

Transportation Task Force

Minutes of the meeting on May 13, 2004, Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce

Present: Cheryl Byrd (Dare County Commissioner, Transportation Advisory Board Chairwoman), Kevin Schwartz, (Association of REALTORS[®]), Jody Crosswhite (Chamber of Commerce), Norma Mills, Dare County Attorney; Chuck Poe, Outer Banks Community Development Corp.; Anna Sadler (Nags Head Commissioner); Carl Classen, Southern Shores Town Manager; Chris Layton, Duck Town Manager; Sue Cotellessa, Duck Planning Director; Lori London, Outer Banks Vacation Realty (Association of REALTORS[®]); John Bone, Chamber President; Ray Davis, Kill Devil Hills Police Chief; Ralph Buxton, Kitty Hawk Sports; Sandy Semans, Outer Banks Sentinel.

Called to order at 9:05 by Chairman J. Crosswhite.

1. Set June 10, 9 a.m. at Chamber office for next meeting
2. Approval of minutes -- Approved as submitted.
3. Visitor Education project

K. Schwartz reported on the results of the property manager traffic survey. Of 32 member management companies, 14 completed surveys showing that 65 percent of check ins occur on Saturday with 35 percent on Sunday. The average trip time is 6.1 hours, and, combined with arrival time data, suggests that the very worst inbound traffic balloons between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Saturdays. The survey also revealed that companies put a tremendous number of vehicles on the road on the weekends for house cleaning and maintenance. The 14 surveyed companies account for 1,007 vehicles each weekend from S. Nags Head through Corolla. Extrapolated to the rest of the members, that means nearly 2,500 vehicles, and average of 71 per company.

K. Schwartz reported that the DOT has responded more in depth on the question of whether a visitor education program to try and get tourists to bring fewer cars on their vacations could be successful. DOT planning engineers concluded that reducing inbound vehicles by 10 percent on Saturdays in the season, or 5,000-6,000 cars, on US 158 from Barco to Kitty Hawk would not make a noticeable difference in someone's trip. DOT is working on what percentage reduction would make a difference. C. Classen noted that even a mid-Currituck bridge that would redirect 40 percent of the traffic load would only loosen things up. There was a general discussion on flexible vacation dates and check ins and other property management issues. It was consensus that the education program should go forward regardless of the number of cars it may reduce with emphasis on getting some creative work done now with the help of the Visitors Bureau.

4. Possible Transportation Symposium

K. Schwartz reported on a meeting he and N. Mills had with J. Bone to gather information on producing such an event modeled after the affordable housing symposium the Chamber sponsored in 2001. Discussion led to consensus that such an event would be a positive step in raising awareness of the issue and bringing ideas and possible solutions to the table. It was also agreed that getting one done in 2004 was probably not feasible, and that much more

data needed to be collected. J. Bone noted that it took 20 people about six months meeting weekly to pull off the affordable housing event.

5. Transportation Study

N. Mills reported that the N.C. State University Center for Transportation and Environment has agreed to assist the task force in gathering the transportation data it is seeking through an ag extension Gateway program. There will be a cost, perhaps as much as \$10,000, and the scope and focus of a project have to be determined. J. Bone notes that the right study can be half of the job of getting to a symposium. It was also agreed that DOT statistical and planning resources should be tapped and C. Classen said he would get in touch with DOT.

6. Funding Sources

A discussion of potential sources of funding for the activities of the TTF were discussed and included the Tourism Board, OB Community Foundation and CDC resources through staff.

7. Adjournment

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned with the next meeting scheduled for 9 a.m. on June 10.