

## **Joint Kent-Queen Anne's Task Force**

**February 19, 2016**

**Members Present:** Foster Beach, Wayne Darrell, Commissioner Ronald Fithian, Paul Hanley, Shelley Herman, Greg Holsey, Greg Roby, Commissioner William Short and Laney Solomon.

**Member Absent:** Margo Bailey, Bernadette Bowman, Jack Brosius, Commissioner Jack Wilson, Mayor Chris Cerino, Ken Fry, Mark Glass, Joe Holt, and Greg Todd.

**Also in attendance:** Virginia Gregg, Emergency Planner, Kent County Office of Emergency Services; Kay MacIntosh, Economic Development and Marketing Coordinator, Chestertown Arts and Entertainment District/Chestertown Main Street; Kristin McMenamin, Region IV Coordinator, State of Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene; Bob Rager, Community Liaison, State Highway Administration; Faith Elliott-Rossing, Director, Department of Community Affairs; and David Sobers, Chestertown Environmental Committee on behalf of Margo Bailey.

At 9:00 a.m. the meeting convened. Commissioner Fithian gave opening remarks.

On motion by Mr. Beach and seconded by Mr. Darrell the minutes from the January 15, 2016, meeting were approved.

Ms. Solomon and Ms. MacIntosh provided the Task Force with a brief overview of the initiatives of the marketing committee which is comprised of the Downtown Chestertown Association, RiverArts, the Chester River Packet, the Lemon Leaf and JR's, the Tourism and Economic offices for Kent and Queen-Anne's County, the Town of Chestertown, SHA and the Eastport Association. The Committee has been brainstorming and planning events for the closure of the Chester River Bridge in order to minimize the impact on businesses. Events will run the first three weekends of the closure and include a Ferry service to run from Rolph's Wharf (Friday through Sunday) into Chestertown, a crab feast, a vineyard/distillery/wine and cheese tour, and possibly a mock iron man event. All events would be family friendly. The closure will be marketed as the "Detour to Fun." Commissioner Short inquired as to whether the Committee may need marketing money to help promote these events. The Committee is currently looking into costs to put together these events and will present any additional funding requests during the FY2017 budget planning process. Commissioner Short also requested for the Committee to market to northerners who have open access to the County.

The Chester River Bridge is scheduled to close on July 18 through August 14, 2016. At the January 15, 2016, Task Force Meeting Mr. Hanley requested that the closure dates be moved to begin the last few days in July. Mr. Holsey stated that the scheduled dates were in the bid documents and the contract. The contractor bid on the project based on the dates in the bid. Mr. Holsey stated that SHA is hoping to beat the four week closure. Mr. Hanley asked whether the contract could be set back from another job. Mr. Holsey stated that the contractor will begin on the dates in the contract.

Mr. Sobers asked the Task Force and SHA to include an observation platform on the bridge to allow pedestrians and bikers to enjoy the views. It would also allow fisherman to fish safely. Mr. Holsey stated that the timeline may not allow for the platform to be constructed but Mr. Holsey will look into it. Mr. Sobers also requested to have a prominent sign reading "Welcome to Chestertown, Maryland" which would also include a date of establishment to be placed somewhere upon entry into the Town. Ms. Solomon stated that the Chesapeake Area Scenic Byway Committee has been looking into a sign. Ted Newcomen agreed that an observation platform would be a great addition to the bridge and offered several suggestions in regards to funding.

In follow up to the January 15, 2016 meeting, Mr. Darrell advised the Task Force that he and Mr. Roderick are still in conversations with Washington College on possible housing and dining solutions for the volunteers who will be staying at the Chestertown Volunteer Fire Department during the closure.

Ms. MacIntosh inquired as to whether work would be performed to the bridge prior to the closure. Mr. Roby stated that the barge would be coming in within the next few days. SHA will be preparing and marking the bridge. Flagging will also take place for two to three days prior to the closure. SHA will notify the Counties of the flagging procedures. Ms. Solomon asked about the painting schedule. Mr. Holsey stated that there will be a considerable amount of noise from the equipment and generators. The objective is to complete the project as soon as possible. Commissioner Short thanked Mr. Holsey for all of his hard work on the project thus far.

On motion by Commissioner Short, seconded by Commissioner Fithian the Task Force agreed to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:29 a.m. The Joint Kent-Queen Anne's Task Force agreed to meet again on March 18, 2016, in the Commissioners' Hearing Room.

Respectfully submitted,



April E. Bitter, Deputy Clerk

Approved:



Wayne Darrell  
Member