

CUMBERLAND COUNTY TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL

June 13, 2023
Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Cumberland County Tourism Advisory Council (C.C.T.A.C.) was held on Tuesday, June 13, 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 2026)
Donna Longo * (May 2026)
Lisa Jester * (February 2024)
Brad Scott / Justin Kamm (May 2025)
Marianne Lods * (February 2024)
Jamie Warner (March 2024)
Nancy Patterson Tidy * (May 2026)

Commissioner Doug Albrecht, Director *
Commissioner Donna Pearson *

Guests: Ray Painter, Edible Jersey, Publisher *
Dawn Cobianchi, Edible Jersey, Contributor *

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

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

Approval of Minutes Notes – May 9, 2023

Ms. Timberman thanked everyone for their attendance and asked for a motion to approve the May 9, 2023 meeting minutes. A motion was made by Ms. Jester, seconded by Ms. Lods, and passed unanimously by the Council to approve the May 9, 2023 Tourism Advisory Council (T.A.C.) meeting minutes..

Presentation – Edible Jersey

Mr. Williams introduced Ray Painter, publisher from Edible Jersey, who was accompanied virtually by his co-worker and Edible Jersey contributor, Dawn Cobiachi. Mr. Painter explained Edible Jersey's mission as "believing that locally sourced, sustainably produced food matters to our health, to our lives, to our communities, and to the future of the world around us." Mr. Painter said Edible Jersey was launched in 2007 and is published four times/year. Mr. Painter explained Edible Jersey was one of 75 locally focused media properties held across both the US & Canada. Ms. Jester mentioned she would like to possibly advertise the Millville Wheels & Wings Air Show for July of 2024.

Mr. Painter spoke about an Edible Destinations Package, which he was proposing to the Council. Mr. Painter said he would email an assortment of links for the Package to Mr. Williams to be dispersed out to the Council members. Ms. Jester asked how Edible Jersey and its sister publications were marketed outside of New Jersey. Mr. Painter explained other neighboring Edible publications have available advertising inventories. Mr. Williams stated he would follow up with both Mr. Painter & Ms. Cobiachi and thanked them for their presentation and representation of New Jersey. Mr. Williams said he would get rates for advertising within other Edible publications to present to the Council next month.

Discussion of 2022 Cumberland County Tourism Economic Impact

Mr. Williams said he and Mr. Pisarski were invited to Cape May County Tourism Economic Impact Study presentation. Mr. Williams explained following the Cape May impact study, he had researched and found comparable data for Cumberland County, specifically pointing out: 1.) the Hospitality Tax had increased 15.08% from 2021 with a total of \$1,642,826.19 up from \$1,427,527.82, 2.) Cumberland ranked #5 out of 6 for recovery of New Jersey County Visitor Spending By Category, 3.) with a total of \$365 million spent in 2022, Cumberland's figure was better than Hunterdon, Salem & Warren Counties, and 4.) Cumberland saw a 16.6% increase in Overnight Leisure Stays throughout 2022. Messrs. Williams & Pisarski and Commissioner Doug Albrecht were all very happy with the numbers and trajectory of Tourism within Cumberland County.

Discussion of Tourism Report – Renati Solutions

Mr. Williams said included within the packet as Renati Solutions' Marketing Plan, as well as their suggestions for strategies. Mr. Williams said some of the recommended strategies were already currently being employed and incorporated. He mentioned developing a public relations (PR) strategy for press releases, consistency across the County's various social media channels, utilizing QR codes, re-designing brochures and signs, etc. Mr. Williams mentioned biweekly calendar reminder posts, which had already been implemented, using Facebook Live at events, making use of the Instagram Highlights section, re-sharing Tagged photos posted by members of the general public, and a suggested advertising budget.

A discussion ensued amongst the Council, County staff, and Commissioner Albrecht about the widespread usage of local print media (i.e.: newspapers) and the general consensus was that most people favored the digital versions vs. print media of local publications. Ms. Jester mentioned that the Millville Army Air Field Museum (M.A.D.F.M.) had recently begun

working with radio station network, Audacy. Ms. Longo also mentioned using the Catholic Star Herald, as well as weekly parish bulletins, if Mr. Williams still wanted to try and use print media publications. Ms. Longo mentioned the Blue Outdoor company the Cumberland Mall used. Mr. Williams thanked the Council members for their suggestions and feedback. He said he would look into these various outlets and soon report back to the Council.

