



**Board Meeting Minutes**  
February 11, 2020 @ 9:00 A.M.  
Ocracoke Community Center

Location: Ocracoke Community Center, 999 Irvin Garrish Highway, Ocracoke, NC 27960

Attendees (Board): Amy Howard, Chair, Daphne Bennink, Vice-Chair, Martha Garrish, Greg Honeycutt, Lisa Landrum

Attendees (Non-Board): Helena Stevens, Jeff Dippold, Sharon Brodisch, Tom Pahl, Kris Noble, Bob Chestnut, Randal Mathews

Handouts: Financials, OPS draft of signage

Daphne Bennink called the meeting to order at 9:03 am, Feb 11, 2020.

**Approval of Jan 6, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

Daphne proposed a change to the January meeting minutes, to state that for adjournment of the meeting, Daphne made the motion, and Martha seconded. Amy moved to approve Jan 6, 2020 minutes with the one change. Greg seconded the motion. All in favor, no one opposed, minutes passed.

**Meetings Procedure, Organization, and Public Participation (Robert's Rules of Order)**

In order to keep the meetings flowing, going forward TDA will strictly adhere to the agenda. Public input is appreciated, but will be relegated to the Public Input portion of the agenda.

Daphne has distributed to board members a copy of Robert's Rules and Processes. TDA will attempt to adhere to them going forward.

**Update on Island Inn project by Ken Debarth**

Ken Debarth thanked the board for the invitation to attend and give an update on the Island Inn project. Because of Hurricane Dorian, there are a lot of changes in OPS's consideration post storm vs pre storm. OPS is moving ahead with the Odd Fellows Lodge (Island Inn) project. They are tabling the restroom project. OPS was never in the restroom business, but with the excess funding that OTB had to distribute, and since they had the space, they decided to pursue it. They put out bids twice, and did not get any local contractors bid either time. Because the off island contractors had to include the cost of lodging, meals, etc, those bids were all at least twice the OPS estimate of construction, which made it not feasible. OPS spoke with all the local contractors pre-Dorian and at that time all 9 contractors said they had 2-3 years work already lined up. OPS had anticipated \$250,000 for the project. They still believe that the village still has a need for public restrooms. They would like to find another entity to take over the project. Ken would be happy to meet with someone and share the plans, and the detailed cost estimates; they could pick up the reigns and lease the Island Inn space. Daphne asked if the restrooms were part of the initial package when the property was purchased. Ken said no, restrooms had been



mentioned at that time, but not part of the original approved package. The restroom project came about with the excess OTB funding. They've spent about \$2,000 of that money to date. The unused money from that project will be retained by the 3% board, OPS will need to reapply for funds for next fiscal year. Note, TDA will put the restroom project on the agenda for a future meeting.

Ken spoke about the fact that the Island Inn/Oddfellows Lodge project came about quickly. It was first brought up in Nov 2017, and brought to the OPS board Dec 2017. In January 2018, the TDA agreed to support the mortgage payments, and in Feb 2019 OTB also agreed to support the mortgage payments. OPS board approved the purchase in March 2018, and the sale went through May 2018. OPS has made a 30 year commitment, with the promise from the TDA and OTB to fund it annually. His/OPS concern is that if the will of the board/future boards may change over time. If either of the boards would decide to not fund that year, the timeline for OPS to be able to do something about it is short. If they would find out in April that the funding for the next fiscal year starting July is not going to happen, that only leaves six to eight weeks to find a buyer and close a deal.

Otherwise the property will go back to the Storrs as the mortgage holder. Funds already paid out will also be lost. Bill Rich is working on OPS behalf to find a conventional mortgage. They have applied to the 1772 Foundation, this is the organization that replenishes the revolving funds. So when they spend money out of the Beverage account, they can put the money back in, and then OPS can again spend money out of that fund, and reapply again to replenish. The Executive director of the 1772 fund is very interested in the impact of climate change on historic property preservation.

Martha asked about the future plans for the building. Ken said that at this point they are thinking about a visitor center, with maybe some offices upstairs. Possibly some short term use apartment for visiting teachers, relief at the health center, something like that. OPS purpose for the purchase was to get the property out of the commercial market. At some point sometime in the future some other entity will take over ownership and management. The building was built in 1901, one of the oldest buildings on the island, and probably the only Greek Revival architecture building remaining. Greg asked if there could be some signage put up with the information on the project, as well as a clean up of the grounds. There is signage that will be put up. Part of the issue with the condition of the lot is that the pile of dirt that is there will be moved when the building is raised, and they don't want to spend money to move the dirt twice.

