

King George County Tourism Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes 02-10-2021

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by chairman Bob Baird. Meeting is totally virtual. Members present Bob Baird, Dee Strauss, Warren Veazey, Dave Hall. Jeron Hayes is absent. Also present are Nick Minor, Kim Wilson, and Roan Grapes

2. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

3. Approval of January 2021 meeting minutes

Dee Strauss made a motion to approve minutes from January 2021.

Warren Veazey- Seconded.

No Comments.

All members vote aye, chairman votes aye. Motion carried.

4. TAC Member Reports

Dee Strauss- This month is Career & Technical Education month across the nation, and DECA advocacy month. All the CTE Advisory Committee met last week. Had adult led meeting last week and student led meetings this week. Guest speaker from American Heart Association. All schools in King George participate in American Heart Challenge, HOSA is creating cards for residents at Heritage Hall. DECA and Skills W...Association is preparing for competition. Faculty meeting this morning re: in person/hybrid reopening of schools in coming weeks.

Bob Baird- You mentioned CTE Advisory committee, have not heard anything about the school Expansion advisory committee, it has gone dormant.

Dee Strauss- Yes, Covid has taken over, not a whole lot that committee can do at this point.

Warren Veazey- Getting ready for upcoming trail events. Going out to do maintenance. Held run for Ainsley's Angels, a non-profit group last week. It is for off-road wheelchairs. We had 5 participants with volunteer runner helpers. A six-mile run with help. Lit a bonfire after and shared smores. Will do another in September and 2 races 2 weeks from now and the one in March.

Dave Hall- Administration of the market had meeting last week, have not heard what happened yet, most likely to set up schedule for the coming year. Will get in touch with Darren to find out when farmer's market will begin and anything new going on.

Bob Baird- Historical Society has really been hurt by Covid as well as illness of couple of volunteers. Society has not met since last March. A few of us got together last week to decide trying to get something going, for

possible hybrid or virtual meeting. Trying to get something going. The museum is open on Thursdays and have had a few people coming in, to research genealogy and county history. It has been slow. Have been getting newsletter out every other month and at least quarterly have another one coming out the first of March. No progress made with joint projects with Dahlgren Heritage Museum and with Ralph Bunch Association on Roseland Road Property, no progress there. Chris has been working hard to get us moving forward, but lack of personnel has made life difficult. Need to get together with Chris again and discuss where we can go with this.

Nick Minor- County as well as the Northern Neck region was awarded 2 broadband grants that will cover the entire county over the next 3 years. The underserved will be served well. It is fiberoptic, it is top of the line, moving in the future, it will become more wireless. Construction will begin in December. The County did put up extra money to be the first locality completed. We sent out a business need survey, the EDA, I think will serve the TAC as well. Comments received were about needing more cooperation agreements with state parks. Promotion of horse farms in the county, as we get closer to summer, if there are opportunities for people to come in and learn how to ride and interact with those farms, we could promote that from a tourism perspective. Highlight those farms, put them on the website, give them a place to sign up or that type of visibility.

Bob Baird- Dr. Young is leaving and there is a new interim administrator while we search for new administrator.

Nick Minor- Interim administrator is Mr. Larry Hughes. He is from Berkley Group. His previous experience is with Prince William County. He has stepped right in.

5. New Business

i. KG Trail Series Application-

Nick Minor- Put forward by Arsenal Events. They are asking for \$2000.00 per event, similar to what we granted the Sheetz 2 Sheetz race. For promotional materials marketing and swag as well.

Bob- This is for the KG Trail Series - There are four events, they are looking for a total of ..

Dee- they are requesting 14,425 dollars. But the projected profit is \$6500, the math doesn't add up. They're going to have 250 people, there's a lot of income coming in..

Warren Veazey- Main use of money is mostly for signs and banners. The swag is mostly something with King George on it. The main use is for signs that can be used over and over, this year's profit is small because of the limited number of runners. In the future they hope to have more runners.

Dee Strauss- What portion of the \$70.00 goes in their pocket as the coordinator?

Warren Veazey-I don't know. For the Trail usually gets donation of \$10.00 per runner as a donation. Caledon also gets a donation from the race held there, it's open to negotiation depending on the number of runners, they have a set cost. See page 2 for breakdown of items needed.

Dee Strauss- Reviewed page 2 with the group. And questioned # 8 for the advertising funds.

Nick- looks like they are using all digital and print ads thru Inside Nova.

Warren- gave overview of the different advertising used in the past. We need more detail.

Bob Baird- Need good profit/loss statement on this one.

Dee Strauss- They are asking for \$14,425.00. and I understand that they are just purchasing items for the King George materials for these races. I would think that from their profits would create designated metals. I am trying to understand that somewhere they are making money.

Nick Minor- I hear you Dee on the profit side, I think what we're paying for is the marketing of the county. We want to make sure that f

Bob Baird- application. Would like a P&L, Would do... Metals and some swag should...

