

Tourism Board Regular Monthly Meeting

January 16, 2018 – Oriental Town Hall

A quorum being present, meeting was called to order by Chair Marsha Palpham at 5:30PM.

Members in Attendance: Marsha Palpham, Carol Mabe, Suzanne Gwaltney; prospective member Pat Thomaier, Town Board Liaison Diane Simmons

The Minutes from the November 21 Meeting were approved. No meeting was held in December.

Discussion: Goals for 2018. Marsha suggested that the Board set three or four goals for 2018. These were identified as important areas for the board to focus on:

- Improvement of Oriental's presence on social media: There is insufficient budget to design a tourism focused web page. Alternatives were considered to use the Towndock.net as a landing place for web inquiries. All agreed that the current town site is more of a municipal website and that something specifically focused on activities, events and reasons to visit was needed. It was also discussed that the town website needs to be updated regularly as do business websites that link to the town website. Businesses might be featured on the website on a rotating basis, with special banner ads. Pat Thomaier presented information about VisitNC.com, a program sponsored by the NC Department of Commerce. They have existing social media that Oriental can tap into through our county rep, Janice Swimm, of the Pamlico Chamber of Commerce.
- Business roundtable: The discussion of business inputs to social media led to the need to pull all parties together in a roundtable format as had been done in the past. This would be an opportunity to present information about the board's outreach activities to businesses and event organizers and also to gather input regarding their needs. The Pamlico C of C would also be invited to participate. Feb 8 was acceptable to everyone at the meeting. Marsha will confirm that date with the Pamlico C of C. The roundtable will be held at Brantley's, with breakfast at 8 and the meeting starting at 8:30. The Pamlico C of C may have the email addresses for all area businesses to enable notification of the meeting asap. Marsha indicated that she had called them individually for the last roundtable.
- Christmas decorations: Placement and condition of the decorations need improvement. All agreed that the harbor area looked beautiful with use of the new nautical fixtures purchased by Tourism in 2017. We do not have enough decorations to adequately cover the length of Broad Street, so they were spaced far apart and erratically, and the condition of many pieces is tattered, with lights missing. Carol Mabe suggested that we consider using additional funds from Tourism reserves to purchase additional fixtures in the nautical theme for 2018. The spacing of fixtures and overall coverage on Broad Street could be improved with additional new fixtures, but the lack of alignment in the poles is always a challenge. Suzanne Gwaltney reminded the Board that the Women's Club might consider taking on a project to make some lighted chicken wire ball decorations for use in Lou Mac Park or other areas around town.