

# Borough of Wildwood Crest Tourism Commission Meeting

Wednesday, September 9, 2020

Crest Pier Recreation Center

Meeting called to order by Brian Cunniff at 4 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	not present
	Joseph Franco, Tourism Commission	present
	Dennis Hall, Tourism Commission	present
	Lester Klayman, Tourism Commission	present
	Bob Patterson, Tourism Commission	not present
	Frank Basile, Recreation Supervisor	present
	Brian Cunniff, Asst. Rec Supervisor/TDC secretary	present

A quorum is present.

Brian Cunniff updated the members on the marketing campaign by Robindale Consulting on behalf of the borough. Idea was to promote website and social media pages. Campaign seemed to be a success.

Brian Cunniff informed the members that the borough added a webcam that shows views of the beach from the roof of WCBP headquarters about a month ago. The webcam has already had more than 53,000 views and has been well received. The webcam is angled in such a way that viewers can see the sunrise at most times of the year.

Brian added that in addition to the webcam views, the number of followers on the borough's social media pages continues to rise. The Facebook page has more than 14,000 followers, Instagram has more than 7,900 followers and Twitter has about 2,000 followers. Instagram followers have increased significantly over the past couple of months in conjunction with the recreation department making an increased effort to post to that platform more regularly.

Brian Cunniff stated that all live music at Centennial Park and the Christmas In July event were all canceled due to the governor's executive orders limiting the size of outdoor gatherings because of the pandemic. However, the borough made a strong effort to hold as many events as possible. The Sand Sculpting Festival, 5K Beach Run and Monday evening Sunset Celebrations were all held without problems. Attendance and participation were down a bit for sand sculpting and the 5K run, which was to be expected, but attendance for the Sunset Celebrations was up as many more people than ever were taking advantage of Sunset Lake Park to view the sunsets and that the Sunset Lake kayak launch area has

become extremely popular. The borough also added live music on Thursdays at the Sunset Lake gazebo, mostly solo and duo acts. Brian said the Monday and Thursday music usually drew anywhere from 100 to 150 people, with those attending practicing safe social distancing. Brian added that live music has been added to the Sunset Lake gazebo on Friday and Saturday evenings for the final three weekends of September.

Brian Cunniff stated that the Pier Playmates Day Camp was not held but that it was replaced with the Outdoor Explorers Camp. About 80 percent of the activities were held outdoors. The Outdoor Explorers Camp drew about one-third of what we normally draw for Pier Playmates, which worked out well. Brian stated that the camp did not experience any problems related to COVID-19 due to a variety of safety measures put in place.

Brian Cunniff stated that Wildwood Crest merchandise was sold by the recreation department four times per week throughout the summer. Merchandise will continue to be sold at Sunset Lake during the live music events in September and will eventually be sold out of the recreation center in the fall through the Christmas buying season. Frank Basile stated that the merchandise sales have been very successful, with some items selling better than others.

Brian Cunniff stated that the beach box rental program went extremely well. Boxes sold out within a couple days after going on sale. Only hiccup was the closedown of DEPTCOR, which forced the borough to contract with the local carpenters union to build the final 46 boxes. Boxes were placed on the beach and made available to renters two weeks after Memorial Day weekend because of the DEPTCOR shutdown. Box renters have until Sept. 27 to get their belongings out of the boxes before Crest DPW winterizes them. There were 100 boxes, with two doors to each box, for 200 rentals. Rentals were \$400 each. Each box cost about \$1350 to build, so in theory the program will be a money maker for the borough by next summer. Brian added that the borough administrator has asked DEPTCOR to fulfill the initial order by making 46 boxes over this coming offseason to add 92 more rentals for next summer to meet demand. Frank Basile added that there is an idea to possibly add boxes made to store surfboards that could be placed at the Crest's two surfing beaches.

Brian Cunniff stated that the Crest Best Run Fest scheduled for Columbus Day weekend is down to a one-day event that will have limited numbers due to the governor's orders on the size of outdoor gatherings.

Brian Cunniff informed the members that renovations will soon be taking place on Higbee Field in the wake of damage done to one of the dugouts and the press box by Tropical Storm Isaias. Could be a tiered plan to renovate both fields over the course of a couple years to make the facilities attractive for tournaments that could bolster tourism, particularly during the spring and fall shoulder seasons.

Lester Klayman asked if the borough received money back on deposits given to bands for the summer concerts. Brian Cunniff said that the borough does not give the bands deposits and that no contracts were signed, so there was no loss of money in that regard.

Lester Klayman asked if beach boxes were open to all or just Crest residents and if box renters could sublet them out. Brian Cunniff stated that the rentals were available to anyone and that subletting was prohibited as per the terms of the agreement.

Dennis Hall commented that the beach box rental program seems to be a very good addition to the Crest.

Joe Franco asked if the possible future addition of beach tags would change demand for beach box rentals. Brian Cunniff answered that, while it's possible, he feels it's unlikely because most of the beach box renters are frequent users of the beach who would most likely purchase beach tags if they became required.

Joe Franco asked if there was any new information on the proposal to extend the fishing pier at Heather Road. Brian Cunniff stated that he had not heard anything new but would follow up.

Meeting adjourned at 4:57 p.m.