

**NOTES FROM REHOBOTH BEACH-DEWEY BEACH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
ACCOMMODATIONS TASK FORCE MEETING
NOVEMBER 2, 2016 – 2:00 PM – ATLANTIC SANDS, 2ND FLOOR OSPREY ROOM**

Present were: Co-Chairs Rob Marshall and Keith Martin, Barbara Brewer, Jesse Burns, Carol Everhart, Falan Mifflin, Meghan McCalley, Lana O'Hollaren, Lorna Petchey, Scott Thomas, and Karen Zakarian.

The **Notes from the March 29, 2016 meeting** were reviewed with Rob Marshall, Task Force Co-Chair. All were in agreement that the notes accurately reflected the prior discussions and follow through.

The Task Force reviewed the **regional advertising placement for 2016** and was reminded that the final results are reported to the Chamber Board with repeat advertisement based on return on investment and suggested advertisement for markets that did not perform well. The Chamber Board reviews the information and gives the final approval on where advertisement should be placed. Carol stated that the end of year 2016 advertising information would be printed in the Chamber Newsletter and provided to the Accommodations Task Force directly via e-mail and include results.

There was conversation regarding the parking of **motor coach buses** year-round. Carol reported that the Visitors Center advises motor coaches during Park & Ride open times to park in that location. Otherwise, motor coaches work with local accommodations and/or businesses for their parking needs. Carol stated that she would call DART to acquire additional information and request a review of the Park & Ride facility to determine where commercial motor coaches might be allowed to park year-round.

Karen Zakarian requested that the Chamber look into **sport event advertising** as well as the potential for display opportunity in downtown Wilmington, Smyrna Rest Stop and other frequently visited locations. Carol was also requested to check on a rack for Visitors Guides to be placed at the Georgetown Airport.

The Task Force discussed the rental bookings – such as **Airbnb, DRBO, Homeaway**, etc., which is now owned by Expedia and which may be tied to the occupancy statistics indicating no increase in accommodations weekend stays. It was also noted that realtors were reporting no increase in rentals. Mid-week occupancy (Wednesday) shows a slight increase over 2015.

Discussion continued regarding accommodations and the accommodation tax currently in place. Comments of note included:

- a. Should short term rentals in non-municipal areas only be collecting tax? What happens to the funds collected?
- b. If buildings that offer apartments move to short term rentals, they are no longer subject to landlord-tenant rights.

The Chamber and **online registration engine, Regatta**, was discussed. Carol reported that 13 accommodations are currently on the Chamber site, and 5 are waiting to be added. Rob Marshall noted that the service has no cost to accommodations that already have site minder service, but for those who do not, the cost is several hundred dollars per month. It was noted that a clear review of how the current booking is performing will be needed as we go into 2017. In addition, more members' activities and events would assist the success of the service, but the question of how Chamber memberships is attached to the inclusion needed to be answered. Scott Thomas reported that Regatta had a dedicated account manager assigned for the East Coast, and it was hoped that they would help get others involved as an add-on feature.

Carol reported that the **Sandcastle Contest**, which moved to the Saturday after Labor Day (next year, September 9, 2017), and the new location on the beach in front of Funland, was a success and will be repeated. She further reported that the **Beach Goes Blue** is now in cooperation with the USO, and is the "Beach Goes Blue – Red and White, Too" and will be a day (Saturday, June 10, 2017) to salute police, firemen, paramedics, military and all those who serve.

Information on the **Winter WonderFEST** was distributed, and Carol advised that the Chamber was a promotion sponsor of the event.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol A. Everhart
President/CEO