

Borough of Wildwood Crest Tourism Commission Meeting

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

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
	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 as presented from the last TDC meeting in May and the special TDC meeting in July. Joe Franco seconded the motion. Motion approved unanimously.

Brian Cunniff gave an overview of summer special events.

Sand sculpting on Friday 7/9 was a big success. Interest seems to be greater now that the event is on a Friday instead of a Saturday. Plans are to keep it on a Friday for 2022.

Christmas in July on 7/24 was huge. Great weather, not too hot. Crowds nearly the size of Seafarers. May need to add another activity and definitely add another food vendor. Boat parade had more than 35 boats. 5K beach race was another good event. Numbers were up from last year, around the same as before pandemic.

Weekly live music at Centennial Park and Sunset Lake saw weather issues. Lot of cancellations this summer. Nine shows at Centennial Park canceled or shortened due to rain. Same for four others at Sunset Lake. Bob Patterson commented that he really enjoyed the Thursday evening music at Sunset Lake. Great setting for it.

Brian Cunniff stated that, in response to the request made at the special TDC meeting in early July, the borough had contracted with a company called Paralux, through Robindale Media, to shoot photos and videos over multiple days of events and activities. Provide a day in the life look at Wildwood Crest. Media can be used to promote many things for the borough. Also up for us to decide how to use for further marketing purposes.

Brian Cunniff stated that the beach box rental program went well this summer. There are now 385 boxes, more than doubling the borough's inventory from last year. DPW did a good job setting up the boxes and making any necessary repairs early in the summer. Boxes are available for use through Sunday 9/26. Already getting emails and calls about additional people looking to rent for next year.

Brian Cunniff called the new Marine Science program a great success. Was run by Danielle DeJesse and was held every Monday from 11 am to 1 pm from mid June through the end of August. Dozens of kids and parents at each presentation. Danielle also set up her display on some Mondays at Sunset Lake for the Sunset Celebration. Danielle is interested in running the program an additional day next summer if possible.

Brian Cunniff stated that Phase I of the work being done to the Little League Field was complete in late June. New dugout and snack stand were installed on first base side. Phase II of the project is set to begin sometime soon. Work includes new dugout on third base side, new press box and restrooms and new battling cages. Work should all be complete well in advance of next spring's season.

Mayor Cabrera stated that Phase I of the work at Scoop Taylor Park playground was supposed to be complete in mid July but the equipment did not match the size of the lot. The contractor had to put in more concrete, then ran put of surfacing pads. Pads come from overseas and just got here. Work is being done to complete that this week. Playground remains closed until that work is finished. Phase II, which will start soon ,includes the removal of the trees and replacement with lower-rise trees and other landscaping, the addition of a shade structure and new electric. Most of the money came from a DCA ADA grant.

Mayor Cabrera stated that there is thought to moving the food truck festivals held at Sunset Lake to the oceanfront. Complaints have come in from residents in that area that the events are too large and about the street closures and detours. Possibly move those events to Centennial Park or Sunrise Park for next year.

Mayor Cabrera stated that work on the old library building is going out to bid to renovate the inside and outside of the building, as well as the grounds. Operations at the Nesbitt Center would eventually go there. Will have welcome area, museum area, meeting space, retail space with some kid of coffee shop perhaps. The outside could open up to an area for weddings and other events. Also an environmental feel to it. Love Blue program could operate out of the building. Green Team also involved. Mayor Cabrera added that the sheds behind the beach patrol building have been moved due to correspondence from the state DEP. The Nesbitt Center then may be turned into more storage space for the beach patrol once tourism operations are moved to the old library building.

Mayor Cabrera stated that the bocce courts that go virtually unused will be removed from the tennis court area at Wisteria and Ocean. A shade structure and benches/seating areas will be placed in that area. This could help make the facility more attractive for tennis/pickleball tournaments. He added that a pickleball court or two may be added to the Washington Avenue tennis courts.

Mayor Cabrera said the TDC fund has a good balance in it, due to not using much of the funds from last year due to the pandemic. He added that he has asked the CFO to provide a financial update for the next TDC meeting in October.

Mayor Cabrera stated that the new splash pad at Sunrise Park has quickly become one of the borough's top tourist attractions. The splash pad will remain open daily through 9/26.

Brian Cunniff stated that borough merchandise sales have gone well again this summer. Merchandise was for sale at each live music event on Saturdays, each Sunset Celebration on Mondays, at the Christmas in July event, at the three food truck events and at occasional Saturday morning sales. Brian added that he believes a building is needed so that sale opportunities are more consistent and that allowing credit card purchases would be a major boost to sales. Dennis Hall added that accepting credit cards would help tremendously. Frank Basile disagrees. He believes cash is better and that not accepting credit cards did not hurt sales significantly.

Dennis Hall stated that he has friends who can't say enough good things about the Monday Sunset Celebrations at Sunset Lake. He said they also love the spray pad at Sunrise Park but would like it open earlier than 10 am each day. Frank Basile stated that it doesn't open until 10 am due to maintenance and how busy the bike path is in the early morning. Mayor Cabrera also stated that it gives neighbors in the area some quiet time before the park starts buzzing at 10 am. Mayor Cabrera stated that more fencing is due to go up at Sunrise Park but there has been a long delay in getting the equipment in from overseas.

Lester Klayman asked about how many more beach boxes the borough is considering adding for next year. Brian Cunniff stated that no discussions on this have been held outside the recreation department just yet, but at this time our suggestion is to maybe just add one box (two rentals) at each street for 2022. The heavy lift is done, now it's just adding a few here and there to further meet demand. Maybe add an extra box at some of the more in-demand streets.

Lester Klayman asked if there would be a point where there would be too many boxes on the beach. Brian Cunniff stated that's the balance we're battling with – trying to meet demand without cluttering the beach with too many boxes.

Lester Klayman also asked about plans to possibly add storage boxes for surf boards. Brian Cunniff stated that Nick Holland of the recreation department has been working on this but at this time we can't seem to find a design that works. He will continue to correspond with the company about this over the winter.

Dennis Hall brought up the additional surfing beach that was added a couple of hours per day near the Hollywood beach. He understands it was controversial but that it seems great for the kids. He thinks we need to find a balance and let people have fun, especially kids. Mayor Cabrera stated that the beach patrol chief asked to start this additional surfing beach by some residents and visitors so the beach patrol designated it as a surfing-only beach from 10 am to 12 noon each day. Joe Franco thinks it is a great idea. Bob Patterson added that since it's only two hours each day he doesn't see a problem with this.

Joe Franco brought up the Create in the Crest arts festival that was proposed before the pandemic hit. He said the group is looking at Father's Day for 2022 but now wonders if that date is good now that the country music festival will be that same weekend in Wildwood. Mayor Cabrera, Frank Basile and Brian Cunniff each stated that Father's Day weekend could still be the best time to hold this event.

Meeting adjourned at 5:01 p.m.