

CUMBERLAND COUNTY TOURISM ADVISORY COUNCIL

May 9, 2023
Meeting Minutes Notes

A meeting of the Cumberland County Tourism Advisory Council (C.C.T.A.C.) was held on Tuesday, May 9, 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 *
 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 – April 11, 2023

Ms. Timberman thanked everyone for their attendance and asked for a motion to approve the April 11, 2023 meeting minutes notes. A motion was made by Ms. Lods, seconded by Ms. Longo, and passed unanimously by the Council to approve the April 11, 2023 Tourism Advisory Council (T.A.C.) meeting minutes notes.

Southern Shore Region Destination Marketing Organization (S.S.R.D.M.O.) Marketing Grant Requests

Mr. Williams explained he had added the Vineland African American Community Development Corporation (V.A.A.C.D.C.)’s request onto the end of the meeting packet. The

first request was from the Maurice River Historical Society (M.R.H.S.), who maintains East Point Lighthouse. Mr. Williams said they would use the money towards social media marketing, rack cards, signage, etc. and was requesting \$1,500.00.

Mr. Williams stated next up was the Friends of India Society (F.O.I.S.) was requesting \$1,500.00, as well, which, if awarded, they would use for social media marketing, banners, etc. for their upcoming 15th Annual Kite & Color Festival to be held on June 10, 2023 at The Mid-County Park (formerly known as The County Fairgrounds.)

Mr. Williams said the last request was from the V.A.A.C.D.C., who would be utilizing the marketing funds towards their programming scheduled for Juneteenth, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, and Unity Day, as well as event brochures, give-away items, etc. Mr. Williams added for clarity's that all three organizations had applied for S.S.R.D.M.O. marketing grant funding requests the previous year(s) with very successful programming.

A blanket motion to approve all three S.S.R.D.M.O. grant requests for the Maurice River Historical Society, the Friends of India Society, and the Vineland African American Community Development Corporation was made by Ms. Timberman, seconded by Ms. Jester and passed unanimously by the Council.

Update On Specialty Crop Grant

Mr. Pisarski explained the Cumberland County Farmers' Market at the Cumberland Mall had hosted a "soft" launch the previous Saturday & Sunday. He said the sign to be mounted above the store would be installed that week and a post had been shared on Saturday spotlighting some of the County-made products available at the storefront within the Mall. Mr. Pisarski added three vendors were booked and one had dropped out due to a family emergency. He said between them, the two remaining vendors had plants, assorted vegetables, honey, strawberries, etc.

Mr. Pisarski said each vendor made more than \$200.00 over the weekend, which would essentially pay for the vendor fee of their whole season. Mr. Pisarski said it was still a work-in-progress and he and staff were making improvements to the space for each weekend. Multiple Council members made suggestions for vendors they personally knew and regularly used. Mr. Pisarski said the fee(s) would be pro-rated based on the number of remaining weekends for each potential vendor. Mr. Pisarski added re-usable Cumberland County Farmers' Market bags were being ordered and there were paper bags now free of charge.

Ms. Longo asked when the Vacationer Magazines would be delivered to County staff. Mr. Williams said he was unsure, but all of the necessary components had been delivered to Mike Lacy. Mr. Williams stated he would reach out to Mr. Lacy to double-check.

Update On Digital Marketing Grant (Renati Solutions)

Mr. Williams discussed the Renati Solutions Digital Marketing Plan. Mr. Williams said specific pages to focus on would be Page 2 under "GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE PLAN

(To Be Discussed)” and four more pages later, on Page 6, under “PRIMARY MESSAGES.” Mr. Williams said he had sat down with Will Gruccio to help iron out the Plan and asked the Council to identify the principles they would be looking for and targeted messages to ultimately be conveyed by such a plan. Mr. Williams asked the Council members to review the direct strategies, as well. Mr. Williams explained he would be meeting with Mr. Gruccio within a number of days and would be discussing any such feedback from the Council. Mr. Williams added within a week, Mr. Gruccio would have the Draft Plan delivered. Renati Solutions’ Digital Marketing Plan would be distributed by the next Council meeting.

It was mentioned \$5,000.00 had been set aside from the Budget for the Plan. Ms. Longo suggested including some verbiage along the lines of “Cumberland County is one of the best-kept secrets in New Jersey... and we don’t want it to be a secret anymore” within the Plan. Assistant Planning Director Elena Gable suggested including some aspect(s) mentioning local agrotourism highlighting the nearby wineries, breweries, and distillery. Mr. Williams added he and Ms. Riviera had recently seen Wine Trail brochures at the Monmouth County booth at the New Jersey Association of Counties (N.J.A.C.) Ms. Gable mentioned she had seen something similar in neighboring counties with a Brewery Passport and a brewery glass. Mr. Jester mentioned challenge coins had been gaining more and more popularity, too.

Upcoming 2023 Events

Mr. Williams briefly made reference to a list of upcoming 2023 Events within the final pages of the meeting packet. He stated Departmental staff would 1.) soon need more money to purchase additional give-away items for the upcoming events season and 2.) were looking for volunteers to help staff such events. Volunteers were welcome to come and assist staff while manning the booths and tables at events throughout the County. Multiple dates for additional events were mentioned by the Council members, as well.

