vacationer Magazine had been increased from two to three pages, as well. Mr. Williams explained the T.A.C. was awarded more money from the DMO in 2022 than in previous years being increased to \$37,500.00. Mr. Williams

had incorporated pictures from a variety of the many events staff had attended throughout the year including the Horseshow Crab Festival, Vineland National Night Out, Bay Day, the Kite & Color Festival, Unity Day, the Oyster Festival, and Downe Home Day, just to name a few. Mr. Williams added T.A.C.'s social media had just under 3,000 Likes on Facebook and 602 Followers on Instagram at the beginning of 2022 and wrapping up with 3,165 Facebook Likes and 725 Instagram Followers at year's end. Mr. Williams stated social media boosting seemed to be effective in helping increase such numbers.

Mr. Pisarski said the website, ExploreCumberlandNJ.com, was currently being re-designed by Joyce Media. They would also be integrating a new online calendar of events, which would be much more interactive and user-friendly. Mr. Williams said there were some issues converting things on the back end of the website, but Joyce Media was looking at a targeted launch date of March 2023. Commissioner Director Doug Albrecht said the County website was going to be re-designed as well, and hoped the ExploreCumberlandNJ site could be complimentary to the County website and vice versa. Mr. Williams added Renati Solutions was working on a Digital Marketing Plan for T.A.C. concerning TikTok, video, and such mediums. Mr. Williams said he would reach back out for a timeline.

Mr. Pisarski said he would soon get everyone on the Council set up with a user login for the film reels website. He said there would be a lengthier update next month or the month after regarding this matter. Mr. Pisarski stated he would find and send out an article to the Council that examined the State-wide impact of the film industry. With the Council's approval today, they would be awarding marketing mini-grants to re-grantees. Mr. Williams said T.A.C. would continue their photography efforts across the County with Craig Terry. Mr. Pisarski added per T.A.C.'s guidance, they would be reducing their participation in the Vacationer from three pages down to two and using the funding for the Jersey's Best magazines and newspaper inserts. Examples of both were passed around to the Council.

Departmentally, Mr. Pisarski said one of the goals for 2023 was seamlessly integrating Tourism efforts with the Department of Agriculture, the Master gardener, and 4-H efforts; all of which could have space at the Tourism booth at various events throughout the year. Staff went through many brochures, paper assets, and take-away items, which would soon be replenished. Mr. Pisarski said staff were working with Sassafra Design to re-design the ExploreCumberland brochure.

### **USA Today Northeast Media Kit**

Mr. Williams explained this latest advertising opportunity seemed very similar to what T.A.C. had received from the sports teams firm and their rate card was significant. Mr. Williams added a four-page full-color ad would cost \$29,500.00. He had said the Council had seemingly agreed that if they received additional funding, grant sources, etc., these such opportunities may become slightly more financially viable.

### **Ink Global Media Kit – Business Traveler Magazine & WiFi Test Trial**

Mr. Williams stated the Business Traveler Magazine was similar to an airport magazine, which had a couple offers for \$5,000.00 month-long campaigns. He pointed out the In-flight WiFi campaign, specifically, which would be the landing page before getting the free WiFi (along with a mandatory 15-second video) on all of the American Airlines flights Nationwide. Mr. Williams said this would be something to re-visit later in the year when the website re-design was finished and ready. Mr. Pisarski stated an additional cost would be the creation of a high-quality 15-second video, as well. Ms. Longo asked if the company would provide email addresses and Mr. Williams said he would double-check. Ms. Longo suggested showing the WiFi test trials information to Will Gruccio at Renati Solutions, too.

### **Southern Shore Regional DMO Letter 2023**

Mr. Williams shared a letter letting everyone know that T.A.C. would continue to receive their Southern Shore Regional DMO (SSRDMO) award. For 2023, the allotted reward amount was \$37,500.00. Mr. Pisarski added Cape May's own award from the Division of Travel & Tourism (DOTT) was cut, but they still maintained Cumberland County's award amount from year's past. It was mentioned there were two new applicants within the DMO, which affected the formula, and staff at Cape May's Southern Shore were unhappy. Ms. Jester said the Millville Army Air Field Museum had received funding from the DOTT.

### **Draft Budget for 2023**

Mr. Williams noted he did not realize both the printed and scanned/emailed versions of the Draft Budget for 2023 had been cut off; he said, following the meeting's conclusion, he would send out a properly sized copy to the Council. Mr. Williams had allotted \$13,000.00 for returning organizations and an additional \$3,000.00 for two extra organizations. It would be further marketed on the website to "anchor" organizations for Tourism throughout the County. Social media boosting would start off with \$1,000.00. \$5,000.00 was put towards Digital Marketing following Renati Solutions' suggestions. Mr. Williams said he simply moved everything over from 2022 to 2023 but was flexible and open to suggestions.

