



OTTDA Meeting Minutes
March 6, 2019
11:00 a.m.
Ocracoke Community Center

Present: Helena Stevens, Jeffrey Dippold, Martha Garrish, Greg Honeycutt, Amy Howard

Note: There is a board vacancy. Wayne Clark resigned from the OTTDA board in January 2019.

Start Time: 11:05am

Daphne Bennink joined 11:15am

1. Review and vote on past minutes
 - a. Daphne's last name is misspelled
 - b. Edit the phrase "working in the rears" on page 2
 - c. On page 3 in 2nd bullet, edit the phrase "Daphne said to subcontract out plumber". The new phrase reads "The plumbing job needs to be subcontracted out to a third party. It is not within the responsibilities of the restrooms contractor."
 - d. The minutes are accepted with the changes added.
 - e. A motion was made by Martha Garrish to accept the minutes with the above changes and was seconded by Greg Honeycutt. Motion carried.

2. Follow up on old business
 - a. The OTTDA Board asked Tom Pahl if a new board member has been decided on, to replace Wayne Clark. Tom shared that he has spoken with seven people and that the replacement needs to be a hotel owner/operator. He is speaking with an owner/operator of a hotel/motel, but this person has not fully committed. A OTTDA board member suggested a representative from Blue Heron Realty because they also collect occupancy tax. Whether the person comes from a realty office such as Blue Heron or a hotel/motel, the legislation requires a member from a lodging establishment.

3. New Business
 - a. Executive Director's Report – See Report Attached
 - i. Helena is working with Element Advertising.
 - ii. OCBA is moving into a new visitor's center location today (3/4/19). Jason Daniels is working on new signage for the Visitor Center and in front of Community Square. OCBA is not quite fully moving in to the new location (formerly Trixie's Fineries) because construction needs to take place on the building to address split piling, causing the building to tilt at an angle. At this time, a table with chairs and rack card displays will be added. The construction on the building's foundation is part of a grant request so it is in

the works to get fixed. Scott is receiving estimates from construction crews. The project should not take too much time to do. Overall, it will be a nice space.

- iii. The 2019 walking map and directory came out last week. 127,000 pieces were printed. Helena is working with Coastal Impressions to get them all to Ocracoke. Currently, they are stored in her garage as the weight of the boxes may not be good for the new office location. A portion of the maps ship from Coastal Impressions to off island locations (ex. Visitors centers). Is it possible to get an app version as asked by one of the OTTDA board members? Yes, it is a project that needs to be researched. Helena and Phoebe are distributing the maps now to island contributors. They are also being distributed to Dare County hotels and businesses.
- iv. Helena is working on grant requests to Occupancy and OTTDA, as well as insurance policies.
- v. Helena is working with Element Advertising on new content for the web site and newsletters.
- vi. GrowthZone, which is the widget database that feeds into VisitOcracokeNC, recently upgraded to a new version. Helena is working on resizing and uploading businesses' images.
- vii. Outer Banks This Week – Helena is working with the writer on a piece specific to Ocracoke. It is about 10 reasons to visit Ocracoke.
- viii. VisitNC – Helena is working on updating Ocracoke information.
- ix. Emma John is a UK journalist coming to Ocracoke March 6-9. Helena is coordinating with VisitNC and local businesses to accommodate her trip on the island.
- x. The VisitNC365 conference is at the end of March/beginning of April. Helena is working on a new pitch sheet that will highlight Ocracoke offerings.
- xi. Social media management – ongoing. Informative and interesting pictures to engage visitor interest.
- xii. Helena and Jason Daniels are working on new signage around the island. This includes the Visitors Center sign at the community square, Welcome to Ocracoke sign at the ditch in front of the NCCAT building, and possibly Welcome to Ocracoke sign in front of the village on Hwy 12 coming into the village. The last sign is contingent on some variables. An example of the sign is in the Executive Director's report. The OTTDA Board suggested adding the VisitOcracokeNC logo for consistent branding. OTTDA requested an example mockup with the VisitOcracokeNC logo added. Helena is also at the tail end of getting dimensions and signage of large walking maps that will be displayed at the passenger ferry waiting areas. Coastal Impressions is handling the printing and Jason is putting together the mockup. Because the map is so condensed, it needs to be on the larger size. Helena will share mockup with OTTDA.
- xiii. Video Project – late spring/early summer. Chris Hannant from Nags Head is the photographer/videographer. He will build photo database and video shorts. These videos can be used for publications. He is providing enough inventory to last a whole year.