Discussion of Cumberland County Farmers' Market

Mr. Pisarski said within the meeting packet was a Farmers' Market Analysis outlining what happened with the effort at the Cumberland Mall. He explained a multi-month runway was needed to launch the Farmers' Market and the farmers that initially wanted to participate could not provide staff with said runway build-up. Mr. Pisarski explained said vendors would have needed to make a certain figure instantly and when it was not made, they all bailed. Mr. Pisarski stated the Market had no vendors remaining even at a reduced vendor rate. Everyone on the Council said the space looked great and commended the valiant efforts of Mr. Pisarski and his staff to launch the County-wide Farmers' Market

Mr. Pisarski said the recommendation for the United States Department of Agriculture (U.S.D.A.) grant funding was to help promote farm stands in Vineland and to do farm markets on the Western side of the County in 2024. He explained they would do a billboard campaign designed by Mike Lacy trying to attract people to the individual locations. Mr. Pisarski said staff would ask the Mall to be released from the standing lease agreement. Mr. Pisarski said staff came to the realization that a County-wide farmers' Market held at the Cumberland Mall was not the service the people of the County/farmers needed presently. Mr. Pisarski stated the only ad was placed within the Vacationer magazine but was still appropriate and relevant in promoting Cumberland Fresh.

Departmental Updates

Mr. Pisarski said the previous weekend was the annual Friends of India Kite & Color Festival held at the Mid-County Park. It was a fantastic, sold-out event. He said the next event to be held at the Mid-County Park would be the Cumberland County Fair, for which staff were currently making preparations through 4-H/the Fair Association. He said a Future Farmers of America (F.F.A.) banquet would be held at the 4-H Extension Center that Thursday night.

County Commissioner Updates

Commissioner Doug Albrecht echoed the same sentiment about the Kite & Color Festival and upon his first time attending, said it was very fun. Commissioner Albrecht said a planned Cohanzick Greenway would run through the Cohanzick Zoo up to Mary Elmer Lake, Barretts Run in Hopewell, and the Greater Bridgeton Amish Market. Commissioner Albrecht mentioned additional developments involving the Cohanzick Country Club, the South Avenue/Grove Street culvert, and the Middle Mile Project.

Tourism Advisory Council Member Updates

Ms. Jester said the M.A.A.F.M. would be hosting their Annual Movie Night that very night hosted by veteran Carl May. Ms. Jester added muralist Sam Donovan would soon be painting their M-60 tank, as well as new interpretive signage funded by the Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission. Mr. Williams said he would have Celeste Riley send Ms. Jester the images from the Clerk's Office's Hometown Heroes calendar.

Ms. Patterson Tidy said staff at East Point Lighthouse were still waiting to receive word on the lease from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ D.E.P.) Ms. Patterson Tidy stated Bay Day had been canceled, but even though the beach had been closed by the D.E.P., attendance at the Lighthouse had been great. Ms. Patterson Tidy added the recent influx in press coverage had been fantastic for Lighthouse attendance and support.

Ms. Lods explained the Glasstown Arts District's Art Creates Excellence Summer Art Camp registration was about two-thirds full. She passed out numerous informational flyers for the Art Camp, Made In Millville, Christmas In July, an old fashioned Sidewalk Sale, and Holly City Fest, amongst other upcoming events.

Ms. Longo said the Mall would be hosting a Paint & Sip Party to be held on the fourth Friday of every month with proceeds raised being donated to local charities. Ms. Longo added that the Mall would also be holding a Hometown Heroes event and a 50th Anniversary celebration for Halloween. Ms. Longo said anyone could submit photos of their own Hometown Heroes for the wall, which would be up on display for a month. Ms. Longo extended her thanks to Messrs. Williams & Pisarski, Ms. Riviera, and Departmental staff for attending all the outreach events on behalf of the Council.

Ms. Timberman stated the Zoo was looking wonderful! Staff were very happy with their new director, John Medica. She said staff were currently working on organizing a 5K run and walk planned for the fall. Ms. Timberman said she would report back following the next Zoo Board meeting at the next T.A.C. meeting with additional updates. She said there were new Zoo Board members, who were working on a new website, QR codes, increasing their social media presence, the Amazon Wishlist for the Zoo animals, etc.

Adjournment

Ms. Timberman said the Council's next meeting was to be held on July 11, 2023 at 3:00pm at the 4-H Extension Center facility in Millville. A motion to adjourn the June 13, 2023 Tourism Advisory Council was made by Ms. Longo, seconded by Ms. Lods, and passed unanimously by the Council. Mr. Williams thanked everyone for their continued attendance and participation within the Council.