### **Update On Specialty Crop Grant**

Mr. Pisarski said there was an ongoing digital flyer and physical billboard campaign that had been paid for and split between Tourism and the Specialty Crop Grant for marketing of Specialty Crops; the initial campaign for 2022 was centered around the Millville Farmers Market. Mr. Pisarski said in 2023, staff were trying to arrange a County-wide farmers market. He was happy to report with Ms. Longo's help and support, the Cumberland Mall had been secured for an indoor farmers market running roughly from May through October. He added Mayor Fanucci of Vineland had already agreed to help do cross-promotion and marketing. Mr. Pisarski hoped to do the County-wide farmers market at the Mall into 2024 and if successful, would re-apply to USDA for another three-year Specialty Crop Grant funding cycle. Ms. Warner & Timberman both volunteered to help with the farmers market. Ms. Longo suggested putting up a billboard on the South-bound side of Route 55. Mr. Pisarski said the farmers market would be held weekly or at least bi-weekly.

### **Departmental Updates**

Mr. Pisarski stated the Department was moving along with preparations to physically move to the 4-H Extension/Ag. Services Building on Morton Avenue in Rosenhayn. He said the floor plan had been completed and staff would be meeting with a furniture vendor within a matter of days; this would provide The Authority with the details they would need to schedule construction. Mr. Pisarski explained the goal was to be fully moved in by May 1, 2023. All Departmental meetings (including Tourism) would move to the Extension Center post-move. Mr. Pisarski added the County Fairgrounds was booking up with its usual events, as well as new and exciting events and programming, as well. Clarke Caton Hintz was working on the County Fairgrounds' Master Plan and a Site Plan for review should be in-hand within the next month. Mr. Pisarski said it would look at how to expand the existing services there now.

### **County Commissioner Updates**

Commissioner Doug Albrecht said the Commissioners were getting settled in and the County had a new Administrator, Harold "Hal" Johnson, and a new Deputy Administrator, Luz Vazquez. Commissioner Albrecht said the new Clerk to the Board was Kim Codispoti. Commissioner Albrecht stated there were some big things that would be happening, including parks and recreation. The Fairgrounds would be the first area in which to expand the County parks system. Commissioner Albrecht said they planned to start doing internships with students at Rowan College of South Jersey Cumberland Campus.

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

Ms. Longo said the Cumberland Mall's new owners were great and were working with staff and the Tourism Advisory Council for the upcoming County-wide farmers market. Ms. Longo said the Mall had a new Marketing Coordinator named Deanna Pascucci. She would be charged with handling social media and booking at least two events per month.

Ms. Jester said the Millville Army Air Field Museum had a fantastic 2022 with their most tours and outreach in years. Ms. Jester had drafted the 2023 Calendar of Events, which would include the quarterly Movie Nights, the golf event, the 50/50 Raffle, and annual Veterans Appreciation Day event. Ms. Jester said the Museum would be celebrating its 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2023 and they would do a fun, out-of-the-box event. The M-60 tank had arrived on-site and was already attracting new visitors. Ms. Jester said there was no Air Show planned for 2023, but they may be doing one in 2024.

Ms. Patterson Tidy said East Point Lighthouse had a great year and it was the first time in a number of years they were able to be open the full year. They had good number of visitors all year at each event. Ms. Patterson Tidy said they finished up the year strong with their annual Santa Claus visit and the new addition of the New Jersey Lighthouse Train Village. They would most likely be featured within Lighthouse Digest magazine. Ms. Patterson Tidy, staff, and affiliates would be participating in Eagle Festival, as well. Ms. Patterson Tidy would be

doing crafts and there would be no entrance fee for the Lighthouse for anyone attending Eagle Fest.

Ms. Lods said the Millville Development Corporation's board was meeting the following afternoon, for which she had prepared her annual report. Ms. Lods stated following its approval, she would be happy to share her annual report with the Council. They did just under \$1 million in real estate sales in Downtown Millville. There were some major renovations still underway, and Ms. Lods anticipated the opening of two new buildings. The gift card sale on Small Business Saturday was bigger than ever with \$39,000.00 sold putting \$78,000.00 in 21 participating businesses. Ms. Lods mentioned a program with \$500.00 in Downtown Bucks, as well an upcoming Plein Air competition and Artists/Fun Day On The River occurring on May 21, 2023.

Ms. Warner said the Downe Township Green Team was planning the Horseshoe Crab Festival, Downe Home Day, Bounty of The Bay, and their new event, The Polar Plunge, scheduled for 2023. Ms. Warner said she would send out solid dates shortly. The 2022 Polar Plunge had 97 attendees, including Messrs. Williams & Pisarski, and 100-150 spectators watching the first annual Plunge. Afterwards was a Chili Cook-off at a local firehouse.

Ms. Timberman stated the Cohanzick Zoo was having their re-organization meeting the following evening and their Director had left. Ms. Timberman said she would, hopefully, have more news to report at the following month's Tourism meeting.

#### **Old Business/New Business**

Matt Horowitz distributed The Sounds of Cumberland County 2-CD's and QR codes to Bandcamp.com to the Council.

Ms. Lods said she felt the Jersey's Best magazines and newspaper inserts looked interesting. Ms. Timberman agreed, and the Council was optimistic of this new potential opportunity.

#### **Adjourn**

Ms. Timberman said the Council's next meeting was to be held on February 14, 2023. A motion to adjourn the January 10, 2023, Tourism Advisory Council was made by Ms. Jester, seconded by Ms. Longo, and passed unanimously by the Council. Mr. Williams thanked everyone for their continued attendance.