

Tourism Board Regular Monthly Meeting

February 20, 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, Victoria Hardison and town board representative Dianne Simmons.

The Minutes from the October meeting were approved.

Discussion: Keith Smith from Town Dock was present at our invitation to discuss how we might work with his website to increase our social media presence for Oriental. It does not appear cost effective to create a separate website for tourism; nor do we have the resources to manage and update a website to keep it current. Most events and activities that attract visitors to our town are already covered and promoted on Town Dock. Keith will bring ideas to our March meeting for discussion.

Discussion: A representative from The Pamlico News visited to update us on plans underway to reformat and dramatically improve the newspaper with new content, columns, features and layouts. They will be offering incentives to attract more advertisers and promotion of local events as well. We noted that we fully support their efforts and they will keep us informed as they progress with changes.

Discussion: We were informed of a state-sponsored Tourism Day Celebration to be held at the visitors Center on I-95 at the Virginia border in March. We would have the option to set up a tent and hand out materials, but felt the impact would be nominal. Motion not to participate in the event was passed.

Discussion: Radio station 95.7, who has been doing a remote broadcast for the Oriental Boat Show paid for by the Rotary in recent years, contacted us about picking up the show as the Rotary has decided not to do this year. They felt they could not verify that the live remote built additional attendance for the event. We discussed the value of the broadcast in attracting visitors and the problem of supporting one event with radio advertising as a Tourism Board versus other events in Oriental. Motion was made and passed not to do the radio advertising for the Boat Show or any other singular event. Our focus and spending will continue to be on advertising that promotes the entirety of Oriental.

Discussion: Mabe noted that there is an annual NC Tourism Conference to be held in Winston-Salem in March. We had not budgeted to send a rep to the conference this year, but will consider in the future.

Discussion: The group discussed possible purchase of additional new holiday lighting for 2018 to add to those purchased in 2016. Many of the older decorations still being used were missing so many lights and appeared shabby and worn during the recent holidays, while the new lights on the harbor were very striking. Mabe will meet with the Town Manager about purchasing fixtures including fish and other nautical icons ones to mix with the anchors, sailboats and

snowflakes added last year. Gwaltney is to discuss the OWC taking on a project to make multi-colored lighted chicken wire balls to be hung in trees at Lou Mac Park for the holidays.

A motion to adjourn was made by Mabe; seconded by Hardison and approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:35pm.