Dee Strauss- \$8400 cover items 1-7, 6000 covers #8, promotion...

Dave Hall- This is for all 4 races?

An in-depth discussion was held regarding the use of the money.

While the TAC is basically supports the series there are questions.

Questions to be answered before final approval:

Is there a storage facility for reusable items?

What are the costs that will not recur next year?

Need financial breakdown of where dollars are going in current year and following year.

Nick Minor- I will go back to them with these questions and email answers to you. If you want can set up another meeting for final approval and can invite Arsenal like we did with Sassafras.

Dee Strauss – That's a good thing to pre-plan for anyway. Thinking that maybe getting someone to run Fall Festival 5K and donate back to Fall Festival. Just a thought.

A discussion was held regarding basic details about the Fall Festival 5K.

ii. Application for Visit King George Website Marketing

Nick Minor- This is request from my department for google marketing ads for the Visit King George website. I have been getting calls and complaints that visit King George doesn't pop up in a search. It doesn't because we are not putting any dollars to make it pop up. We did for WanderLove. Pushes top search results, can even target for Northern Neck, race series, or Heritage trail. The ads push the website to the top of the google search results for tourism and targeted placement based on traveler's searches. Requesting \$6000 annually or \$500 per month. This is a starting point that makes sure that Visit King George website gets the proper amount of hits and proper amount of exposure.

Dee Strauss– This is a Rambletype thing, right?

Nick Minor- This is the guy who designed our website. He has the plug-ins for google analytics. He did the WanderLove campaign for us. What I have provided you is the year-to-date ads. So, when launched website initially in early May, there was a huge spike. That spike was the result of our Carry-Out King George campaign in response to Covid-19. Then it trickled off. Then you see pop ups that are from every time we send out a newsletter or promoted the website. Then you'll see the WanderLove campaign. That constant stream of activity is because we used grant money for Google Ads until it ran out in December. Now it's back to usual level and spikes when we send out a newsletter or an update.

Dee Strauss- How much are you asking for?

Nick Minor-\$500 per month or \$6000 total. His proposal lays out different levels of funding. I am asking for the minimum. For a county, our size I don't think we need to lay out 24 thousand. I want to start with baseline Goggle Ad words. If we want to add things later we can.

Warren Veazey- For Trails we are looking at geofencing as to let them know it's a private trail and try to get people to join up.

Nick Minor- Would like to start with baseline, straight up Goggle Ads. We'll get this many hits then we can start experimenting in geolocation for events or a new winery and measure.

Dee Strauss- Do you want a motion?

Bob Baird- We need a motion and then discussion.

Dee Strauss- I make a motion to provide \$6000 a year, \$500 per month to the Goggle Ad words promotion piece.

Warren Veazey- I second.

Bob Baird- We have a motion to fund up to \$6000 per year for keyword promotion. Any discussion?

Warren Veazey- Geofencing would be a great way to capture being at open events like Fall Festival...(unable to hear remainder-too much echo in recording)

Bob Baird- Question I have is Google Ad words at the 6000 level, not talking about geofencing just broadband advertising?

Nick Minor- This is straight up keyword search, organic search. If you search for King George, the county website comes up first, then Wikipedia for King George and Google Ad words will push the site to third on the list. Right now, that's not happening. When they put in search for things to do in King George, the county website comes up and then they have to navigate the site to find the Visit King George site. May look at Board of Supervisors page and jump right off.

Google pushes county to the top, everybody else under that has to pay. (He explained how this works.)

Bob Baird- We're looking at \$500 per month. Are they proposing a SCO study to recommend what key words to use or be asking us what key words to use?

Nick Minor- They will do all the work, but he does take suggestions. So, if we want to change to promote he will add.

Warren Veazey- Will we get a monthly report?

Nick Minor- Yes.

Bob Baird- Nick, will you be liaison on this or is the computer group?

Nick Minor- I will be liaison.

Bob Baird- We have a motion and a second to provide \$6000.00 per year and \$500.00 per month for Google Ads promotion.

All members vote aye, chair votes aye. Motion carried.

iii. Application for T-shirts and Stickers for Sheetz2Sheetz

Nick Minor- Department wants to provide swag to promote the county as a sponsor of the race. Each runner will receive a sticker and 40 runners will receive T-shirt. Will also give out King George magazines and other Visit King George items. 250 Visit King George stickers is \$239.00 and 50 t-shirts with Visit King George logo is \$366.50, totaling \$505.50. We will also be giving away King George magazines

Dee Strauss- Made motion to approve \$505.50. for this promotion.

Warren Veazey- Seconded.

Minimal discussion by members.

All members vote aye. Chair votes aye. Motion carried.

Nick Minor- There will be a request coming from Parks and Recreation for signage. The request is large but a one-time only.

