

# King George County Tourism Advisory Committee Regular Meeting Minutes October 27, 2021

## 1. Call to order:

Meeting called to order by Bob Baird, chairman.

Members present: Dee Strauss, Warren Veazey, Lisa Caswell, Becky Stewart

Absent: Dave Hall, Jeron Hayes

Also present: Nick Minor, Director of Economic Development & Tourism (late), Kim Wilson, Economic Development Specialist and Roan Grapes.

## 2. Public Comment:

There was no public comment.

## 3. Approval of Minutes:

Warren Veazey made motion to accept the minutes for September 2021 meeting.

Dee Strauss seconded.

All members and chair vote aye. Motion carried.

## 4. Member Reports:

Warren Veazey: Had a meeting with Arsenal Events regarding the 50K race next year. Want to start behind the Walmart and finish in Dahlgren. Parking at the caboose is limited. Ties in better with hotels and restaurants if we have 300-400 runners. University of Mary Washington would be best place for parking, and we could access trail through property owned by my mom. That would be next August, Chris Chalkley also looking at the Sheetz 2 Sheetz race for same. Caledon Trunk or Treat is this Saturday and the Art & Wine Festival the next weekend, two-day event.

Dee Strauss: Fall Festival was a big success. Will have after event report coming. Will have first meeting after the event this week and will compile data. DECA is having its annual Veteran's Day 5K race and 1 mile fun run on Veteran's Day. Registration/check-in for the 5K is at 8:30AM, race begins at 9AM. The 1-mile check-in begins at 8:45AM and race begins at 9:15AM. Everybody reports to the stadium at the high school. Money raised goes to Some Gave All Foundation here in King George. Received email from Sheriff Giles about the opening of Machodoc Creek bridge will be named for Sgt. Nick Mason. We have been invited to that. Varsity football team doing very well with Friday's game being moved to Thursday due to Friday weather concerns. Have finished first play and have started call backs for second play. The band was rated superior at their event on Saturday. Our CTSOs are going coordinating with social services for Thanksgiving baskets that we will collect from our students.

Becky Stewart: I am a resident of King George for 33 years. My husband and I have SlamOne, LLC. We live over near Passapatanzy. We teach, we do private lessons, we conduct workshops at Stratford Hall, we have contract out there to do African Drumming and musical workshops and teaching music. We record in a studio at our house, and we perform, Latin Jazz and Afro-funk music work with several different bands. We have performed at White Hall, there's a reception coming up. Bring to the table joy for music, gathering in people and teaching. Getting families and kids involved in music. And leveraging some of the hotels and wineries, breweries, there may be some that have gone out of business since Covid. Need to get my list together of who's doing what in the county, venues that would attract people to King George, it's a wonderful place to live and visit and a gateway to other places, like Stratford to the east. In my other life I am an engineer with DoD at the Pentagon, so I do work from home right now. I do about half time engineering.

Lisa Caswell: I'm not from the King George area. I've been (manager) at the Holiday Inn since February. I have been in Richmond area, the Fredericksburg area, the Woodbridge area, I'm still learning the King George community. At the Holiday Inn we have been quite busy. Hotel has been sold out almost every night and My Place as well. We are getting a lot of group inquiries now and lots of business from the bridge workers and we get a lot from the Navy base. We are getting group inquiries for next year; we already have the Jefferson Cup booked for March. I know the owners are working with the race that will start in our parking lot, so we're excited about that. Owners are going to be putting up a storage facility in My Place Hotel. So, we are staying really busy, and we still have issues with staffing. That's why I haven't been to a lot of meetings, covering a lot of shifts. We are staying really busy and I'm glad to be here.

Bob Baird: I am the Chairman, a native of the county, grew up here, moved around the state a bit then decided to come back home. My family has been here since the 1700s, so I have roots here. I represent the Historical Society. I am Vice-President of the King George Historical Society. I am here to promote U.S. history, King George history and genealogical studies of the county. I am very proud of the county and believe we have a lot to offer. I just believe we need to package it better and make more people aware. As far as activity, would like to mention that the Historical Society will be working with Parks & Rec on our December 5<sup>th</sup> Christmas Tree Lighting, Chris has already reached out to the schools to get the King George Band involved, I believe the brass section. We have Steve Englewood, and a Christian music group Act 17 is going to be doing the staging for the event and will provide band as well. There may be some room for additional musicians to participate in that. It will be a 2-hour function outside the King George Courthouse area there next to the library and adjacent to the museum. We'll have music and Santa Clause there, hot chocolate and stuff and the museum will be open. It will start at 4 PM and light tree at 6PM. Second project I have been working on is accessibility to our rivers, on the Rappahannock side, we've only

