

Kent Narrows Development Foundation
Board of Directors Meeting
June 23, 2020
For Board Approval

Board Members in attendance

Mike Foster
Victoria Hoffman
Justin Kiernan
Joe Pomerantz
Butch Pearson
Jody Schulz
Jeff Smith
Walt Thompson
Judy Wink
Pat Worns

Absent with notice

Jerry Dammeyer
Jason Ruth
Sheryl Jaros

Commissioner Liaison

Phil Dumenil, KNDF Liaison

Guests:

Linda Friday, QAC Chamber of Commerce
Marc Lacoste, Best Western (via Zoom)

Queen Anne's County Staff

Steve Chandlee, Director, QAC Parks & Recreation
Nancy Scozzari, QAC Parks & Recreation
Heather Tinelli, Director, QAC Economic and Tourism Development

Call to Order

The meeting was held in person and via Zoom call.
With a quorum of directors in attendance, the regular meeting of the Kent Narrows Development Foundation commenced at 9:06 a.m.

Public Comment

Linda Friday thanked the businesses at the Kent Narrows for all they have done to support the community through the COVID crisis.

RESOLUTION

Jeff Smith made a motion to accept the Minutes from the May 26, 2020, regular meeting of the KNDF. The Board unanimously approved. (Meetings in March and April were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.)

Financial Report

Victoria Hoffman reported on the finances:

Checking Accounts

The Queenstown Bank checking account was closed in June and the remaining fund from that account were transferred to the new checking account at Shore United Bank. The balance in the Queenstown Bank account according to the 5/31/19 statement was \$571.80. The current balance in Shore United Bank is \$11,583.25, as of 5/31/20. That includes \$10,000 from the PPP program.

Kent Narrows 570 Fund

The balance in the KNDF 570 fund as of 5/15/20 is: \$198,772. 84. In FY 19 the special taxing district collected \$41,603 by June 30. In FY 20 the collections appear to be less than the previous year. The KNDF will request a more detailed breakdown, showing collections by property, so it can be reviewed to ensure that all eligible properties are paying into the 570 fund. An effort will be made to coordinate this with Jonathan Seeman’s office.

Chesapeake Charities

The balance is \$9493.48 according to the March 31 quarterly statement. The need for this fund will be reviewed.

A discussion with Mid-Shore Community Fund will occur when feasible.

Other Financial Matters:

An effort also will be made to track and report on the Amenities Fund that was established by the Planning Commission.

Gigi mentioned that overall, an effort will be made to define how the new revenues will be earmarked, accounted for, and reported on.

The process of requesting forgiveness on the PPP program will begin when Shore United prompts the Foundation to do so.

A request will be detailed in a letter to Jonathan Seeman and coordinated with Accounting Strategies Group so the financial statements can be updated accordingly.

The KNDF QuickBooks data and other key information was transferred to ASG.

Accommodation Tax Monitoring:

The Board suggested that the Economic Development and Tourism Office coordinate with the finance office and regularly report on the public accommodations tax revenue by month and by area. It would be helpful to have the consolidated revenue from the Kent Narrows hotels reported

to the Foundation on an ongoing basis with year-to-year comparisons over the last 4-5 years. Heather is working on that.

Parks and Recreation/Public Landings

Director Steve Chandlee reported on completed projects. The Kent Island South Trail and Cross Island Trail were both repaved. Maintenance and tree work along the trail also are underway.

There has been a significant increase in use of the public landings and the parks and trails, causing overcrowding and other problems. These issues are being addressed.

The Kent Island Beach Cleanup is scheduled for Terrapin Park later in the month. The Corsica River dredging project is underway.

The Fireworks will be launched from Ferry Point Park on July 1, with a rain date of July 2. The public will be directed to the old outlets parking lot for viewing. It will be a 20-minute program. Plans for the event were discussed in detail.

Parks is working with one of the DPW engineers on a plan for the bulkhead project in front of the Chesapeake Heritage and Visitor Center. That plan will be presented to the KNDF when ready.

A large Lacrosse Tournament will take place at Whitmarsh Park, located between Centreville and Church Hill. The tournament was moved from Kent Island because of overcrowding at the parks. (Mike Foster noted that the tournament was previously held on Kent Island, and spending from participants helped boost business in the Kent Island and Kent Narrows area.) It was suggested that an e-mail with tourism information be sent to the event producer, the Hogan's Lacrosse, so coaches and participants can receive it prior to their visit. The July tournament will draw mainly day trips; fewer than 10% of the group will stay overnight. The larger, showcase tournaments will generate more overnights. The tourism office will work with Parks to supply visitor information to the participants.