Bob Baird- Requests that staff discuss internally before bringing it to the committee. Is such permanent signage infrastructure cost or advertising cost. Are we running into a scope issue and policy from Board of Supervisors?

Nick Minor- One of the Board of supervisors has been working on for in about three years. So have at least 1-2 Board of Supervisor approval. But will have Chris on the phone next time to give back story.

Bob Baird- Not saying it's not a good project. Just saying don't want to run afoul of the Board of Supervisors claim that infrastructure should be funded internally.

Nick Minor- Lisa Caswell will replace Dave Zabelsky for the hospitality sector. She is the new GM for Holiday Inn Express.

6. Old Business

i. Strategic Planning Update

Nick Minor- Next part is to develop tourism stakeholder survey that will go out to public and tourism businesses. Roan and I are developing the survey. Finding it hard to develop questions that don't have a bias result. Would like to have solid 10-15 questions that go to a direct result. Using the SWOT analysis that was used at first focus group. Will send out to TAC for feedback, you can add additional questions to survey. Would like to get out before the end of the month. In March will hold public meetings and then internal strategic planning laying out budget, and key take-away and move forward..(unable to hear-too much background noise) Looking at April..(too much background noise).

If you have anything for me to promote, if you have stuff or know of events coming up and know ahead of time let me know.

Warren Veazey- Laurie Schlemm idea of a replacement fund raiser for The Friends of Caledon. Will email you the date once I get it verified.

Nick Minor- Let her know that we approved that application, funds still there, but before we release that check let her know she needs to come back to us. Make sure she still needs same amount of money. If I release that check after 4 months without update....

Warren Veazey- I will email her and ask her to answer.

Bob Baird- First, where are we on maintenance and upgrading our tourism part of the website? Would like to hear more about that at the next meeting.

Second, we have floated several times it would be very useful to have drone overflight over parts of the county for use in both public and private promotion. With spring coming will see greenery again would be a great time to film something like that. as move into spring and summer might want to talk about is that investment.

Also, I have no commercial interest in this, I see there are 50 acres on the Rappahannock have become available. Great access point for recreation adjacent to wildlife conservation area on the Rappahannock. If anybody interested public or private, wish somebody would buy it and make it available for public use.

Nick Minor- How much is it?

Bob Baird- I believe it is \$800,000.00. Not cheap but it is river front. 50 acres.

Nick Minor- Bob, about the video, we got 2 quotes back in the November but us and the videographer decided not worth doing in the wintertime. Those quotes probably not good now. What we can do is

get them to resubmit proposal and bring to TAC and actually start working on that now. So that way we'll be ready to go... and make it something like a hero video and put at top of website.

Bob Baird- Just some thoughts I wanted to put in front of everybody. Anybody have anything they want to bring up now or for future meetings?

Dave Hall- ...(unable to hear) Would rather have meeting in person, the board room is open again, my internet terrible, lot of echo and difficult to understand people frequently. Any interest in doing this in person again?

Bob Baird- I am certainly available. Nick, could we do a hybrid out of the board room?

Nick Minor- Hybrid is harder to achieve, because the microphones in the board are really good when everybody is in the room and really bad when only a few because of echo and feedback. It doesn't mean we can't do it, but it is a challenge. But if we want to do a hybrid, I'll figure it out and we can get it done. You have to have a quorum in order to have meeting, need 3-4 of you in the room. It changes the way we conduct the meeting. It is fine for us to all be virtual or all be in one room but when your split you have to make sure there is a quorum present. (unable to hear remainder) keep that in mind.

Bob Baird- The other option, not sure about the legality, if several of us want to voluntarily participate in a teleconference out of the Quesenberry room, is that a possibility? If people want to remain virtual, that is OK or want to sit in room with better phone reception as a group is that a possibility?

Nick Minor- Depends on how many people are in the room. If there is a quorum present, then it has to be a public meeting. Dave, you are welcome to come into the county building and use the county internet.

Discussion of how quorum present changes meeting. And members verbalized how change of venue would affect different members and their availability.

Bob Baird- Sounds like we have a quorum willing to come in so why we don't send out email solicitation to get people's feelings for sure. But sounds like we can do in person again now that the board room is open again and possibility for someone to participate virtually.

Nick Minor- This should have been on the agenda. As of now the next meeting is scheduled for the 24th. What I want to ask is do you want to keep the meeting on the fourth Wednesday of every month or keep it on the 2nd Wednesday, do we want to keep or change to 2nd Wednesday of the month? Will send out digital invite for the entire year for the 4th Wednesday. There is an option to participate virtually.

Discussion by members to keep meetings on 4th Wednesday.

Bob Baird- Any further discussion?

Hearing none, thank you Nick, need motion to adjourn.

Warren Veazey- Made motion to adjourn.

Dave Hall- Second.

All members vote aye, chair votes aye.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 PM.

Submitted by: Roan Grapes, Administrative Asst.

Approved on: _____