

Outer Banks Transportation Task Force

Minutes of the meeting on Oct. 28, 2004, Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce

Members present: Carl Classen, Buck Thornton, Ralph Buxton, Nancy Bellantine, Lori London, Cheryl Byrd, Kevin Schwartz, Jody Crosswhite. County staff: Norma Mills, Jeff Aitell, Outer Banks CDC.

Called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chairman J. Crosswhite.

1. The minutes of the Sept. 9 meeting were approved.
2. Discussion of DOT grant – J. Crosswhite updated the task force on discussions with DOT and ITRE on obtaining the 90/10 grant from DOT to fund the ITRE project. That decision was to be made by DOT on Nov. 4. A Nov. 4 approval would mean ITRE could get to work on the project immediately after all the signatures were in place, as the open contract they already had with DOT would help move things along. Jud Lawrie of ITRE was already getting the project authorization paperwork going in anticipation of a positive DOT decision. N. Mills noted that the 90 percent of the DOT portion would come from federal grant money.
3. Visitor education project – The task force discussed what it would take to get the “bring fewer cars” project back on track. C. Classen noted the concern about such a program sending a negative message to tourists and the task force agreed that tourism board coordination was needed. N. Mills noted that there might be third party opportunities, such as through AAA, to get the message across so that it would not look like Dare was saying leave cars at home. L. London said that the message needed to go on property management and other Web sites to be effective as that would be where tourists would check for updates in advance of their planned trips. It was also noted that such a campaign should stress environmental benefits, gas conservation/cost.
4. Open discussion – There was a discussion of visitor check-in days and the possible moving of some percentage of check-ins to Fridays to lessen arrival congestion and what challenges and benefits that would bring. L. London said that visitors do mention the traffic, but it was unclear if the area was losing business because of it. There was a general discussion of travel trends. R. Buxton discussed that trolleys or jitneys should be a major focus of the ITRE project.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30.

2. Discussion of some specific traffic remedies – B. Thornton described some things that could be done to relieve congestion on NC 12 north, including lane reversals during high check-in and check-out times; surveying the many curb cuts in Duck and then eliminating some of them; raising the speed limit in N. Duck to 45 mph and using new speed limit signs noting the need to maintain 45; and staggering rental days. K. Schwartz said the rental industry would take a serious look at expanding Friday and Sunday check-ins.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 with no future meeting date set at the time.