Tom Paul spoke as a member of the committee for the project that it is important to keep in mind that next to the lighthouse and maybe NCCAT building, that it is the most important historic property on the island. It's a really important architectural part of the island.

(Ken came back later in the meeting with a draft copy of the signage that will be put on the Island Inn Property)

### **Create OTTDA mission statement**

Amy read the current mission statement. She felt that this needed to be a bit more specific. She wrote up a new mission statement. The board discussed what she wrote, and edited it. It now reads "The Ocracoke TDA board shall engage in promotional activities to promote travel and tourism to Ocracoke Island, while recognizing and celebrating the unique cultural, historical, and environmental heritage of Ocracoke village and Ocracoke Island. In lieu of amending the by-laws, this can be adopted to be a tagline on the website and bio. Daphne moved to adopt the phrase. Lisa seconded. Motion passed.

### **OCBA/TDA Allocation of duties**

Daphne, Bob Chestnut, and Martha met to list the primary tasks that OCBA and TDA have been working on jointly and to separately the duties. The OCBA will retain ownership of the walking map. The TDA will assume ownership of the website and domain of the visitocracoke.com; however OCBA will maintain a link and pages on the site to promote local businesses, and events. TDA will promote the island of Ocracoke as an entity, and OCBA will be responsible for promoting individual businesses within its membership. The OCBA can maintain a visitor center/space for individual OCBA member rack cards as they traditionally have done. TDA will be responsible for management of the social media. There are obviously other specific tasks, but these are the primary bullet points.

Amy suggested a team/committee be put together to look at staffing needs/budgeting to present back to the board. Committee will be Greg Honeycutt, Lisa Landrum, Sharon Brodisch (now removed). Sharon will provide the information from the original OCBA hiring process as a member of the 2018 research committee. They will meet next week.

### **Element Advertising**

TDA agrees we need some type of advertising agency, and will send out an RFP for bids for next fiscal year. Kris Noble explained the process she uses for her county contracts, which includes the specific needs as well as a scoresheet that she completes once the completed RFP is reviewed. She will send TDA some examples, but the board needs to be very specific about what is needed prior to sending. Helena will also forward the RFP that was put together when Element was chosen. Helena cautioned that the proposals will need to be sent fairly quickly to ensure there is no break in advertising continuity, they need to coincide with the budget. Element's contract expires at the end of June/fiscal year.

### **Staffing needs**

Amy referenced the last page of the financials provided by Jeff Dippold. The last page is a budget draft. Amy started with a total budget of \$300,000, last year's budget was \$336,000. TDA will have almost \$75,000 left as of the end of this fiscal year. She proposed keeping \$50,000 of this as a surplus. \$25,000 would be rolled into next year's budgeting for a total of \$325,000. This was subsequently cut back to \$275,000 plus \$25,000 for a total of \$300,000. All board members are tasked with going through the budget template and tentatively filling in their own wishes for each line item. There was a discussion on removing the visitor center from the TDA budget since this is part of the OCBA responsibility. Bob Chestnut brought up that TDA has funded this before, OTB has/will funded events. OCBA is happy to manage the visitor center but there is no money to do so. Amy would like to have a tentative budget meeting prior to the end of February. Bob Chestnut would like to attend the March 2020 meeting to bring the proposals for the 3% board to get input. Amy will put Bob on the agenda.

### **Village Welcome Sign**



Discussion on having welcome signage. Helena explained that there was a sign that was to be placed on the right side just before entering the village, a design was made by Jason Daniels but due to Dorian, this was never completed. The welcome sign coming into the harbor was lost during Dorian. There is money in the budget to pay for this. Daphne moved to replace the sign coming into the harbor, and funding the sign coming in from the north. Martha seconded. Discussion on putting the TDA logo on the sign, Helena will check with Jason to see if this is possible. Motion passed.

### **Public input**

### **New Business**

Discussion on a more efficient way to do meeting minutes. Options mentioned: technologies that transcribe for voice. Taping via video in lieu of written minutes. Using a contract service like EWork. Going back to quarterly meetings.

A more consistent space for holding meetings. If the visitor center comes about, this will eliminate the need, but even that is at best 3 months out. The Fire Department may be open to contracting for a monthly meeting date. Maybe a modular building could be purchased.

Agenda items for next meeting; Budget, Staffing needs, bathrooms, Bob Chestnut's presentation on 3%, RFP

**Next meeting:** Tuesday March 10, 2020 9:00 am at the Community Center

**Adjourn** Greg moved to adjourn; Daphne seconded. Meeting adjourned 11:03 am