

Borough of Wildwood Crest Tourism Commission Meeting

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

Crest Pier Recreation Center

Meeting called to order by Brian Cunniff at 4:05 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
	Dennis Hall, Tourism Commission	not 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.

Beverly Trapp, Director of Events for GWTIDA, is also present.

Lester made a motion to accept the minutes from the last TDC meeting in January 2019. Bob seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

Brian Cunniff reminded the members that financial disclosure forms for 2019 are due to be completed by the end of the month.

Brian Cunniff stated that the 2019 special events brochure is at the printer and that a proof is expected soon.

Brian Cunniff asked the members about the digital advertising proposal sent from Comcast. Bob Patterson said he wasn't impressed with the package. Lester Klayman agreed, stating that we should wait to see how effective the 6ABC campaign is before spending another \$5000 on another campaign. Lester said he thinks the 6ABC campaign will give more back for the buck as well. Bob Patterson agreed that it wouldn't be prudent to spend another \$5000 on similar advertising this year.

Brian Cunniff stated that Wildwood Crest underwent an advertising campaign with nj.com and the Newark Star-Ledger. Was same package that he emailed the members about. The Crest will have a front page ad on the newspaper's Shore Guide scheduled for print on Sunday, April 21, to go along with other online ads with a link to the borough website that will run during the month on nj.com.

Beverly Trapp from GWTIDA was given an opportunity to speak. She informed the members that a few things are in the event funding request pipeline from the Crest for 2019. She mentioned the request for additional money for fireworks over Sunset Lake for the 2019 Seafarers Celebration and that the GWTIDA committee wasn't sure if it wanted to commit to something that large, knowing that this could be a long-term item. Beverly added that the committee wasn't definitely saying no at this time but added that the request would not go through easily. Beverly said each town in the Wildwoods received about \$61-62K for event support and that there was a feeling that that money should be used for such things. Beverly said the GWTIDA committee wanted to know if the fireworks absolutely had to be over Sunset Lake. Mayor Cabrera stated that ideally we'd like the entire Seafarers event to be at Sunset Lake. The event used to be held there in its entirety until problems arose with launching fireworks from the small island located in the lake. Mayor Cabrera stated that he understands the cost issue involved and said the Crest could wait a year to see if fireworks could be moved back to Sunset Lake. He added that he doesn't want GWTIDA or the Crest to wastefully spend money.

Beverly Trapp added that there are a lot of events on the island that weekend and that the GWTIDA committee feels there may not be a need to spend more money. It's already a big weekend with Irish Fest in North Wildwood and the car show in Wildwood.

Beverly Trapp asked if GWTIDA could save that money and put it toward another event. Mayor Cabrera agreed.

Mayor Cabrera stated that the Crest, North Wildwood and Wildwood have had discussions with the state about dredging the channel behind the Wildwoods, which could be benefit to Seafarers fireworks in Sunset Lake in the future by making it easier to navigate a barge into the lake.

On a different note, Beverly Trapp informed the members that North Wildwood and Wildwood have been getting away from the event business as municipalities. She said those towns would rather see events run privately, with the municipality providing support. She said Wildwood Crest is running an awful lot of events on its own. Beverly added that there seems to be a really good balance of events in Wildwood Crest and that the events still maintain and preserve the nice, peaceful atmosphere of the Crest. Beverly told the TDC members that if someone approaches her about an event that might work well in the Crest that should would put that person in the Crest's direction.

Frank Basile stated that we try to welcome people with ideas for events with open arms, such as the Crest Best Run Fest by Delmo Sports. But Frank added that sometimes you have to be careful about people using the municipality to make lots of money on an event that might not necessarily benefit the town.

Brian Cunniff stated that another new event is on the docket for 2019. Powerzone Volleyball is running separate indoor youth volleyball tournaments on two consecutive weeks in May (May 11-12 and 18-19). The organization is using Crest Pier and Lower Cape May Regional High School. Brian stated that his understanding is that about 40 teams are coming each weekend.

