

Talbot County Tourism Board
Meeting Minutes
May 10, 2023
Via Zoom

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Chairwoman Judy Bixler called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Members Present Jessica Bellis, Judy Bixler, Ian Fleming, Kristen Greenaway, Mary Kellogg, Jeff Schneider, Cassandra Vanhooser

Members Absent: Tad DuPont, Angela Eade, Keasha Haythe, Amy Kreiner, Harold Klinger, Mark Salter

Economic Development Commission Members Present: Ted Bautz, Dr. Clifford Coppersmith, Reza Jafari, Ken Kozel, Jackie Wilson

Guests Present: Holly DeKarske, Sandy Dubay, Eric Kellner, Deena Kilmon

Staff Present: Krista Boothby, Ryan Snow

II. Overview of Tourism in Talbot County

- **Tourism by the Numbers**

Ms. Vanhooser gave a PowerPoint presentation providing tourism data relevant to Talbot County.

- **Challenges**

- **Sustainability**

Ms. Greenaway spoke about the issues of climate change and the effects it will have on Talbot County. She also discussed how the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum is planning for mitigation of these issues.

Ms. Vanhooser spoke to the economic viability of the Talbot County community.

- **Workforce**

Mr. Fleming spoke about the issues of workforce issues in Talbot County, especially as a seasonal tourism community, including cost of living for low wage workers and supply chain issues.

- **Public Safety**

Oxford Police Chief Eric Kellner presented the impact large events have on police forces as they work to make residents and visitors safe.

- **Opportunities and Benefits**

Ms. Bellis addressed the opportunities the challenges the tourism industry faces, and she stressed the need to work together to overcome these issues. Ms. Vanhooser added that tourism contributes to the quality of life Talbot County residents enjoy.

- **Next Steps**

Mr. Schneider spoke to the Tourism Board's vote to pursue a lodging tax increase as part of an effort toward future sustainability.

III. Comments from Board Members

Ms. Bixler welcomed the Economic Development Commission (EDC) and its Chair, Ken Kozel, and thanked them for participating in today's Tourism Board meeting. She also reiterated that the Tourism Board will be moving forward with next steps as they pertain to the accommodations tax increase.

IV. Comments from the Public

Mr. Kozel, EDC Chair, thanked Ms. Bixler for inviting the EDC to be a part of today's Tourism Board meeting and stated that the EDC will be undertaking a

strategic plan in which tourism will be a part of the process.

V. Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 12, 2023

Ms. Bixler called for a motion to approve the minutes from April 12, 2023. Mr. Fleming made the motion to approve; Ms. Greenaway seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

VI. Upcoming Meetings and Events

- National Travel & Tourism Week, May 7-13, 2023
- Next Tourism Board Meeting, September 13, 2023

VII. Adjournment

Ms. Bixler called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Schneider made the motion to adjourn; Mr. Coppersmith seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:22 a.m.