*Commissioner Dumenil commented that the Commissioners will address the overcrowding situation at the Parks at their upcoming meeting. The topic of beach/parks permits and or passes was discussed. The Parks department is looking at different strategies to ensure that visitors to the parks help cover the cost of the park operation.

The Kent Narrows Development Foundation has requested that rangers be dedicated to the area during peak times and that the County look at eliminating fishing from the shore in problematic areas.

Jody Schulz praised the improvement to the Watermen's Monument.

Victoria pointed out the need for a sign to direct people where to park for access to the Cross Island Trail, to discourage trail users from using the Holiday Inn parking lot.

Nancy stated that Parks is developing a new map.

Commissioner Dumenil

Commissioner Dumenil gave a briefing on the county's FY 21 budget, which was reduced by \$1.3 million over the previous year. It went from \$145 million in the current budget to 143.8 million for this fiscal year. The property tax rate did not change; it remains at \$.84 for every \$100.00 of property value for both commercial and residential property. The income tax rate of 3.2 % remains stable. A decrease in the revenue for FY 21 is projected due to COVID. The County has instituted a hiring freeze. Some supervisors and director's positions have not been filled.

The State-mandated \$1.5 million for the state mandated, maintenance of effort for education has been allocated \$34.8 million dollars will go toward capital projects. This year's bond sale of \$2.6 million is down \$16 million from the previous year. Capital projects funded this year include: the replacement of the CAD system, the expansion of the detention center, Kent Island Library expansion, and school improvements. Emergency funds are coming in from the State and Federal government to offset the costs associated with COVID.

In addition to the special tax funds, the KNDF will be a line item in the county budget every year from this year forward. This provides the Foundation with a guaranteed funding stream of \$35,000 per year. Jody and other board members thanked him for the Commissioners' efforts.

Economic Development and Tourism

Heather Tinelli reported that a tourism committee is forming through the EDC to help establish a tourism council or board. Gigi Windley Linda Friday are working as an ad hoc committee of the EDC to make recommendations for forming group to advise on a marketing plan for tourism and on job descriptions for the tourism staff. Victoria suggested that those who are selected for the final committee be highly experienced in the travel industry.

The County was awarded between \$8 million and \$9 million for COVID relief through the CARES Act. Out of those CARES funds, the Commissioners approved a \$2.5 million grant program for business recovery in Queen Anne's County. The county has approved 50 of the 99 applications received. The grant committee for the Small Business Assistance and Recovery Fund meets every Friday to consider applications. The deadline for the grant program has been extended to July 31. More information on the program is available on the choosequeenannes.gov website

The Visitor Center is closed for renovation. The first set of renovation drawings has been approved. The project is scheduled for completion in late summer.

Nancy mentioned that Ferry Point Park -- originally purchased with funds from the public-private Coastal Resilience partnership -- is a prime birding site, and that feature of the park could be emphasized as a tourism draw. It was suggested that Tourism work with the KNDF to develop a way to do this. She suggested that Ferry Point be promoted as a nature park instead of a bathing beach. Judy Wink suggested that the restaurants also can promote birding during certain times of the year. Judy offered to work with the group to identify the times of the year that certain birds come to the area. Birding is more than a \$9 million business for Maryland.

Director's Report

Something to Celebrate

Fisherman's Inn is celebrating 90 years in business. Their sign at the corner of Kent Narrows Way North and Rt.18 has been replaced with a new design.

Congressman Harris Visits

Congressman Harris visited the area twice. He toured several businesses in QAC, including the Boatel at Kent Narrows, to see how they had responded to the pandemic. He made a return visit to Fisherman's Crab Deck and The Big Owl to discuss the plans for outdoor dining.

STATUS OF MAJOR PROJECTS IN THE WVC

Kent Narrows Marine, LLC

Major Site Plan SP #19-06-0026

84,505 sq. ft

Phase 2 of the Boatel Project. Includes docking, boat lockers, commercial/retail space and separate offices (9,000 sq.ft.) and restaurant (6,200 sq. ft.) pad sites.

Requested a bonus height, which was granted. Site plan was approved with conditions.

Safe Harbor Narrows Point

Planning Commission approved extension.

