



Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes

August 11, 2025

Convention Center Board Room 214 - 1:00 pm

The following individuals were in attendance:

Commission and Voting Members – Tourism Commission Chair and Council President, Matt James; Councilman Will Savage; Voting Members Sal Fasano, OC Chamber of Commerce; Joe Wilson, OCDC; Ruth Waters, HMRA; **Absent:** Mayor Meehan; Councilman John Gehrig.

Staff Members Present – Terry McGean, City Manager; Tom Perlozzo, Director of Tourism; Brenda Moore, Special Events; Fiona O'Brien, Kathryn Bethard, Marketing & Communications; Kim Mueller, Director of Sales; Nicole Olson, CVB; Chip Woytowitz, Ashley Johnson, Tourism Sales; Leslie Raven, Tourism & Business Development.

Also present: Susan Jones, HMRA; Amy Thompson, OC Chamber of Commerce; Zach Bankert, OCDC; Rina Thaler, Crystal Collins, Art League of Ocean City; Bethany Hooper, OC Today-The Dispatch.

Tourism Commission Chair and Council President Matt James called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES.

MOTION to approve Minutes from June 9, 2025 Tourism Commission meeting was made by Voting Member Sal Fasano and seconded by Voting Member Joe Wilson. The vote was unanimous (5-0) with Mayor Meehan and Councilman John Gehrig absent.

ZARTICO PACING REPORT PRESENTATION By Bill Obreiter, VP Destinations, Zartico

Zartico is a data science company that helps understand the tourism economy's impact using big data sets like movement data from cell phone devices, credit card data, and lodging data.

Bill Obreiter, VP Destinations, Zartico, began a slide show presentation beginning with:

Hotel Data Set:

- Data set includes transactional hotels and short-term vacation rentals. Independent hotels and B&Bs with breakfasts are not included.
 - Hotels: Chain hotels that distribute through Amadeus.
 - Vacation rentals: Almost 2800 direct source properties (Airbnb and VRBO).
- Overall, in the market, there are 7273 vacation rentals (combination of Airbnb's and VRBO's) which allows us to compare paid occupancy with availability—two very different things when it comes to rental properties. 2800 direct source properties give cleanest professional numbers for vacation rentals.
- Pacing is hotel performance in the future.
- Revenue is the revenue from the sample size being measured. Doesn't include total revenue collected.
- Pacing is a leading indicator of chain hotel performance.

Performance

- Final numbers for lodging for the White Marlin Open and the weekend after will be in on Wednesday or Thursday of this week. August 1st update will look at the entire historical as well as future Ocean City as of August 1st.

Revenue Performance in July

- Slight increase in overall revenue when adding vacation rental and hotel revenue. Solid line represents revenue performance by day for 2025, and dotted lines represent 2024.
 - Red = vacation rental.



- Blue = chain hotels.
- 90% occupancy for paid occupancy is almost unheard of for chain hotels for entire month. Usually, comp rooms, people using points, rooms out of service, rainy days affect occupancy but this is absolute 90% paid occupancy. Will see that percentage for events like Oceans Calling but not for one month.
- Weather for the month was about the same as last year.
- Occupancy grew by three points versus last year for July.
- Took a slight hit on ADR (average daily rate) versus last year, but still at \$364 which is very, very strong.
- The rate actually went up from \$355 to \$364 during the month. Did drop from \$370 to \$364 from last year.
- Overall, revenue collections are up.
- RevPAR is up for July. Good July

July Competitive vs. Comparison

- Ocean City was 6% higher than the entire comp set (Outer Banks, North Carolina, Virginia Beach, Myrtle Beach, Cape May, and Sussex County, Delaware). Looking at a blended comp set. -- means Ocean city vs. comp set averaged together.
 - Ocean City occupancy: 89%. 6% higher than comp set.
 - Competitive occupancy: 84% for hotels.
 - Ocean City occupancy: 66% for vacation rentals.
 - Competitive occupancy: 64% for vacation rentals. Paid occupancy for vacation rentals means someone is paying taxes to OC to stay in that rental. OBX is thrown off because homes in OBX, Myrtle Beach have bigger, 10-room homes (very common) and is a different type of inventory.
- Average stay value is a calculation of how long someone stays times the rate that they pay for that stay across the entire destination. Average hotel stay for hotels was almost \$1,000 (before tax, before parking, before room services; before other amenities). It's 46% higher those hotel units than the comp set. Outpacing competitors, but suffering a little bit on the vacation rentals.

