

Tourism Board Regular Monthly Meeting

March 20, 2018 – Oriental Town Hall

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

Members in Attendance: Suzanne Gwaltney, Carol Mabe, Victoria Hardison, prospective member Pat Thomaier, Town Board Liaison Diane Simmons.

The Minutes from the February 20 meeting were approved.

Discussion: Town wide yard sale. Mabe presented ads to be run in the County Compass (2 @ \$100 each) and in New Bern Magazine (1 @ \$100). The Board approved with a small modification: the word "Register" will be placed at the top of the early ad, and then "Shop" at the top of the later ads. Mabe will send four different PSAs to area radio stations. Bill Wheeler will prepare a map with locations of the registrants. Locations will not be numbered this year, as it does not seem necessary and it adds last minute effort to map preparation. The Board unanimously approved.

Discussion: Preliminary 2018-2019 budget. Mabe presented a budget for \$10,000. The major items were \$6,000 for ads in Our State magazine and \$3,000 for social media. The latter was based on an estimate of \$250/month for a program to be designed with Towndock. Thomaier asked if there was a way to determine the effectiveness of Our State ads. Although there isn't one, Gwaltney and Mabe felt strongly about the importance of a continuous presence in Our State. Discussion followed about ways to reach a younger audience, given the success of the Sailpack Regatta and also the growth of a large younger segment in the RTP area. Hardison suggested that younger prospective visitors would look on-line and explained the basics of Facebook ads. The Board thought this might be a cost effective way to expand Oriental's presence. This will be considered once the Board receives the Towndock proposal. Also, since the town has a Facebook page, a more touristy focus could be introduced on it. Thomaier will investigate RTP area college newspapers for a cheaper alternative to ads in Carolina Parent. The Board unanimously approved the preliminary budget with a modification to the \$6,000 line item to state that this would be for "Print Advertising, Our State and Other."

Discussion: Christmas decorations: These are to be purchased out of reserves, not the annual Tourism Board budget. Mabe to set up a meeting with Diane Miller to discuss the purchase.

Discussion: Tourist tax revenue. Mabe to research ytd amounts for the last five years.

Discussion: Mabe presented pricing for two banners plus stands (\$600.00). This will enable the Board to display the Oriental banner easily regardless of whether there is anything nearby to which a banner can be attached. The Board approved.

Discussion: Web presence and passwords: Thomaier followed up on an email to Dianne Simmons regarding control of accounts that the Tourism Board might open for the purposes of promoting Oriental tourism. Thomaier had opened an online account on Carolina Parent with

her own email account and password. She was concerned about the need for changes in the future and who would have access to the account. The Board agreed that the Town should be the central control point for any on-line presence, using the town email address and passwords to be recorded by the town.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00.