Hyatt Place

Delayed construction due to COVID situation.

SPECIAL PERMITS FOR OUTDOOR DINING

The Narrows, Annie's, and The Big Owl were approved for temporary expansions to accommodate outdoor dining.

In addition to the above, Bridges, the Crab Deck, The Jetty, Red Eye's, and Harris Crab House also were permitted to offer outdoor dining.

AREAS IN WVC THAT NEED ATTENTION: Small Projects

The curb in Wells Cove parking lot that was once painted red to reserve for emergency vehicles is faded. It needs to be painted, as do the bases of the light posts and the yellow, lockable stanchions used to keep vehicles off the public landing. (Parks, Public Works)

The parking sign in front of the Best Western is faded and needs to be replaced. (Public Works)

The green directional sign for Rt 301/50 on Kent Narrows Way N. needs to be fixed. (SHA)

The Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman interpretative sign in front of the CHVC needs to be cleaned or refreshed. (Parks and Tourism)

The interpretative sign stand in the small park in the public marina needs to be ordered and erected. (Parks)

The KNDF will invite the PRAB (Parks and Recreation Advisory Board) on a boat tour of the Kent Narrows. It will be similar to the one offered two years ago.

A crosswalk is needed across Rt. 18 to help The Jetty and Bridges employees to and from the parking area on the North side of Rt. 18.

ECONOMIC VITALITY INITIATIVES

The KNDF worked closely with the Economic Development office and the re-opening team to advise on the needs of the businesses during this unprecedented time. The KNDF assisted in letting Kent Narrows businesses know the availability QAC's Recovery Fund. Several Kent Narrows businesses have applied for and been granted emergency funds.

The Economic Development Office in cooperation with the KNDF worked with Kent Narrows restaurants and other businesses to fast track their reopening plans through the regulatory environment. The KNDF director served as a liaison between the businesses and advised the County reopening committee. Regular updates were sent out to stakeholders as the COVID crisis unfolded.

PROMOTION

Marketing/ Communications

The website was continuously updated to reflect re-openings/closings.

A new "Plan your Visit" summer page was added to help guide and inform visitors. The page was reviewed and approved by the EOC.

<https://www.kentnarrowsmd.com/plan-your-visit>

The KNDF director wrote an article on fishing opportunities and supplied photos for the Queen Anne's County Outdoor Guide.

Literature Distribution

Pad maps have been distributed to the hotels. A new brochure holder on the outside of the visitor center has been made available for KNDF's use. All other distribution has stopped, since the visitor centers aren't open and many of the hotels and restaurants can no longer allow brochure holders on their counters.

Print Materials

Reprints of materials will be needed soon. The Trail map needs updating as does the larger Kent Narrows brochure. A cover for a coupon book to highlight local businesses has been designed. The KNDF has begun compiling information for an expanded directory of maritime-related services in Kent Narrows. A brochure highlighting winter activities is underway for fall distribution.

Marketing Strategy

The KNDF along with the Tourism office is carefully monitoring what is happening in the travel marketplace; travel and tourism as it once was is over, at least for now. This means a major adjustment will be needed to all marketing programs. Kent Narrows is well positioned, because it

is an outdoor destination and serves primarily drive and boating markets. We will be working with the Tourism Office to reposition the area based on the data we receive.

Update of Promotional Film

Shooting of new video footage for online promotion has been scheduled.

DESIGN

Wayfinding Signs

Waiting for the RFP to be reviewed by Parks so the project can go out to bid.

Comp Plan

On hold. Waiting to hear the path forward for the update of the Comp Plan from Planning and Zoning.

ADMINISTRATION

Finances

A significant amount of the director's time has been spent working to transition to Accounting Strategies Group Briefing materials, documents and a flash drive with Quick Books data was delivered.

A transfer from the 570 Fund is needed.

RESOLUTION

Victoria made a motion to request that \$30,000 be transferred from the 570 fund to the KNDF's checking account. Joe Pomerantz seconded; the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion on a signature event occurred. Jeff Smith suggested that the Yacht Club could serve as the event venue.

ADJOURNMENT

Victoria Hoffman made a motion to adjourn; Pat Worns seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Georgeanna (Gigi) Windley,

Executive Director

Kent Narrows Development Foundation

Certification:

I hereby certify that this is a true and correct copy of the Minutes that were adopted by the Directors of this Foundation on June 23, 2020.

Patricia Worns, KNDF Secretary