July Feeder Market Analysis -Where People are Coming From & Comparing to Feeder Markets to Comp Set

- Baltimore/Wash. represented 19% of the hotel revenue for Ocean City for July. Baltimore represents 17% for Southern DE; 11% for Myrtle Beach; 10% for OBX and 10% for VA Beach.
- Ocean City is the market share leader for beach destinations within the comp set for Baltimore market for July.
- Washington D.C. is also a major feeder market for Ocean City. OC shares two major feeder markets unlike other destinations. More than half of OBX market share revenue comes from DC and no one else is even close. Feeder Markets heavily dependent on Wash. DC. Market.
- OBX is down. Myrtle Beach 30% of revenue comes from Wash. 30% comes from Delaware. NY revenue 11% market share comes from NY. Myrtle Beach added 5 to 6 daily flights a week to/from NY market and saw 4% increase because of their fly/drive customer.

Hotel Feeder Markets Performance for OC Compared to Comp Set

- Baltimore was up 5% in market share for July and flat for everyone else. NY up 5%; Myrtle Beach up 4%; NYC is a big golf market with direct air service. OC still outpaces in revenue growth for that market in that time period. Big strides from PHL, Balt NY and DC. See whole lot of flat for everyone else.

August Pacing Performance – How August Compared to August Last Year.

- As of August 1st, the rate (ADR) has dropped a little bit from where it was pacing at the beginning of July (from \$367 to \$346). High demand time periods, longer length of stay and bigger properties tend to sell out further in advance for longer stays. Shorter lengths of stays fill the gap as you get closer to travel date. ADR did drop a little bit but have a few weeks more to make up. Seeing huge increase in revenue.
- A million dollar increase in the sample size of the chain hotels for revenue as of August 1st compared to last year what's on books for same time.



- As of July 1st, forecasting revenue decreased 3% but flipped to increase 1%. Overall blended increase of about 3% of revenue as far as pacing for August.
- RevPAR is up 6% due to increase in Occupancy for the entire month of August.

August RevPAR Performance Compared to Last Year.

- Solid lines represent this year's RevPAR, and dotted lines represent last year's RevPAR.
- RevPar is growing a lot.

White Marlin Open Pacing 2025

- White Marlin Open: Huge gap in RevPAR versus last year.
- Revenue pacing up 13% versus last year for hotels and up 4% versus last year for vacation rentals as of last Monday when the tournament started.
- 90% plus occupancy with still a few days to sell for the week.

September Pacing Performance

- September is struggling, especially the first half of the month.
- Looking at a 2% decrease in hotel revenue.
- Vacation rentals hurting even more for that time period.

Bike Week Pacing Performance

- Bike Week is not doing really well at all.
- ADR down 4%; RevPAR down 15% as of July 1st compared to down 4% ADR and down 9% for RevPAR as of August 1st Paid Occup and Rev for both July and Aug are down.

Oceans Calling Pacing Performance

- Ocean's Calling is doing really well. Still performing up versus last year.
- 62% on paid occupancy with almost 60 days to sell.

Country Calling Pacing Performance-Revenue

- The revenue increase over last year for the same time period is almost double, with almost 90 days to sell.
- All metrics are up, indicating a strong performance.
- Blended occupancy is at 43% on pace, with time to fill it up.