- xiv. Event management – Helena is currently working on funding requests and the civic meetings, as well as speaking engagements such as Martin Brossman. Upcoming events that OCBA is part of include the Island-Wide Yard Sale, British Cemetery Ceremony and July 4th. Non-OCBA events are also incorporated into social media (ex. Waterfowl festival).
- b. 2018/2019 OTTDA budget
 - i. Amy calculated the budget for 17 months. The Board agreed it would rather err on side of having less than more as far as funds.
 - ii. The total income for one and half years is \$393,792.79 (Jan. 2018- June 2019). To date, OTTDA has spent \$251,633 (between OCBA, OPS, and Professional Fees). The Board has also committed just over \$90,000 in expenditures to OCBA and OPS. There are also miscellaneous expenses such as conferences, etc. Between the past expenses and predicated expenses, it leaves OTTDA a total of \$351,968.48 to keep available. The county recommended keeping a \$10,000 reserve. Just under \$42,000 have not been spent.
 - iii. For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, OCBA requested a total of \$311,335, reflecting a difference of \$60,000 from last year’s request. \$40,000 is dedicated to public restrooms so it is really \$20,000 more than last year in requests.
 - iv. Total estimated income for 1 year is \$336,531. OCBA requested \$311,335, and \$20,000 is dedicated to public restroom property use. Total requested for 2019-2020 is \$331,335, which is more funds than what is available.
 - v. OTTDA feels confident in using the quantity of \$336,531 for projected income. There is just over \$42,000 currently. Board would prefer to lean conservatively as far as budget, meaning it will use \$336,000 and not use any of the funds in the reserve.
 - vi. Professional fees include items such as lawyers, audits, design. In the last fiscal budget, \$15,000 was allocated to these expenses since there were a lot of first-time expenses being that OTTDA was a new organization. For the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the Board is proposing allocating \$10,000 for this line item. Of the \$10,000 budget, \$3,000 will be used for the audit this year.
 - vii. The Board committed \$20,000 last year for the Island Inn. The request for 2019-2020 is \$20,000 again with the expectation being that this amount will be requested each year. Based on conversations, money from OTTDA will go to restoration portion of the project. OTTDA can expect a formal request from an OPS board member or Ken DeBarth at the next meeting.
 - viii. For requests moving forward, requests need to be written and with an update on the project if funds have been requested previously (ex. Island Inn project). Everything is still set on schedule unless contractor’s schedule is backed up. The septic system will be put in after building is built. Construction is fully funded. The \$40,000 in OCBA budget is part of maintenance and paying contractor for upkeep. The full \$40,000 is included because restrooms are supposed to be fully running through entire fiscal year.
 - ix. Two thirds of the OTTDA budget is supposed to be dedicated to marketing. More than two thirds is being used for marketing. Money should be spent for events and tourists’ enhancements. The Board also recognizes that there is a

need for professionalism to oversee these events and dedicate to marketing. OTTDA would appreciate quantifying statistics to prove if Element Advertising is working as far as getting more people to the island. Element is a 50% mandated investment for tourism and promotion. OTTDA board member asked if they can expect a \$125,000 request for Element Advertising each year? The answer is it's a choice. OTTDA can grant less funds and OCBA will use the funds for different or less advertising. Another possibility for judging whether Element's marketing is effective or not is looking into the sales tax and occupancy numbers. Sales tax numbers may not be a 100% proving statistic because the sales tax number that comes from the state to the county is for the entire county, rather than split between Ocracoke and mainland. Corrinne has requested they be separated in the past, but the state rejected this request. Corrinne is able to send recent years' sales tax to OTTDA because it still should show a trend if the majority of sales tax comes from Ocracoke rather than the mainland. Tom cautioned to not count mainland short because they have sales from agriculture products. Helena has also approached lodging owners to submit their lodging numbers to a third party. She has not received much feedback from the owners about participating. In order to create the lodging reports and see if occupancy numbers are increasing, the firm needs at least 6 lodging establishments to participate. Helena can also send ferry ridership information to measure riders. Advertising is necessary because even if people come via word of mouth, advertising is needed to keep Ocracoke in their mind. It seems like the island is almost at full capacity in the summer time, but there's an opportunity to bring more people in during the shoulder season time. Going along shoulder season and weather, the ferry division needs to be updated with Ocracoke information. The ferry staff can enhance or lesson a visitor's first-time experience to the island. Ocracoke should invest into ensuring visitors have enjoyable experience. For example, make sure ferry staff is updated so that they can educate and be a valuable resource for riders.

- c. 2018/2019 OCBA budget discussion and decision
 - i. \$34,000 dedicated last year to tourism/events. Out of the \$34,000 from last year, \$20,000 was dedicated to Island Inn. OTTDA decided to increase the portion of the budget decided to events to \$50,000.
 - ii. With the reduced funds, OTTDA would grant OCBA \$293,928. It is still \$20,000 over what OTTDA Board planned to allocate.
 - iii. Advertising – until last year OCBA used the funds from contributors to pay the walking map. Last year the OCBA Board requested for the \$15,000 from occupancy. This year it was requested from OTTDA.
 - iv. \$5,000 was also reduced for the restrooms project. It is not a hard number. There is also the funds in the CD in case the project money costs more. The OTTDA Board requested an actual budget that made up the \$40,000. Tom has the breakdown for the \$40,000. The restrooms project needs to be kept as a separate line item. The OTTDA Board decided to decrease total funds granted to OCBA. OCBA can then decide how to spend the funds. OCBA will submit a new line-item budget to OTTDA for approval. Restroom is separate

with the OTTDA setting aside \$35,000 for that project specifically. There are additional funds in case restrooms project needs more funding. The board is voting to allocate \$294,000 to OCBA.

- v. The OTTDA Board made a motion to budget the following for 2019-2020 out of \$336,000 budget:
 - 1. Professional fees: \$10,000
 - 2. Tourism related expenditures \$32,000
 - 3. OCBA budget: \$294,000
 - 4. Daphne motioned. Greg seconded. The motion carried.
- d. 2018/2019 contract agreement between OTTDA and OCBA
 - i. Runs through the end of the fiscal year.
- e. Schedule 2019 meeting dates
 - i. Review OCBA line-item budget and vote to approve. Needs to be after Occupancy Board meeting.
 - ii. Next meeting is scheduled Tuesday, April 30, 2019 at 11:30am at Community Center. Phoebe will reserve location from Rebecca Trejo.

Motion to Adjourn: Martha Seconded: Daphne Motion carried.

Officially Adjourned: 12:55pm