

KURE BEACH MARKETING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 25, 2022

TIME 11:30 a.m.

Kure Beach Town Hall, 117 Settlers Lane, Kure Beach, NC 28449

Present: Ann Gibson, John Ellen, Christine Avery, Mark Dirks, Shawn Braden, Kim Hufham (CVB), representatives from marketing agencies (Mythic, French West Vaughn, Northampton Marketing), Chris Cavanaugh

Call to Order: Chairperson Ann Gibson

Meeting called to order at 11:30 a.m.

I. Minutes from Dec 14 Meeting were approved via motion & committee vote.

II. CVB Strategy/Planning

The CVB and partner agencies provided data, gathered information and presented initial strategy recommendations for the FY22-23 Marketing Plan. The agenda was as follows:

- Welcome & Ad Agency Introduction
- Room Occupancy Tax Collections/Rollovers & Fund Reserve
- FY22-23 Strategic Planning/Research
- July – December 2021 Results Presentation
- 2022 MAC Meetings Schedule

The presentation drove a lot of discussion and ideas, with highlights as follows:

- Kim Hufham (CVB) kicked off the Marketing Budget Discussion, reviewing ROT Collections, budget and the Special Marketing Initiative: Out of State Marketing Awareness Campaign (met w/ each of the towns, all of which are contributing toward the overall \$700K planned budget)
- Chris Cavanaugh (Northampton) introduced the partner agencies and their staff in attendance, outlining their roles (Mythic, Northampton Marketing, French West Vaughn)
- Mr. Cavanaugh then reviewed the major objectives of the marketing strategy with respect to the following:
 - National Travel Trends – impact on beach community visitation
 - Traveler Research & Data – highlight new marketing opportunities
 - Current Advertising Approach – review & enhance effectiveness
 - Brand Platform – assess & identify any new branding opportunities
 - Earned Media, Social Media, PR Trends – obtain content and storytelling direction
 - Initial Implications of Strategic Priorities – affect in increasing overnight visitors
- Tom Hickey (FWV) presented Travel Trends and lead a discussion to get feedback from committee members regarding change, seasonality, visitor profile, length of stay, areas of focus, events and the effect on businesses.
- Mr. Hickey also presented data as follows:
 - Visitation via Arrivalist, noting that 2021 arrivals up 35% vs 2020, up 57% vs 2019 and that an “Arrival” is anyone who comes into New Hanover County beyond 50 miles

- Growing the Pool of Visitors based on New Audience Research, noting traits of high potential visitors based on generation, marital status, employment, income, etc. and considering the target audience based a variety of factors (previous visits, excitement, rating, method of arrival, length of stay, overnight, party size, daily spending, activities, deterrents, attributes, emotion-driven to relax, advance planning metrics)
- The CVB/Agencies next shared their Advertising Approach (F22-23) as a hybrid approach with the Wilmington & Beaches Unified Campaign & KB Dedicated Program (paid search, paid social, eBlasts to KB tourism website). This approach broadens the destination, bringing more collective value. We discussed Out of State Marketing in detail by reviewing data from a variety of states, by market, noting that 73% of arrivals are from NC, with 38% staying overnight. The committee pointed out that providing good service is a factor in successful marketing, which is important for the KB MAC to communicate to local businesses when gathering input regarding marketing support. As part of this topic, we also reviewed the following:
 - Brand Platform – “Naturally Beautiful”, focusing on a word cloud of key phrases that drove discussion to validate the phrases and identify any that may be missing.
 - KB Travel – “Earned Media” strategy and ideas with focus on the following:
 - Wellness travel, domestic travel, setting boundaries (disconnecting from work), niche travel, outdoor travel, activities of interest
 - Social trends – influencer marketing , user-generated content, algorithm shifts, Instagram reels, TikTok, Pinterest, Facebook
 - PR Trends - quick pitches, focus on trends, need freelancers due to decrease in newsroom, agility, authenticity/feedback from real visitors, diverse stories
 - News stories, events that need PR or social sharing.
 - Outdoors – stories, new ways to talk about things available outdoors (hiking, biking, etc...)
 - Preliminary Implications & Opportunities – presentation and discussion of what all the data and research implies with respect to marketing opportunities for Wilmington and Beaches to meet objectives. These will drive the marketing strategy, plan and budget. The 7 implications were to educate travelers more about, unify the messaging to better inform travelers, continue to market to NC residents, develop marketing to new residents of NC, consider expanding to a March-October marketing approach based on the data, focus in-state budget to target longer stays (vs daytrippers), include media tactics to attract higher income customers during peak season.
- CVB will summarize the findings and input from KB MAC members and incorporate it into the plan. They will present the 2022-23 strategic and marketing recommendations at the next KB MAC meeting (March 29). It was requested that the KB MAC provide any additional feedback to CVB in 2-3 weeks to allow appropriate time to prep for their March 29 presentation.
- KB MAC decided to schedule an additional planning meeting on Feb 2 before its next regular meeting on Feb 22 in order to finalize the KB Tourism Asset discussion and layout a plan to gather feedback from local businesses in time to meet CVB deadline.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Next Meeting: Feb 2, 11:30 a.m.