



CITY OF ST. MARYS

418 OSBORNE STREET
ST. MARYS, GEORGIA 31558

St. Marys Convention and Visitors Bureau

Work Session Minutes

St. Marys Welcome Center, Ward Hernandez Building, 400 Osborne Street

April 25, 2023 – 4:45pm

The SMCVB held a work session to discuss the following TOPICS:

1. Mission statement review
2. Bylaw review and suggested changes or questions
3. Wayfinding and other signage
4. Events Review

PRESENT WERE: BOARD: Darlene Landreth, Tyler Carpenter, Valerie Fautz, Sugar Yadav, Mardja Gray, Allen Rassi. **STAFF:** Angela Wigger.

ABSENT: Melissa Braun and Judy Thurner

Darlene Landreth opened Work Session at 4:45 p.m.

Mission - Angela gave a review of the SMCVB mission statement:

The mission of the St. Marys Convention & Visitors Bureau (SMCVB) is to promote St. Marys, Cumberland Island, and the Camden County area as a desirable tourist destination, increase the overall economic impact and overnight stays of visitors to the area, and foster a quality visitor experience to benefit the city.

Reviewed that local governments imposing a Hotel-Motel Tax are required by state law to file a tax report each fiscal period and there are specific ways and amounts to legally spend. We fall under OCGA 48-13-51(a)4. Spending should be 43 1/3 TCT% (tourism support) 16 2/3 TCP% (facility support) or TCT. 40% is available for unrestricted use. We use 100% towards our marketing and welcome center with any left-over funds going to our savings for future fund balance.

Bylaws – A printed copy of the bylaws were passed out and we discussed how to meet the bylaw member requirements and still have a functional and engaged board. Some quick points were covered: Members must be a resident of the city or operate a business within the city, or to be a representative of a business in the city. Our bylaws and legislation state we should have 2 hotel and motel sector members and 2 bed and breakfast sector members. This is causing a hardship because one of our hotel members has not attended in at least a year and one bed and breakfast is without a manager and staff appointments are not firmed up. There is a paragraph that states “in the event that the required membership representation from the Bed & Breakfast and/or Hotel sector cannot be filled as a result of courtesy industry closures within St. Marys, an alternate may be recommended by the CVB to the City Council for the council’s approval until another courtesy industry establishment opens in St. Marys.” We think we can invite another hotel contact from Riverview and Angela will also be following up with Spencer House and with the city lawyer to see if we can fill a space with an at large based on the above paragraph. We have lost a B&B since this legislation was enacted.

Wayfinding and Signage – The different types of signs were discussed. We identified several signs in disrepair and directional signs and the board was tasked with sending any other locations or comments that had prior to our next board meeting. Locations to target: Binational Peace Garden, St. Marys Waterfront Park, Welcome Center building. Plus three preferred board targets: On St. Marys Road before the ramp that goes to Osborne Road. On Osborne Road at the end of the ramp from St. Marys Street.

At the Spur 40 intersection area – Heading towards downtown St. Marys or in front of shopping center. De-clutter what is there. Possibly some smaller “pedestrian”/ “proximity” style signs located in downtown St. Marys. We will let the city know that we have a goal to assist the city in their sign efforts and that we have a wish list of where we would like to see changes.

Events review – We reviewed the 38 events that the CVB is specifically involved in or plans (plus the community market). It was suggested that it would be nice to bulk up what’s done at Build A Scarecrow. Angela shared that would be great if a board member wanted to take that on, but she cannot physically do anything else and that we do not have a budget for additional services in this year’s budget and that event is not a money maker. Christmas Tour of Homes checklist was handed out. We will definitely need a committee to assist in securing homes. Goal is 6 homes (five is the minimum).

ADJOURNMENT:

Darlene Landreth declared the Work Session closed at 5:50 p.m.

Minutes Prepared by Angela Wigger