Departmental Updates

Mr. Pisarski explained Departmental staff and the consultants from Clarke Caton Hintz were diligently working on both the Mid-County Park (formerly County Fairgrounds) Master Plan and County-wide Recreation Master Plan. He said a meeting would be held with the consultants the following day. Mr. Pisarski hoped to share concept plans and other materials related to both in-process Plans next month. The County Commissioners recently had a resolution on their agenda to investigate the possibilities available at East Point Lighthouse for the lease, park expansion around the Lighthouse, etc. to help save, support, and protect the Lighthouse. Mr. Pisarski said staff would be working with both County Administration and the Department of Environmental Protection (D.E.P.) through these efforts. Mr. Pisarski personally thanked Mr. Williams & Ms. Riviera for their dedication in working many, many events back-to-back in recent weeks.

County Commissioner Updates

Mr. Williams explained there were no County Commissioners present on the call virtually or in-person at the Administration Building at the physical meeting space.

Tourism Advisory Council Member Updates

Ms. Longo said The Cumberland Mall had a relatively new marketing coordinator named Deanna, who had been tasked with holding two community events/month. She added some of the recent and upcoming events had included and would include a Mother's Day event, a Father's Day festival, monthly Paint & Sip events, Hometown Heroes Day, a disabled fashion show, an event with local artist John Davis, and much, much more. Ms. Longo said the Mall would be celebrating their 50th anniversary on October 31, 2023.

Ms. Patterson Tidy mentioned she had submitted the application for the lease on East Point Lighthouse to the D.E.P. Ms. Patterson Tidy said now they just had to wait and see and, unfortunately, Bay Day had been canceled. She added upcoming events would include the Lighthouse's Annual Picnic Meeting & Clean-up Day on May 20, 2023 with volunteers and musical artists performing live music from 2-4:00pm. Ms. Patterson Tidy was more optimistic in working with the D.E.P. now that the County was in her corner.

Ms. Timberman said the Cohanzick Zoo had hosted their Kids Fest the previous weekend and it was wonderful. She commended the new Recreation Director and new Zoo Director and how well they were handling everything through this busy events season. Ms. Timberman added the Zoo grounds were getting cleaned up, new signs were going up on the exhibits, they now had a maintenance man, Cumberland Dairy wanted to do a clean-up, and Rotary were doing a clean-up, as well. Ms. Timberman mentioned Zoo Camp would be starting up soon, too.

Ms. Jester asked Ms. Longo for Deanna's contact information to possibly co-host a Fundamentals of Flight-style event at the Mall. She said the Millville Army Air Field Museum was doing very well in their 35th year. Ms. Jester said they had just kicked off their annual 50/50 Raffle fundraiser, which was already almost sold out. Ms. Jester said there would be an Annual Movie Night in June and recognized Carl May, who had recently been featured on Channel 6abc Action News wearing a M.A.A.F.M. hat. Ms. Jester added there would be a golf event to be held in September and the Museum had received a grant to help fund and execute a strategic plan. There would be a tank fundraiser soon and the tank (now named American Glory) would be camouflaged by muralist Sam Donovan. Ms. Jester stated the next Millville Wheels & Wings Air Show would be held July 20-21, 2024!

Ms. Lods explained the summer art camp, Art Creates Excellence, would be in its 24th year this summer starting on July 10, 2023 for four weeks. She said registrations were coming in, but still needed two teachers for the camp. Ms. Lods said a new program would be started on June 24, 2023 from 11-2:00pm called Made In Millville replacing the Farmers Market at The Village On High. Ms. Lods mentioned the continued 3rd Friday events and the painted and decorated small chairs competition with 35 submissions. Ms. Lods mentioned the upcoming Plein Air on May 21, 2023 at a private home on the Maurice River. She said there would be another Plein Air hosted in conjunction with the Cultural and Heritage Commission on September 30, 2023. In closing, Ms. Lods said there would be a Game of Clue held live in

Downtown Millville in October. Ms. Lods shared she would be retiring at the end of 2023 or early 2024. The Council congratulated Ms. Lods.

Ms. Warner said the Downe Township Green Team would be hosting their Horseshoe Crab Festival that upcoming weekend. She stated they would be hosting guided walks, have music, food, clean-ups, etc. Ms. Warner said she would send out dates for additional events to Mr. Williams & Ms. Riviera soon, but to keep tabs on Facebook, as well.

Old Business/New Business

Ms. Lods asked how the prospected films and television projects to be shot within Cumberland County were coming along. Mr. Pisarski said the CUT Film Festival would be held soon and that staff had met with film industry folks from North Jersey, which went very well. They thought the County could have specific scenes for films shot here.

Adjournment

Ms. Timberman said the Council's next meeting was to be held on June 13, 2023 at 3:00pm at the 4-H Extension Center facility in Millville. A motion to adjourn the May 9, 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.