

# **Borough of Wildwood Crest Tourism Commission Meeting**

**Wednesday, October 9, 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
	Joseph Franco, 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.

Dennis Hall made a motion to accept the minutes from the last TDC meeting in September. Lester Klayman seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Brian Cunniff reported that the Seafarers Celebration went very well. Lots of new activities. Crowd good but not as large as some past years due to very warm weather. Many people on beach instead. Evening portion at Centennial Park had one of best crowds ever, however. Bob Patterson added that the fireworks show was excellent.

Brian Cunniff reported that the recreation department is exploring the possibility of securing a barge for 2020 so that the fireworks can be shot from Sunset Lake.

Brian Cunniff reported that the Crest Best Run Fest is this weekend. Races Saturday and Sunday. Brian stated that he has already put out an alert about road closures through the Nixle system.

Brian Cunniff stated that plans are in the works for a holiday tree lighting ceremony along Sunset Lake on Dec. 3. Mayor Cabrera stated that much of the Sunset Lake area will be lit up this year for the holidays.

Brian Cunniff reported that Powerzone Volleyball is looking to return its tournaments to the Crest Pier for the second and third weekends of May 2020. Brian stated that this event brought a lot of youth and high school girls volleyball teams to town.

Brian Cunniff stated that he has already begun the process of booking bands for the 2020 Summer Music Series. Some of the better bands must be booked early because their availability becomes scarce.

Brian Cunniff gave dates for 202 events – Sand Sculpting Festival Friday, July 10; Christmas in July Festival Saturday, July 25; and the 5K Beach Run either Saturday, July 25 or Saturday, August 8.

Mayor Cabrera stated that he will request the borough CFO to provide an end-of-year financial report for the TDC for the next meeting in November.

Mayor Cabrera stated that the Sunset Lake project was complete in late spring/early summer. The Kayak launch was a big hit, with many people using. He added that plans are in place to add a seasonal restroom facility near the Gables Yacht Club.

Mayor Cabrera stated that he recently met with NJDEP about CAFRA permits for certain improvements, including the bike path connection on the beach and at Washington Avenue. This would be tied in with Army Corps of Engineers dune system plan. Don said the plans were received well at the preliminary meeting. Also discussed were street end improvements near the beach entrances – more benches, improved concrete and foot showers. Designs would be similar to what was put in place at Rambler Road for this summer.

Mayor Cabrera stated that NJDEP seemed to like all the ideas and had no issues.

Mayor Cabrera stated that there has been a committee formed to discuss the future of the beach pier. Committee includes Steve DelMonte, Jamie Peterson and Jason Hesley. Trying to create a vision for the pier, which gets used a lot. The renovation is going on 10 years old. The new dune placed by Army Corps will be higher than the pier. Mayor Cabrera stated that the state and county have given verbal commitments to support making the pier wider and extending the pier an additional 500 to 1,000 feet so it again reaches the ocean. Mayor Cabrera feels the pier is iconic now but will become even more so if this can be done. He added that a rendering of the proposed renovations is available on the Special Projects page of the borough website.

Mayor Cabrera discussed improvements coming to Sunrise Park at Rambler Road. There is already a playground there. Have pitched county open space program about adding another playground area and possibly children's water play area. No shore community has something like this. Could be in place prior to next summer. Mayor Cabrera stated that parking could be added at the Sunrise Park site as well, which would help for concert parking at Centennial Park.

Mayor Cabrera stated he had a meeting yesterday with Wildwood and North Wildwood to discuss the Roar at the Shore motorcycle event held the weekend after Labor Day. Seems to be a hot topic right now in Wildwood. He added that there doesn't seem to be many issues in the Crest but Wildwood is affected. There seems to be a "gang" element at recent rallies and that is the big concern. There is discussion on whether to keep or eliminate the event. In the fact-finding stage now. Will be discussed further after the upcoming Wildwood election.

Bob Patterson stated that he feels the event has run its course. Mayor Cabrera added that there are a lot of people who still feel it's a good event. Bob Patterson said a lot of the Harley people aren't involved anymore. Dennis Hall, Joe Franco and Lester Klayman also acknowledged some of the concerns surrounding the event.

Bob Patterson added that there are other events that could be held that weekend instead. He didn't like how much police were involved. Doesn't bode well for the town's image.

Brian Cunniff stated he wonders how much other tourism activity is driven away by this event.

Dennis Hall added that the Wildwoods make a lot of efforts to attract people and that if there is one violent incident it could lead to a lot of damage for the town's image.

Don Cabrera asked the members their thoughts. Joe Franco said he feels it's time for it to end. When lots of police are out with guns out it's not a good image. He added that, yes, there is a lot of revenue that comes from it but if there's a bad incident the town could lose so much more. Dennis Hall and Lester Klayman concurred. Bob Patterson said it could be brought back in the future if cleaned up. Lester Klayman wondered if moving the event to a different time of year would make a difference. He added that the month of May could use additional events.

Bob Patterson said he was amazed at the crowds for the recent Race of Gentlemen event.

Brian Cunniff informed the members that the borough won a beautification award from the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce for the work at Sunset Lake.

Bob Patterson asked how the replica boat at Rambler Road held up all summer. He asked if there was damage. Mayor Cabrera said it did hold up very well for the entire season.

Mayor Cabrera added that new beach signs should be in place for next summer. The JIF came out with new regulations that use universal symbols for beach signage. Signs will be discussed at commission level before being ordered. New signs will replace having too many signs.

Mayor Cabrera also stated there has been more discussion at the commission level about what to do regarding smoking on the beach – designated areas or ban altogether.

Bob Patterson asked when county will start with New Jersey Avenue reconstruction. Mayor Cabrera stated that the project is in the design stages on infrastructure. Renderings for downtown/Crest Station area not yet available online but will be soon. Mayor Cabrera feels the NJ Ave business district will look very nice. Two-lane road with north and south bike lanes. Streetscapes to include historical artifacts relating to the Crest. Sidewalks to have stamped railroad design to bring back history.

Mayor Cabrera added that he sees that area for the potential liquor license for a restaurant if the matter ever goes to referendum and passes. That would also give certain hotels the ability to serve, have catering permits, etc.

Dennis Hall believes adding one liquor license would be beneficial to town. Opens up tourism opportunities. Mayor Cabrera said he believes we're sending business elsewhere by not having alcohol available. He added he wants to make sure residents have the right information on the matter.

David Mears, a new seasonal resident from 245 E Topeka Avenue, asked Mayor Cabrera if the borough had interest in establishing beach tags. Mayor Cabrera answered that there is no movement toward that at this time. He said the issue gets brought up every once in a while by a resident at a borough commission meeting. Mayor Cabrera added that, in his opinion, the entire island would have to go to a beach tag system, not just one of the three towns. He added that the Crest has 42 beach entrances and we would need at least 60 to 70 seasonal employees to run a beach tag program. May not be practical. He feels the beach is our No. 1 amenity and it is good for the Crest that it is free. He added that that is his position as an elected official, taxpayer and business owner.

Meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.