Hotel Demand by Day Insight

- Darker time periods on the calendar view indicate busier times, while lighter areas indicate less busy times.
- This information is shared with restaurants and bars to help them set their schedules based on overnight demand.

Zartico Visitor Journey App. – New Zartico App coming out that will give access to insights you need, right when you need them. Can order a cross-visitation report from any place in your destination. No longer limited to a set number of analyses.

CATCH A RIDE PROGRAM UPDATE PRESENTATION – Darci Bandi, BVK VP Account Director

Catch a Ride Results

- Goals were crushed with 309 million impressions and 124,000 engagements.
- 32,000 people entered the contest, and 57% opted into email communication.
- Tour stops included Baltimore (Brew at the Zoo; Orioles, CFG Arena); Philadelphia (Phillies); D.C. (Washington



Nationals, Chesapeake Baysox and Giant Barbeque Battle).

- There was a 4.2+ million event impression; a 38% increase year over year in impressions.

Catch a Ride Activations Included

- Footprint included a custom keychain making station and head-to-head skee-ball games. “Find the Van” itinerary board was popular.
- Dwell time was around five plus minutes (beat industry average of 2 mins.), with brand ambassadors engaging with people in line.
- A video showcased the mobile tour and its immersive experience resulting in 58,000+ event engagements.

Paid Media Perspective

- Paid media efforts included digital, event sponsorship extensions, MLB partnerships, regional extensions; influencers in destination, public relations, and social media.
- The Catch a Ride website landing page allowed users to create a playlist based on their starting point.
- The sweepstakes package (which included a 3-night/4-day stay, \$1,000 prepared Visa gift card and OCMD Swag Bag) was a key metric. \$32,000+ travelers entered the sweepstakes resulting in a 45% opt-in rate. Paid media drove traffic to it.
- The winner was from New Jersey and is coming on Sunday.

Cheers To 3 Years!

- 772,8353,200 impressions
- 296,982 engagements
- 41,136 contest entries
- 64 smiling winners

Future Leisure Campaign

- The channel mix for summer tactics includes paid social research, TV, out-of-home, and digital tactics.
- TV and out-of-home efforts were concentrated around tent pole events and key markets.
- Digital tactics are flexible and allow for pivoting based on performance.

Top Performing Ads

- A Snapchat filter had 13,704 shares or saves, saved to user’s cameras 3,761 times.
- A video targeted to Millennial moms had three times the click-through rate of normal ads.
- A TikTok carousel ad had a 7.4% click-through rate (CTR) compared to 0.88% CTR for video.
- A new Reddit freeform ad had 2.4 million impressions and a click-through rate of 1.14% which is three times higher than benchmark.

Broadcast preliminary results

- A media partner implemented a destination lift study tracking incremental sales based on BVK advertising. First report, March – May, generated \$281k in observed sales and a 15% lift in people who saw the ad versus those who didn't.
- Expandable rich media unit was most effective format driving a 59% sales lift
- Campaign delivered a 2.05x return on ad spend (ROAS) on this component.

Fall Creative

- Fall creative started on August 1st and focuses on more seasonal specifics such as of food, golf, and other seasonal activities without the water component.
- They will be doing the SMARI ad effectiveness study again this year which will be shown in January.



Incremental Campaigns – Will Focus On:

- **Weather triggered ads:** If there is a whole stretch of sunny days, get the message out to drive markets. This ad performed three times better than normal display ads.
- **Summer Send Off:** Target outside states whose kids are not back in school yet to let them know about the summer sendoff festivities.
- **Callings Restaurant:** Reach out to communities that normally calm down and really spend a lot of money on our restaurants and hotel specials going on, especially during Oceans Calling and Country Calling and share with restaurants and bars to ensure appropriate staffing is provided.

TOURISM and BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT – Tom Perlozzo, Director

Smile Sign/Boardwalk Arch

- The Smile sign is up on Fourth Street creating a social media generator.
- The Boardwalk Arch has been completed and is receiving "rave reviews" from the public.
- There is now a year-round lighting program for different times of the season that can be operated from the Tourism office.

