

Borough of Wildwood Crest Tourism Commission Meeting

Wednesday, March 13, 2024

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
	Joanna Lacivita, Tourism Commission	present
	Dennis Hall, Tourism Commission	present
	Stephanie Alicea	present
	Frank Basile, Recreation Supervisor	present (entered 4:14 p.m.)
	Brian Cunniff, Asst. Rec Supervisor/TDC secretary	present

A quorum is present.

Also present is Tom Ankrum, who is considering volunteering to fill the open seat on the TDC.

Dennis Hall made a motion to accept the minutes from the February 2024 meeting of the TDC as presented. Stephanie Alicea seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

Brian Cunniff gave an overview of the TDC's duties to Tom Ankrum. Mayor Cabrera discussed how the TDC is funded.

Brian Cunniff asked the members if they had a chance to review the Seward Johnson sculpture suggestions for 2024. Dennis Hall said he had not had a chance to review but is good with whatever is decided. Dennis Hall asked how many sculptures the TDC is considering. Brian Cunniff stated that the TDC had decided on two, both to be placed at the Crest Arts Pavilion. Stephanie Alicea said that she liked the sculpture of the person with the book. Joanna Lacivita added that she liked the sculptures of the lady walking and the person reading. Stephanie Alicea added that she also liked the shaping up sculpture. Stephanie and Joanna agreed that they liked "Summer Thinking" and Shaping Up" the best. Mayor Cabrera commented that he liked those, too. Brian Cunniff stated that he would follow up with the company about securing those sculpture rentals for 2024. Dennis Hall made a motion for the TDC to allocate up to but not to exceed \$7,000 for the rental of two sculptures for 2024. Stephanie Alicea seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

Brian Cunniff stated that the borough will be offering 54 dates of free live music from late May through the end of the September this year, thanks to weekly music scheduled at Centennial Park, the Sunset Lake gazebo and the Crest Arts Pavilion, as well as live music at some one-off special events. Brian gave Tom Ankrum a bit of an overview on how the music is booked. Tom stated that he hears a lot of positive feedback about all of the live music. Dennis added that it's very positive for the community to be able to offer this much live music, especially for free.

Brian Cunniff gave an update on upgrades being performed at the Crest Arts Pavilion (outside perimeter, landscaping) and on upgrades to street-end beach entrances from Myrtle Road to Morning Glory Road (new and wider ramps, foot showers, bike racks, benches).

Mayor Cabrera asked the members what they think is the best way to reach people regarding entertainment and special events. Could we possibly create a separate page on the borough website that lists all the entertainment? Jonna Lacivita suggested a QR code could be created onto rack cards and other literature that takes people to the website. Joanna Lacivita asked about a text service. Mayor Cabrera responded that the borough already subscribes to Nixle but that it is used more for public safety. Mayor Cabrera asked if we could ask Robindale Media if they can create a QR code system for us tied in with email signup. Brian Cunniff said he would follow up on that.

Mayor Cabrera stated the arts pavilion work will include additional parking on both sides of the building. The north side will also have four EV-charging stations, two high speed and two regular speed. Also a bicycle flat fixing station, patio lighting, tables and chairs, entertainment pavilion, fire pits. Venue should be very attractive when finished. Getting some requests for weddings. Ordinance changed a couple of years ago to allow alcohol.

Mayor Cabrera stated that the shade structure at the pickleball/tennis facility will be installed within the next few weeks.

Mayor Cabrera said the organizers of the Run the Crest event on Oct. 5 have added a kids run to go along with the 10-miler and 5K races. Interested to see how good the turnout is for the event.

Mayor Cabrera gave an update on the possible reconstruction and expansion of the fishing pier at Heather Road. He said the borough argued that it is a boardwalk structure and was successfully able to earn an award of \$1.043 million from the state Boardwalk Preservation Fund. He added that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will offer the borough a \$2 million credit to rebuild the pier over the new dune that will be constructed. He added that preliminary indications from county open space are that the borough would be awarded \$2.5 million. Mayor Cabrera said the total cost of the project would be about \$7 million, with \$5.5-6 million covered in grants.

Dennis Hall said it's a shame there might be some pushback on this. Would be great to save pier, rebuild it and extend it. Mayor Cabrera said the borough will not have the opportunity to do so again. Could be a state-of-the-art fishing pier unique to the Wildwoods. Could put some retail out there.

Dennis Hall added that the simply fact that the handicapped can get out over the beach and potentially the water is worth it.

Mayor Cabrera added that a rough rendering of a new pier and video about the pier are on the Special Projects page of the borough website.

Mayor Cabrera said approval to widen and extend the pier has already been granted by the state. He added that for the most part this potential project has been well received. History of the pier is important to a lot of people.

Mayor Cabrera briefly mentioned the Crest Station idea for New Jersey Avenue and added that these things all tie into tourism and that the borough has a tourism-based economy. He added that the borough has to continue to invest in these kinds of amenities.

Mayor Cabrera spoke about the Crest Historical Society and how it is basically defunct. The borough has stored many of the old artifacts. The original thought was that the borough could display many of these at the Crest Arts Pavilion but there isn't enough room and the building has too much of a modern look to house historical items. The thought now is to potentially create a museum-type room at the ambulance corps building on Pacific Avenue next to Crest Memorial School. Staff it seasonally. Could help the school with program on the history of the Crest.

Brian Cunniff asked the members if they felt a full printed brochure was needed for this summer. Brian stated that the recreation department would still do rack cards for entertainment and fitness schedules but that the full brochure was sometimes redundant and sometimes outdated. Dennis Hall said he feels the QR code idea would solve the program. Consensus from the members was to save the money and not print the brochure in 2024.

Meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.