



Lardner/Klein Landscape Architects, P.C.

Memorandum:

To: Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway Advisory Committee and Management Team
From: Jim Klein
Date: May 25, 2010
Subject: Advisory Committee #1 Meeting Summary

The first advisory committee meeting for the Michener's Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway Management Plan was held from 11:30 am-1:30 pm on May 18th, 2010 at the Talbot County Community Center in Easton, Maryland.

Meeting Summary:

1. Terry Maxwell, State Scenic Byway Coordinator, provided a brief overview of the byway program. Michener's Chesapeake Country is one of nineteen state designated byways and extends from the nationally designated portion of Chesapeake Country Scenic Byway (Cecil, Queen Anne, and Kent Counties). Michener's Chesapeake Country connects with the state-designated Blue Crab Byway to the south. The byway overlaps with a portion of the Harriett Tubman/Underground Railroad Byway, now designated as an All-American Road. Funding for the byway management plan is from FHWA's scenic byway program with matching funds and/or labor from Talbot, Dorchester and Caroline Counties.
2. Jim Klein presented an overview of the byway planning process indicating that the purpose of the planning effort was to determine whether or not the communities along the byway wanted to pursue designation as one of 151 designated routes across 46 states.
3. Mr. Klein discussed the need to coordinate among the many complementary touring routes in the region including Chesapeake Country National Scenic Byway, Harriett Tubman/Underground Railroad All-American Road, Blue Crab Byway, touring routes and resources associated with Frederick Douglas, touring routes and resources associated with the Captain John Smith Water Trail, touring routes and resources associated with the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail, touring routes and resources associated with the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, and the two state heritage areas (Heart of the Chesapeake and Stories of the Chesapeake)
4. In order to facilitate the development of a vision and goals for the byway, participants wrote down the following on color-coded cards:
 - Green Card –Top 3 Assets
 - Yellow Card –Top 3 Challenges
 - Blue card - how will we know when our byway is a success? Or, what will the byway have accomplished after 10 or 20 years?A transcription of the cards is attached (www.lardnerklein.com/mcsb_ac1cards051810.pdf)
5. As part of the slide presentation, Mr. Klein provided an overview of how a byway corridor can be defined including: the byway route, the width of the corridor, and related and nearby sites.

6. After lunch the following questions and comments were noted as part of the discussion facilitated by Shelley Mastran. The focus of the discussion was on the route itself, the Michener theme, and the relationship to water.
 - With regard to the route itself, the following were noted as worth looking at:
 - The two options (33 and 329) between Easton and St. Michaels with 329 noted as having more character
 - Connecting to the Idylwild Wildlife Management Area (south of Smythville) – good for birding and bikes, 1700's and 1800's cemeteries
 - Federalsburg (Riverwalk/Greenway, fishing, marina, milling process story, museum, etc.) and Vienna were identified as strong assets for the byway and that the primary route for the byway should go through these towns (not the spur)
 - Patty Cannon House on route to Seaford – house straddles state line and has associated stories about moving from one room to another to avoid capture *[some discussion as to the accuracy of the story as the original house is gone – the current owners are asking for the sign to be removed; this is also part of the Underground Railroad story]*
 - A spur was suggested to connect to Dorchester County's first winery (2 turns)
 - High Street in Cambridge is an historically important street (access to water) and should be included as the byway route
 - Bestpitch Ferry Bridge has weight limits and may need to be qualified in some manner if it remains the primary route
 - Detail enlargements for the byway map were suggested for the small towns (Preston, Vienna, Federalsburg, East New Market, etc.) in addition to Easton and Cambridge
 - National historic districts should be added to the map and related to the primary route (Cambridge, East New Market)
 - What about the back roads as an alternate route beyond 331 to the Dover Bridge?
 - What about making the route between Preston and Federalsburg the main spine of the byway (392)?
7. Spurs associated with the byway were discussed. Most all were noted for their beautiful drive experience, although they lack a specific destination. They should be described as such to match expectations of something at the end (or look at opportunities for incorporating interpretation or access, etc at the end).
 - Elliot Island Road is a scenic drive and is a good place for birding, bicycling or canoe/kayak access
 - MD 343 to Hudson is beautiful and pristine with working agriculture landscapes and rich maritime history
 - Oxford spur has a strong link to Michener (Morris Inn)
 - Tilghman Island/St. Michaels – fishing village with strong land and water views; also has link to charters, skipjacks and island sightseeing
8. The Michener Theme and the relationship of the byway to water were discussed extensively throughout the meeting. In summary
 - What is the byway's relationship to water? Need to think about how to provide better connections with the water; this is a 21st century touring route through an area where water transportation was the primary means of getting around up until the Bay Bridge was built; access to water is mostly private and the plan needs to address that including both physical

- and visual access. [*Strong linkages to the Captain John Smith Water Trail were suggested; suggestions to look at other byways and how they address this issue and what could make this byway unique*]
- Michener theme and Michener name - what about visitor expectations raised by the use of the name Michener? Is it difficult to connect the name with the entire route of the byway? [*Although not a consensus, the regional association or feeling that is evoked through Michener's Chesapeake, was noted as an important asset for the area, and provided instant recognition.*]
 - How about using the theme "Many Rivers?" – This is what Michener wrote about and addresses the Maritime Heritage through the periods when there were few roads
 - A broad approach was suggested perhaps associating more with the Choptank River as the primary feature around which the byway is organized
9. The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be Thursday, July 15th, with a late afternoon time (say 4-6) with the location TBD (tentatively either the Blackwater NWR visitor center or Vienna Community Center)
10. Two public meetings will be conducted on June 22nd (The Academy Art Museum in Easton) and on June 24th (at North Dorchester Middle School in Hurlock). Both meetings will be from 7-9 pm. A package of publicity materials will be sent out for advisory committee members to use in publicizing the meetings to their organizations, friends, and colleagues.