



CITY OF ST. MARYS

418 OSBORNE STREET
ST. MARYS, GEORGIA 31558

St. Marys Convention and Visitors Bureau

St. Marys Welcome Center

Ward Hernandez Building, 400 Osborne Street

MINUTES: August 22, 2023, 3:30 p.m.

- I. Call to Order – Darlene Landreth called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. and reminded all that as a member of the public attending the meeting there are no comments allowed within the meeting except at the granting audience to the public section, which she encouraged anyone to comment at and shared that Misti Kline is on the agenda later in the meeting.
- II. Quorum: Yes. Present: Tyler Carpenter, Valerie Fautz, Darlene Landreth, Judy Thurner, Mardja Gray, Allen Rassi. Absent: Sugar Yadav, Melissa Braun, Jane Alexander. Public in attendance: Misty Kline and Mr. Kline, Edna Jenkins, Chris Thurner.
- III. Approval of the June 2023 Meeting Minutes
Motion to Approve the Minutes from June 2023 by Tyler Carpenter and seconded by Allen Rassi.
APPROVED
- IV. Granting Audience to the Public (any speakers should provide name and address): No speakers.
- V. Approval of the Agenda
Motion to Approve the Agenda BY Judy Thurner. Seconded by Mardja Gray.
- VI. New Business
 1. Introduction & Welcome to Jane Alexander, new SMCVB board appointment & Updates – Angela Wigger shared Jane was appointed and had a planned day out of town for a meeting, so her first meeting will be September.
 2. Introduction & Welcome of Sarah Koenen, Cumberland Island National Seashore and Fort Frederica National Monument Chief of Interpretation, Education, and Outreach and Cumberland Island Updates – Sarah Koenen had a family emergency and Pauline Wentworth is dealing with a ferry issue today but will be here late to share updates. Pauline shared that Sarah would handle the interpretation and fees and Steve Theus is the interim superintendent. Visitation right now is a little lower than last year when we had very high post Covid attendance. They will participate in the Seafood Festival and Angela has already sent the parade application link. The dock repairs are still not done and do not have a finish date yet. Plum Orchard Christmas is being planned. Angela will set up the event on Facebook and on ExploreGeorgia.org. The date is December 2nd and they are thinking about adding a day. They have three hunts completely booked and two additional hunt days with reservations available.

3. Introduction Park Ranger Manny Stewart & Crooked River State Park Updates & Cast on the Coast event – (CRSP Staff &/or Angela Wigger) – Ranger Stewart is on vacation, but Tyler Carpenter will update us on the Cast on the Coast event. Judy Thurner made a motion for approval for a \$250 sponsorship for the event from miscellaneous expenses and Mardja Gray seconded. Tyler Carpenter recused himself.
APPROVED.
4. Military service member orientation – Angela Wigger shared the Camden County Chamber of Commerce has started a community orientation of active-duty military members newly stationed to Kings Bay. Angela provided an itinerary for the program to follow in St. Marys that includes a stop at the St. Marys Welcome Center, the museums, and the park. We are now hosting the group most Wednesdays. We give them a detailed packet of activities and Angela talks to them briefly. The itinerary is included in the packet.
5. New articles/travel writer trips – Angela Wigger recently hosted a travel writer that writes for several sites and has her own travel blog. It was the best site visit as far as service went that she’s had in a long time, and she has let the restaurants know. The itinerary for the visit is included in the packet. Angela Wigger shared there is a detailed list of some articles in the marketing report. She is currently working on 6 article pitch stories to be sent to 2,500 – 4,500 writers and 4 blogs to be used on our website or article submissions we might get. Recent articles included *Travel Awaits*, Six Best Beaches in Georgia with 4.7 million impressions; *Chattanooga Free Press* article with 1.3 million impressions; *Country Living Magazine* with 1.1 billion impressions, *Wealth of Geeks* with 248,000 impressions, and *Fatherly* with 3 million impressions.
6. October SMCVB Meeting Location Move – Angela Wigger notified the board that our October meeting will be held at the Main Street office as we will be hosting a 3-day NPS conference at the St. Marys Welcome Center.
7. Build-A-Scarecrow & Fall Market event and Tour of Homes event – Angela Wigger provided the event details and actions list in the packet for both events. She does need clothes for the October 14th event and asks the board to donate any closet clean outs they may do to the event. We have one home committed for the December 9th Tour of Homes and that is where we need the most help to get 5-7 homes on the event. Mardja has someone that may help.
8. Volunteer recognition discussion/ideas – Angela Wigger asked that we discuss recognizing our two long-term volunteers with a small gift at a city council meeting or our CVB meeting. The board agreed and we will target the November council presentation date.
9. Member Voting Rights – Darlene Landreth shared that a board member had brought up that they didn’t think our council member appointee should count in quorum or be allowed to vote. The issue was taken to the city attorney, and it was confirmed that per our enabling legislation (HB839 and HB696) that all members vote and the council member who serves the board is considered a member.
10. SOJERN digital display campaign final economic impact report – Angela Wigger presented the results of our \$15,000 digital campaign. The campaign had a Return on Investment of \$23.52 to each dollar spent for a total economic impact of \$352,843.00. This number represents the confirmed total of traveler’s times the average spend per traveler. It showed 67 booked flights after looking at our ad. We had 529 confirmed travelers. 345 people searched for lodging after seeing our ad and 74 hotel nights were booked in St. Marys. The average spend was \$667 per person.
11. LRC Media end of year report – Angela Wigger shared the totals from July 2022 through June 2023. Total estimated value of coverage was \$696,312,195 if we had purchased the coverage given. Estimated print value was \$41,761. Estimated digital value was \$696,270,433. The total impressions