Rte. 50 Bridge Lighting

- A test will be set up at the Convention Center parking lot to determine if State Highway will approve the request to light the Rte. 50 Bridge.
- Funding for the Rte. 50 Bridge and Convention Center exterior lighting comes from deferred revenues, specifically the ticket share from C3.
- There was interest in lighting Rte. 90, but it was not pursued because they "couldn't block off that lane to get to it."

Convention Center Exterior Lighting

- The Convention Center exterior lighting is under contract and expected to be completed in the next 60 days.

CVB Rebrand-Discover Ocean City

- This is not a structural change to the CVB, but an evolution of marketing to gain traction in the business place and elevate Ocean City's voice as a DMO.
- The rebrand is a strategic refinement to improve how Ocean City is positioned, especially since there isn't a sports complex.
- The goal is to generate more revenue and grow the resort on a year-round basis.
- The concept is that planners are confused when they are out there speaking. They want to bring Discover Ocean City to life to represent the CVB meetings, conventions, planners, and tour operators.
- Discover Ocean City will be the CVB while Leisure will still be Ocean City, Maryland's Somewhere to Smile About.
- The rebrand will enhance collaboration with stakeholders and sell recreation and partnerships with hotels.

Membership and Partnerships

- Membership rates are \$400 for Ocean City businesses and \$600 for regional members.
- The focus is on using digital media for all partners and determining the best time of year to do so.
- The internal staff makeup and job responsibilities will be reviewed with potential changes recommended.
- Ocean City businesses will always be the primary focus, but businesses and attractions outside the city limits are needed to make the destination well-rounded.
- The goal is to extend stays by encouraging Meetings and Convention attendees to see everything else Ocean City has to offer.
- The logo will not change; "Discover Ocean City" will likely be added over it. The launch is planned for January 1st.



- The CVB will evaluate and fix how it operates, including the timing of certain activities and outside partnerships.
- Discover Ocean City is more of a partnership than a membership, with a focus on active engagement and marketing co-ops.

OCMD Hospitality Association Rebrand

- The HMRA is rebranding as OCMD Hospitality Association focusing on the 21842 zip code.
- The focus will shift from sales, marketing, and advertising to advocacy, networking, and education.
- A new logo has been created, and D3 is rebuilding the website.

Membership Pricing and Value

- Ocean City businesses pay \$400 per year, while Worcester County businesses pay \$600.
- Businesses on the island get a better deal because their room tax pays the marketing budget.
- The focus is on what visitors are looking for and how to ensure they get what they want.

Sussex County and Partnerships

- Partners in Sussex County are included, and the organization reaches out to partners to fill needs, such as transportation.
- There is currently no third-tier rate for businesses outside the city, but this may change as the organization evolves.
- The partnership with Discover Ocean City will focus on the benefits of getting RFPs, group leads, marketing partnerships, influencer collaborations, and FAM trips.
- Hotels pay \$400 plus \$20 per room.

Leisure Market vs. CVB

- Leisure market is optional and not part of the partnership.
- People coming in for leisure can check rates (via Book Direct) and availability on the OCOcean.com website instead of using online travel agents and hotels paying 15% commission.

Summer Activation Series

- Four key initiatives: enhancing visitor experience, growing partner engagement, driving App downloads, and amplifying the Ocean City 150th Anniversary.
- Pilot program: Suns Out Funs Out Summer Activation Series partnered with companies in Ocean City.
- Nine activation dates started June 2nd.
- Incentivized App downloads by offering Ocean City swag in exchange for downloading the App.
- Total downloads increased from 2,900 to 8,400.
- The App allows visitors to explore the city and access preloaded itineraries and partner listings.
- Information on OCOcean.com directly transfers to the App.

