

Tourism Board Regular Monthly Meeting

July 17, 2018 – Oriental Town Hall

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

Members in Attendance: Marsha Paplham, Suzanne Gwaltney, Carol Mabe, Victoria Hardison, and Town Board representative Dianne Simmons. Guest Lisa Thompson – Harbor/Waterfronts Committee.

Discussion: Updates were given on the Whittaker Creek Dredging and Whittaker Pointe Restoration projects. Final plans were discussed for helping host a town meeting at the Old Theater on Thursday night, July 19th to present these critical projects to town's people and local business owners. Key is to raise matching funds of \$120,000 from private donations to activate the grant secured from the state. Gift in Kind donations of services from surveyors, geologist etc. are being counted toward the matching funds and we still need to raise \$109,000. We have an estimated \$220 million in property and 297 homes on Whittaker Creek and its branches. Both County Compass and Pamlico News are supporting efforts with major articles on the projects.

Discussion: Mabe provided an update on ideas for the 2018-2019 ad campaign in Our State magazine. We will purchase five ads – running September and October 2018 issues; March, May and June 2019 issues. Potential creative ideas include festivals/art shows, music/theater performances, Dragon events, Parades etc. Last year's ad campaign featured sporting activities such as sailing, fishing, cycling.

Discussion: A copy of Raleigh Magazine's July-August issue featuring Oriental in a two-page article was shown. We will consider advertising in the magazine in the future should our budget allow, as the Triangle is a key market for weekend and vacation visitor prospects. Pat Messer is getting ad cost info for us.

Discussion: Town staff provided updated Occupancy Tax Revenue numbers for fiscal years 15-16; 16-17; 17-18 as requested in June. We use the "heads-in-beds" data to gauge trends in number of visitors to Oriental as one indicator of the effectiveness of Tourism efforts. Comparisons cover a ten-year period. Unfortunately these numbers do not capture personal rentals such as AirB&B which have become popular.

Motion was made and approved to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 PM.