earned was 75,276,830,729 with 4,327,655 million being from print. This covered 221 published results.

VII. Old Business

1. St. Marys Community Market – Darlene Landreth/Angela Wigger

A.) Topics: Georgia Department of Agriculture permit update and compliance, temporary location change – Angela Wigger shared we do have a current license with the state, but she did need to resubmit to the correct office address. We are okay to move locations on a temporary basis under the license. There was a concern that we exceed the 120 consecutive hours rule in OCGA 26-2-391, provided in the packets. Angela talked to Megan (Norris) with Camden County of Environmental Health, and she confirmed my prior discussion with Terry Terrell that because the market is sponsored by the City of St. Marys no county permit is required and therefore no time limit applies. Angela called the Georgia Department of Ag and told them what the county said, and their response was that would be fine they will list us under “paragraph 2” not requiring a permit and she has noted we do not sell prepared foods and that we are following the allowable list as provided through our local environmental health office. Darlene Landreth shared the location discussion is carried over from last month where we agreed to move the market to Orange Hall if asked by the city in the event, they were ready to work on the lawn at Orange Hall as part of the beautification process. Angela Wigger clarified that the lawn is not part of the beautification project of the DDA, just the flower boxes and there is no update on when the city will do anything to the lawn at the pavilion but the turf, they were working on getting did not work out. Answered questions on grass and timeline. Had reached out to some vendors but stopped calling after the June meeting. Angela suggested that if someone else will be taking over the responsibility of the market we could let them make the decision on a move. Valerie Fautz then asked if the board was going to vote on the location before Misti Kline got a chance to talk and Angela Wigger stated she believed the board was just discussing their location questions and it was not headed to a vote yet.

B.) St. Marys Community Market – Misti Kline - Follow up comments or questions from the May granting audience to the public comments. Darlene re-introduced Misti Kline and asked what her three biggest concerns were that we could discuss to move forward. 1.) She shared the biggest concern is a lack of commitment in the vendor agreement as it only requires two weeks minimum attendance. She would suggest they move to allowing for a split market of something like ten permanent people and 10 people that participate two weeks. 2.) An onsite representative would be helpful. She is already helping, and people are letting her know when they are not going to be there so she could fill empty spots and not have to tell people to call the welcome center. 3.) they have a lack of foot traffic, and she thinks it's because vendors are not attending. They are saying they would attend if more vendors were there. Nobody knows where they are, they just stumble in. So, more advertising would help that. 3.) Lack of produce.

C.) St. Marys Community Market – Follow up to the June meeting discussion on the appointment of a market liaison, if it's needed, and other ways to report on the community market – Darlene Landreth (carried over from June agenda)- Discussion. The money would still flow through the CVB budget. Motion by Mardja Gray to nominate Valerie Fautz to represent the board in taking over responsibility of the community market with assistance of a vendor, Misti Kline, as the volunteer vendor to assist her in running the market going forward. Tyler Carpenter seconded. APPROVED.

Coming back to the location discussion, Tyler Carpenter made a motion to move the market to Orange Hall on a temporary basis beginning September 16th and Allen Rassi seconded the motion. APPROVED.

D.) St. Marys Community Market – Valerie Fautz – Discussion and request for approval for funds for a larger banner to advertise the community market and the purchase of an ad in Coastal Shopper publication. Valerie gave a rate sheet for Coastal Shopper out. The board did not think the time was right on the Coastal Shopper yet but a motion for a larger banner for the market and push in signs for the location change using miscellaneous funds that may later be moved from fund balance with council approval by Mardja Grey and seconded by Tyler Carpenter. APPROVED.

VIII. Business & Event Updates – Angela Wigger or BOD Members – Darlene shared she, Angela, and Valerie are attending the tourism conference 9/11-13. Allen Rassi shared festival meals are \$17 in advance.

IX. Hotel/Motel Tax & Financials Review – Angela Wigger. Darlene stated that the financials and other materials were included in the packet and if there were no questions we would suggest adjourning.

X. Director's Report/ Other/Marketing – Angela Wigger no additional comments.

XI. Adjournment: Motion to Adjourn by Mardja Grey and seconded by Tyler Carpenter.

Agenda by Angela Wigger