got 2 boat landings available. We've got Hopyard and Wilmont, down near Rollins Fork, that is an extremely small parking, at last visit, there was 1 boat trailer that took up half the parking lot. So, we really need to try and improve that area and come up with some additional parking facilities. The problem there is on 1 side of the landing area is a ravine and gully and the other is adjacent to 350 acres controlled by Federal Fish & Wildlife, as a nature preserve. So, I have met with the acting director for the area Fish & Wildlife and broached the idea could we come up with a partnership to develop additional parking down there and they are willing to discuss, they have some money that they could put in for parking, but they don't want to overdo it. So, I threw out some numbers, right now you are using our parking for your hunters in the winter, that means our people can't land their boats to go hunting in the river. He said, "That's not our problem, but we are using your parking lot so maybe we do need some of our own parking". As a starter for discussion, I asked if we could get a quarter acre of the preserve for parking adjacent to the access road next to the landing. It's possible. So, I met with a contractor, who did the rebuild of the boat ramp and dock there at the landing and he's supposed to be getting me estimated price to put in a parking lot. Then I will put together a letter for review by staff here and committee that we could that we can forward both to the fed and the state to see if we can come up with a partnership to fund the construction of such a lot, so that's in the works. The other thing I will mention is Holiday season is here, Oakland Baptist Church is having Trunk or Treat tonight from 6-7PM. And Exit Realty will hold a Trunk or Treat on Sunday night from 4-7Pm at the office.

Nick Minor and Chris Clarke, Director of Parks & Rec., have arrived.  
A summary of the above reports was given to Mr. Minor.

Nick Minor: I have an update, I am talking to Stafford about potentially doing state funding for travel kiosks, we really don't have any place to put them except the hotels which is probably where we want them anyway, so they run about \$2500 -10,000. It would be a joint application for state funding, and we would have to put up a local match or no match at all. I don't have all the details, but essentially, we would put in these travel kiosks, and they are mobile so we could move them from one hotel to the next. Basically, the travel kiosk tells you what's in the area, what to visit what restaurants are available and we collect that data so with that data we can target market a little bit better as to who those travelers, they are digital. This is a regional concept. So, if they are interested in something in Stafford it will go the Stafford website, but while they are in King George they can search by radius. So, if they go 5, 10, 20 they will know exactly what's in the area. Don't have all the details yet but I will share with you the handout that I just got today about how it is but it is directly related to Covid-19. The funding has to be related to Covid 19, Will have more information and details in December. Hopefully a cost. Sort of correlates to the strategic plan that we will go over today.

Bob Baird asked Chris Clarke if there was anything he wanted to share at this time:

Working on Christmas Tree lighting, it is a community event for Sunday, December 5. Have confirmed Sealston Elementary School Choir, High School Brass Ensemble, searching for an adult choir. The group that worked with us last year is unavailable.

5. Discussion Items:

- a. Tourism Videography: Proposals from two companies were presented to the TAC committee. Members reviewed both proposals and discussed plusses and minuses of both. AVAdventure was the chosen company, by consensus 4 ayes, 1 nay.
  
- b. Chris Clarke: Park Signs Addendum. The final design and costs are back, and it is \$4676.25 over than originally approved. I'm amazed at the size of some of these, but where the jump really happened was the Brooks Park signs, the two on Route 3 were very accurate but the two on Route 301, he quoted the signs that will be on 205 but VDOT wanted the larger signs that say to use 205 East or West, so that's where price difference is. I need your authorization so this can go to the board. Barnesfield Park southbound sign is a questionable install due to bridge construction. If they put it in, and then have to relocate, that's on them. VDOT uses a contractor to install and manage signs. VDOT has to approve signs. It has taken 4 months.

Dee Straus made motion to approve the additional funds for the Parks & Rec signs. Warren Veazey seconded.

All members and chair vote aye. Motion carried.

c. Tourism Strategic Plan:

Nick Minor: This is the first draft. Take a look at the high-level concepts and objectives. Really look at this hard, be brutally honest with comments. If you have new objectives or priorities change let me know. I proposed 9 objectives and prioritized them. Discussion was held regarding objectives and priorities. Suggestion that county assets current and future be added to back. Discussion of adding a boat ramp at the Roseland house. Suggestion to add objective, low level, to explore state and federal funding for boat access or improve water access. Suggested to increase to medium as Wilmont has potential. This included Caledon and potential for kayak rental and access by Friends of Caledon. Currently need a guide. Discussion included changes in grammar and focus or specifics of objectives. The need to work with Community Development and Business Development to make it easier to have events. Objective 10 is to improve boat access and explore boat access with Parks & Rec. And objective 11 would be creation of special event permit or something that applies to that. The wineries are under Discussion regarding process for needing

special event permits. There is a special event permit for the wineries, but it is a zoning exception. County using same format for event as for a building.

Discussion about promoting history. RCC has educational series.

Priorities were selected by what will bring visitors.

Suggested to remove priorities.

Discussion of Native American trail.

Discussion on including arts and music under objective #8.

Add current annual events to appendix.

What is our music scene and relationship to music scene?

Nick Minor made a recommendation before plan adopted. Changing subgroup titles such as turning agricultural into agritourism and arts and change to arts & cultural events. Civic groups, change to community engagement.

Discussion about what is the case for schools to be included in tourism. Dee Strauss suggested it could be marketing and promotion.

Add partners and thank you for participants.

Nick Minor will update digitally and send to TAC members for review.

6. Next TAC meeting currently scheduled for November 24, 2021, the day before Thanksgiving. It was discussed and decided to move meeting to Wednesday, December 1, 2021, at 3-5PM.

7. Adjournment:

Bob Baird called for motion to adjourn.

Dee Strauss made motion to adjourn.

Becky Stewart seconded.

All members and chair vote aye. Motion carried.

Minutes submitted by: Roan Grapes, Administrative Assistant

Minutes approved on: \_\_\_\_\_