App Features and Data Collection

- Filters are available to find restaurants, events, and hotels.
- Book Direct is available on the App.
- The goal is to track visitor behavior and use the data for future strategies.
- Push notifications can be sent to App users regarding activities in town.
- Zartico is developing a dynamic visualization of visitor movement based on IP addresses.

CONVENTION CENTER SALES REPORT by Kim Mueller, Director of Sales

Star Report - June

- Ocean City is holding its own compared to other destinations.



- Occupancy was at 70% (up 0.1%), ADR was \$228 (up 1.5%), and RevPAR was at \$160 (up 1.6%).
- Year-to-date, occupancy is down 0.3%, ADR is up 3.9%, and RevPAR is up 3.5%.
- Short-term rentals have high demand with occupancy around 73% and higher ADRs.

CONVENTION CENTER MISC. by Larry Noccolino, Executive Director

CC Building Lighting Interior Lutron

- Lighting upgrade is almost complete.
- Refresh continues with artwork, benches, and painting.
- Construction has started on the small freight elevator and small passenger elevator, expected to be finished by the end of September.
- South stairway construction should be done by mid-September.
- MACo will be at the Convention Center through Saturday.
- Jeep Fest and Tri Association will also be at the Convention Center following MACo..
- Bidding out the Convention Center landscaping next year.

SPECIAL EVENTS by Tom Perlozzo, Tourism & Business Development Director

- Frank Miller has resigned as Special Events Director.
- O.C. Rock N' Roll is in a good place with a full lineup.
Springfest is looking at new elements and incorporating street painting. Increasing the number of spaces by 100 or 200.
New Year's Eve fireworks may be moved uptown again.

Fireworks Shows

- The question was whether to continue having two fireworks shows or more.
- A poll will be taken to decide whether to do one show or continue with two.
- The consensus was to have one show at Northside Park. City Manager, Terry McGean will take question to Council.

Premier Lacrosse League (PLL) by Sports Marketing & Events Manager, Chip Woytowitz

- The PLL is the top league for lacrosse players and has added a Women's division.
- There are plans to bring the PLL to Ocean City for two events:
- An indoor competition at the Convention Center during the winter.
- An outdoor beach event in the summertime of 2026, with turf on the beach.
- The PLL is exploring different ideas, such as having a lacrosse game on a boat.
- Working with Footvolley to bring an international tournament with teams like USA, Brazil, and Italy.
- Apex Lacrosse is coming June 13th and 14th, 2026, with Girls and Boys lacrosse, about 100 teams plus teams.
- Legends Lacrosse is the following weekend, a smaller tournament, about 50 teams looking at Northside, Northern Worcester and Snow Hill.
- Hype Nation Volleyball is a big volleyball group that was talked about for the Convention Center.

Taraflex Flooring

- New Taraflex flooring is set to be installed September 3rd through 10th.
- The flooring is what they use at the Division 1 level for volleyball and in the Olympics.
- There should be 13 volleyball courts and eight or nine basketball courts.

PLL and Ocean City

- There is an opportunity to build upon the existing lacrosse base in Ocean City.
- Marketing & Communications Director, Jessica Waters, is the president of the Ocean City Beach Lacrosse program,



which has 500-600 kids.

- The PLL will be visiting Ocean City during Labor Day weekend to explore locations.

Other Events

- Winterfest hours may be extended if there are fireworks uptown.
- Surfer Healing event at Castle in the Sand on Wednesday, August 13, 2025.
- Holy Savior, Blessing of the Waters Thursday, August 14th on 17th Street.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE – No Report

HMRA -

- We are continuing to feature a local hospitality employee on our weekly Facebook Smile Spotlight. At the end of the summer, all Smile Spotlight recipients will be entered into a drawing for a \$500 cash prize!
- Maryland Tourism Council's Summer Soiree is August 13th at the Holiday Inn Pool Bar on 67th Street from 5-7pm, everyone is invited.
- Our first Hospitality Huddle is on August 19th – we're bringing together owners with the new Police Chief Austin and Captain Eade to discuss upcoming large events and how we can mutually assist one another.
- We're moving forward with our rebranding efforts and will soon be known as the OCMD Hospitality Association. Our focus will center on advocacy, education, and networking, while sales, marketing, and advertising will remain the responsibility of the official destination marketing organization, OC Tourism. Our new website is currently under construction—stay tuned! Questions, comments – susanjones@ocvisitor.com 410.726.0334

