

Borough of Wildwood Crest Tourism Commission Meeting

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

Crest Pier Recreation Center

Meeting called to order by Brian Cunniff at 4:02 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Reading of the Sunshine Ordinance – In compliance with the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231 P.L. 231 175, the notice requirements have been classified as to the time, place and date of holding said meeting by posting notice of the same on the bulletin board in borough hall and by mailing the same to the Press of Atlantic City and the Cape May County Herald.

Roll Call:	Don Cabrera, Mayor/Commissioner	present
	Chrissy Casiello, Tourism Commission	present
	Dennis Hall, Tourism Commission	present
	Lester Klayman, Tourism Commission	present
	Bob Patterson, Tourism Commission	present
	Frank Basile, Recreation Supervisor	present
	Brian Cunniff, Asst. Rec Supervisor/TDC secretary	present

A quorum is present.

Approval of presented minutes of last meeting of the TDC was tabled as not enough members had a chance to review.

Brian Cunniff stated that the recreation staff has been busy with beach box reservations for 2022 box holders over the past couple of weeks. Looks like about a 90 to 95 percent retention rate. Registration for Crest residents only will begin Monday at 11 am. Trying our best to accommodate the elderly and the handicapped. Each street will have at least two rentals open. Some may have more.

Dennis Hall asked if the money from beach box rentals goes to the TDC. Mayor Cabrera responded that it goes to the borough's general fund. Dennis asked about how much revenue is brought in. Mayor Cabrera responded that it is expected that about \$240K would come in for 2023, about a penny on the tax rate.

Dennis Hall responded that everyone wins. Chrissy Casiello added that it is a big sum of money coming into the borough. Bob Patterson asked if that revenue covers the water bill for foot showers and the splash pad at Sunrise Park. Brian Cunniff responded that it more than covers those expenses.

Dennis Hall said it's awesome for the borough to offer amenities such as beach boxes, foot showers and the splash pad. Vast improvements to the town that are well worth the money spent. Bob Patterson added that from what he's seen not much water is being used at the foot showers. Mayor Cabrera said these kinds of amenities are needed in a resort town.

Brian Cunniff stated that there is an electrical issue with the new digital signs at the Crest Pier. Should be rectified soon.

Brian Cunniff stated that he joined a Zoom meeting on the possibility of bringing Seward Johnson sculptures to Wildwood Crest. He added that a proposal is forthcoming from the organizers.

Dennis Hall believes that the statues that were placed in Wildwood last year were a great look for the island. Chrissy Casiello added that they were really cool, adds a backdrop for photos.

Brian Cunniff stated that the marine science program will return this summer. Mondays and Fridays at the beach around lunchtime. Also adding Wednesday evenings at the Crest Arts Pavilion.

Mayor Cabrera stated that jitney service will return to the island this summer, but on a limited basis. Coverage Thursday through Sunday. Details to be worked out. GWTIDA, North Wildwood, Wildwood and Wildwood Crest being asked to help subsidize it. Not enough money coming in to keep it going seven days per week. It appears Wildwood Crest will be asked to kick in \$10-15K per season, but final number TBD. The CFO and the rest of the governing body have been informed. We as a community are interested in continuing it. GWTIDA would be main contributor.

Mayor Cabrera stated that the Crest Arts Pavilion is scheduled for a soft opening on Friday, March 24, for the art competition event hosted by the Creative Arts Council. It's been difficult to get the building open. Lots of obstacles. There will be a full-time staff member assigned to Recreation working at the building. That person will help with booking of programs and activities. Still have to finish enclosures of mechanicals, parking lot area and some work inside. Awaiting CAFRA permit that will allow borough to significantly improve ground on the outside – gardens, flowers, other landscaping, statues, bike racks, EV charging stations and more. That work should all occur right after the coming summer ends. Applying to county open space program.

Mayor Cabrera stated that there have been eight reported whale deaths in less than a month and a half. He said he signed off on a letter asking President Biden and the State of New Jersey to pause on the work going on with offshore windmills until a study can be done. The whale deaths may or may not be related to that work. Has turned into a PR thing and has made national news.

Mayor Cabrera stated that he was on a call with the DEP yesterday about the continuous dune across the beaches planned by the Army Corps of Engineers. He said North Wildwood and Wildwood Crest have signed state aid agreements to move forward, Wildwood and Lower Township have yet to do so due to some issues with privately-owned beaches in their municipalities. Mayor Cabrera said he believes the state will eventually move forward with or without and agreements and use eminent domain. As part of this project, the fishing pier at Heather Road could be torn down and built back over the top of the dune. Borough would excavate the back beach to prevent ponding. A bike path south of Rambler could be added near the bulkhead.

Bob Patterson asked if a cut would be left for beach access. Mayor Cabrera stated that there will be no cutouts, will have to go up and over as in North Wildwood. There will be dedicated handicapped access areas. Lester Klayman asked if the new dunes would go where the current dunes are or closer to the ocean. Mayor Cabrera said they'd be a little closer to the ocean. Dunes are capped at a 14-foot grade but obviously will eventually grow.

Chrissy Casiello left the meeting at 4:32 p.m.

Bob Patterson asked what is the pathway to the beach with the new dunes. Mayor Cabrera said it would be compact hard cinder rock most likely, but there are other options.

Lester Klayman asked if trucks and equipment will be able to go over the dunes. Mayor Cabrera said smaller equipment can go over, but that street ends at Rambler, Washington, Heather and Cresse will be constructed differently to allow for access of heavier equipment and trucks.

Mayor Cabrera stated that there is potential for someone else unrelated to DelMoSports to take on the Crest Best Swim Fest and Run Fest. The Run Fest as of this moment is canceled for this year. Borough asked DelMoSports to provide a price for timing, consulting and other work related to the events but the price came in much higher than expected. Lester Klayman commented that it seems DelMoSports simply wasn't interested in doing the event anymore.

Brian Cunniff stated that North Wildwood reached out to see if the Crest was interested in funding the kite festival for this summer. The borough has not received a formal request but is expected to in the near future. Mayor Cabrera stated that he'd rather spend TDC money on things for the Crest.

Bob Patterson announced that GWTIDA director John Siciliano is set to retire at the end of June.

Meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.