Frank Basile added that the Crest has been approached from time to time about beach volleyball tournaments but that the ban on alcohol has prevented those potential events from happening, since the tournaments are often sponsored by beer and/or liquor companies.

Mayor Cabrera stated that the alcohol issue has come forth again. He mentioned that TDC member Dennis Hall asked about the possibility of one-day licenses as a way to attract events a couple of years ago. Mayor Cabrera stated that there has been some traction gained and that the Board of Commissioners is in the process of informing the public about all the possibilities with alcohol should a resident come forth with a petition to take the issue to referendum.

Don reiterated to the members that the borough would be eligible for one consumption license and one carryout license. He said the consumption license would be targeted for New Jersey Avenue to help revitalize the business district. The mayor stated that Cape May County is slated to redo New Jersey Avenue and that the borough wants to work in conjunction with the county to enhance the streetscape in that three- to four-block area. A restaurant with the ability to serve alcohol could be an anchor business that helps boost business in the area. He also added that hotels with 100 sleeping units would also be eligible for a license, which could help hotels draw wedding receptions and other additional events. The mayor stated that he believes that if the Crest is serious about tourism that something more needs to happen in the business district. He wonders how prosperous the business district area would be if alcohol were still permitted to be sold, as was the case prior to 1940. Mayor Cabrera stated that the governing body has asked the various volunteer committees to weigh in on the topic and come up with any questions or concerns. But he also reminded that for an alcohol-related referendum to appear on the ballot at a general election that a resident must come forth with a petition.

Bob Patterson said he doesn't think a package goods store is something the Crest should want. Mayor Cabrera stated that the borough doesn't have to permit one, just simply allow a restaurant to serve it. He added that if the license doesn't happen for the business district that perhaps the site of the old library could turn into a beachfront restaurant with a liquor license. Lester Klayman said a brew pub could even be possible. Lester also added that he feels no one in the Crest wants to see a license go to a bar that would be open into the early hours of the morning.

Mayor Cabrera added that he understands that people will be resistant to change but he feels allowing for the sale of alcohol can be a big economic development piece. He asked why the Crest should allow for this kind of business to go elsewhere. He added that there are many beach towns that allow for alcohol sales that are still very family friendly.

Lester Klayman said there is a need to be progressive. Without it, you'll fall behind.

Mayor Cabrera said the local media have picked up on the story so the word is getting out.

Beverly Trapp asked what the time frame on an alcohol referendum could be. Mayor Cabrera said it could be in time for the general election in November if a petition is brought forth fairly soon. He added that the streetscape project in conjunction with the county is slated for 2021-22. He said that bike paths could be added and that foot traffic could increase if people are interested in going to the downtown business district area. Could also create a longer season.

Mayor Cabrera stated that the work being done at Sunset Lake is almost complete and that everything should be ready within a month or so. The Rambler Road project is also nearly complete – lifeguard boat for photos, better ADA access and two foot shower areas being added. Mayor Cabrera also added that there are plans to add a new playground and fitness equipment to Sunrise Park.

Mayor Cabrera also added the beachfront portion of the bike path has undergone some improvements, with split rail fencing and clamshell surfacing installed on the east side of the path across its entire length. New beach signage is also on its way, along with beach boxes and designated smoking areas.

Frank Basile stated that the Nesbitt Tourism Information Center will open on weekends beginning May 4. Staff will also be distributing recycling tags just like last year. Frank added that 2760 visitors from out of town came through the Nesbitt Center last year.

Mayor Cabrera said he expects more traffic there this year and that the borough plans to sell merchandise there. Start with flags and hats and then maybe move into T-shirts.

Mayor Cabrera asked that a letter be drafted on the TDC's position regarding alcohol sales in the borough no later than May 15.

Meeting adjourned at 5:02 p.m.