OCDC – No Report

WORCESTER COUNTY – No report

OC ART LEAGUE -

- 20th Annual Artists Paint OC Competition and Festival August 13-17, features 65 professional artists competing for \$11,000 in prizes as they paint throughout the resort, including a quick paint competition on the boardwalk. Approx 300 paintings of the resort will be exhibited and sold at “wet paint sales” Sat Aug 16 from 5-7PM, and Sunday Aug 17 from 12-3 PM. 200 free paint kits were distributed to kids ages 6-17, and their artwork will be shown on Sunday Aug 17. Approx 1,000 people will experience the event, and 4,000 people will view the exhibits at the Art Center, which will run through Sept 27.
- The Art League is working with the inaugural Seafood Festival to assist with liquor license. Produce an “art zone” at the event Sept 6, assist with promotion and provide volunteers.
- Aloc 2025 Robinson fellow for Contemporary Art and Community Engagement will be Daniel Bowen of Symphony 21. His focus will be on transforming community through music, and a series of events and performances including one at the OC PAC are planned for the year.
- Art in OC posters and limited-edition numbered prints to commemorate the 150th birthday of Ocean City is being sold at locations throughout the resort, including at the Art League.
- The Art League was named best art gallery in Worcester County by Coastal Style Magazine for the 13th year in a row.
- There were 2,985 visitors to the Art League in the month of July

**Voting Member Sal Falsano made a motion to adjourn meeting; seconded by Councilman Will Savage.
Meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.**

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
PUBLIC WORKS ADMINISTRATION CONFERENCE ROOM
224 65th STREET, OCEAN CITY, MARYLAND
TUESDAY, AUGUST 12, 2025 @ 9:00 AM
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Mayor Meehan

Present were: Mayor Rick Meehan, City Manager Terry McGean, Public Works Director Hal Adkins, Council Secretary Tony DeLuca, Transit Manager Rob Shearman, Operations Manager George Peake, Deputy Director of Public Works Scott Wagner, Parking Manager Jon Anthony and Brian Shane, OC-Today Dispatch. Absent was Council Member Carol Proctor

- A. Approval of May 13th, 2025, Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes
Approval of June 10th, 2025 Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes Informational Only
Approval of July 15th, 2025 Transportation Committee Meeting Minutes Informational Only
 - ***Council Secretary DeLuca mad a motion to approve the minutes from May, June and July; Council Member Savage seconded the motion; vote was unanimous. Council Member Proctor was absent from meeting***
- B. Staffing and Retention Update
 - 1. Bus Division
 - Currently have 57 bus drivers on payroll; this time last year only had 49 on payroll
 - Still having a problem recruiting staff for the Bus Tech position; currently have 4 on payroll with 1 staff member out on medical leave. Part-time staff are working more hours and Full-time staff is doing double duty to cover shifts due to lack of staffing.
 - 2. Parking Division
 - Currently has 5 of the 7 Enforcement Officer positions filled
- C. Special Event Update
 - 1. Fall Music Festivals
 - Scheduling 26 to 27 deployments for late morning; early afternoon; this was a peak time for the prior concerts.
 - Scheduling 34 to 37 deployments for the evening shift when concert lets out; this number does not include the contracted buses
 - In order to reach these deployment numbers for the concert days; the non concert days in that week will be done with decreased deployments and skeleton crews
 - With the staffing for the concerts; we will be able to have all 11 articulating buses deployed; provided there are no mechanical issues with any of them
- D. General Updates and "Follow-Ups"
 - 1. Bus Division
 - b. Ridership and Deployments