

CAC Meeting minutes 04/21/16

In Attendance: Les Purcell, Gary Miller, Herb Roe, Gail Lynch, Audrey Wahl and the CAC Liaison, Tom Terry

The CAC currently has 2 openings for new members, however 2 interested people attended; Suzanne Auwater and Lou Ferman. Both were given CAC applications and Suzanne gave hers to Les to submit to the BOD for approval.

Meeting called to order @ 4:05 pm

Discussion

Private Party

Gail started the meeting with a discussion about a recent private party and some issues that were not handled very well.

- 1) The hostess met with Tim and Jerry to arrange the party menu and made it known that she would be paying the bill. The menu was to have several different appetizers and entree's.
- 2) When people were seated for dinner, they were told several of the items on the menu were not available because the kitchen was out of them, and the menu did not even include all of the items requested.
- 3) On top of that the menu presented to the guests included prices for each item even though the hostess was paying the entire bill.
- 4) The round tables had seats for 10 people but only 8 sets of utensils.
- 5) The center piece on each table was so large that guests could not see other guests sitting across the table.
- 6) Appetizers were served cold, maybe because it took so long to deliver them to the table. Was there not enough staff working the party to provide proper service?
- 7) Calamari was overdone, "like a rubber band".
- 8) Entrees were warm at best. Again, too long waiting to be served?
- 9) Tables were placed so close together that the wait staff had problems getting around

Unfortunately these are all problems that we have discussed in the past. This led to a broader discussion about how the BOD approved budget can negatively effect the ability of The Cove management and staff to perform at the high level expected. Last year the BOD cut the YC/Cove PAYROLL budget by \$150,000. How can any establishment be successful when it is forced to cut back on hiring, especially competent servers and line cooks? We can have an excellent chef, but if the staff actually doing the cooking is not skilled enough to follow his recipe, or they rotate in and out because the pay is low, the food is not going to be up to par. The same applies to the wait staff. If we can't keep an experienced staff, or get them to return each season, the service is going to be sub-par. The only way to get customers into the restaurant is to have consistently good food and service and to match the consistency of both that is available at other local restaurants! The lack of this consistency has been a major problem that we think is directly related to the lack of experienced servers and kitchen

staff, caused by the cut in the budget. It is our hope that the new budget submitted by the YC Manager and approved by the BOD is sufficient to fix this problem.

Thursday Chicken Dinner Night

There was also a discussion about the new Thursday “Fried Chicken Dinner Night”. The original idea came about from a similar event that happened for a period of time at the Country Club, especially while the YC was being rebuilt. Apparently there were regular large crowds that sometimes numbered around 100 people. A lot of those were take out meals after the customer spent some time in the bar. In any event, numerous people had approached Jerry about doing Fried Chicken night at the YC. Hearing stories about the huge number of people that went to the Country Club on those nights it was decided that the full YC menu could not be offered along with the amount of fried chicken anticipated. On the first Fried Chicken Thursday event, only the fried chicken dinner and a few of the “late night” menu items that could be fried were offered. Unfortunately only 16 or so people showed up and stayed for dinner. The following week a few more came in and the third week about 25 or so came in. The huge crowd has not materialized and in fact, some people that came in did not know that only fried chicken was available and left. At least one couple who had been out of town for several weeks called to make reservations for Thursday night and were not told that it was Fried Chicken Only. When they arrived and found out that nothing else was available, they left in a bad mood.

Catering

We questioned how the catering side of the house is doing and our liaison, Tom Terry, mentioned that it is doing very well but the momentum seems to have slowed a little. That prompted a discussion about OP residents expecting to get special pricing because they live in the Pines, especially many of the organizations and clubs. The problem develops when a group does not want to pay for the number of staff needed to serve the group adequately which causes the service problems discussed earlier, sometimes resulting in an unhappy experience. Some of the local competition are offering prices cheaper than normal in order to draw customers away from The Cove. The CAC does not think that is a direction we should go.

It is worth mentioning however that when customers do not have the best experience with food or service at the downstairs portion of The Cove, they are less likely to want to host or attend a function in the catering hall. After all, why would they assume that the food and service would be any better there? The quality of food and service at The Cove is going to have a direct effect, good or bad, on the catering side of the business.

Old Business

The following budget items have been approved by the OPBOD. We are hopeful that preparations are already in the works to move on all of these as soon as possible after the new budget takes effect on May 1st.

The Food Truck has been approved and various trucks are being considered although none have been purchased as of this meeting. Contrary to some press, the truck will be used at various events in Ocean Pines including at White Horse Park, the Yacht Club, Mumfords Landing Pool, as well at appropriate OC events by parking in the Beach Club parking lot.

AC for the Cove Kitchen has been approved.

Glass tops and table cloths have been approved for The Cove tables.

Room dividers/partitions have been approved for The Cove and the Banquet facility. The CAC has some reservations about them being made "in house".

Awnings for the Tiki Bar have been approved.

A "bar rail" similar to what is at the Sunset Grill has been approved and will be made in house. The CAC is hopeful that the water side of the Tiki bar near the pool fence will be turned into a casual sitting area with comfortable seats, tables and that plants will be included.

A water taxi servicing the YC and various other locations including Seacrets, Fagers Island and other venues is being sub contracted out to a local company.

Concerns include;

Parking is already at a premium on weekends. some paying YC customers are parking on the gravel marina lot because the main lot is full. Weekends are also busy with banquets that take up parking, but they are at least paying customers

Any provisions being made to accommodate the potential increased use of the limited parking?

No guarantee that taxi customers will spend any money at the YC.

Is there any money generated by the YC directly from the taxi?

Is any advertising planned for the OC stops to try to draw customers to the YC?

Money for wall ornaments and other decorations in the Cove has also been approved.

It is the hope of the CAC that all of these approved projects will be completed as soon as possible.

Old Business

None

New Business

We are looking forward to seeing the new menu scheduled for the beginning of May.

Meeting was adjourned at 5:20pm.

Next meeting is scheduled for May 19th @ 4pm at the Cove.