

Hotel Center

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The hotel conference center is at the heart of GCAC's five-year action plan. It would be accompanied by other goals to include job creation, tourism-related business development and the installation of a community pool and water park.

There will also be visitors using the hiker/biker trail that will be built between Marion and Crisfield, a project which retired SHA District Engineer and GCAC Vice President Donnie Drewer said is funded.

Janes Island State Park hosts some 90,000 visitors each year and together with kayaking and charter-boat fishing and visits to Smith and Tangier islands, there are opportunities all around. Added to that nearby is Great Hope Golf Course. But a place to stay is what's lacking said Linda Singh, owner of the Bay Gift

Vault. She said that's what her customers usually tell her.

City Councilwoman Gail Lankford said she provides instruction to social workers preparing to take their state test and those classes could be held in Crisfield rather than Ocean City if there were accommodations available.

There is talk about building a hotel conference center by another group, one financed through the Lutherans. They were a leading part of the Somerset County Long Term Recovery Committee which rebuilt 21 homes following superstorm Sandy. The theory is church groups would help keep the hotel booked especially during the off-season.

As a recognized not-for-profit community development corporation, GCAC is working to make Crisfield the number one unique tourist destination on the Eastern Shore. It sponsors the WBOC-TV weather camera at the top of a condominium

by the City Dock and publishes brochures and booklets for tourists.

Ms. Scott said coming soon is a relocation guide that will help attract retirees to settle here.

Frances Martinez Myers, an Annessex Ridge resident who retired here with her husband after many years working in the real estate and relocation industry, is lending her skills in creating the guide. She said retirees come with money, and often have family and friends visit who will also benefit local attractions year-round.

Senator-elect Mary Beth Carozza was complimentary of GCAC's ideas, suggesting they break them down "and get some small wins." She along with Del. Charles Otto and representatives from the administration were in attendance.

Mindie Burgoyne, a Marion resident who works for the Department of Commerce, said Crisfield has all of the state tax advantages through

Enterprise and Opportunity Zones, plus the newly-established Arts and Entertainment District will help lift a distressed uptown. She said while the Hyatt in Cambridge has never met its economic goals, it did serve as a catalyst for additional development.

Between the marina and the state park, Crisfield "is the hub" said City Manager Rick Pollitt. He hopes the mindset can be changed that Crisfield is not the end of the road but rather the "The Gateway to the Chesapeake."

Meeting participants were taken on a school bus ride narrated by GCAC Treasurer Jay Tawes to see sites and attractions, including the area by the J. Millard Tawes Museum which Mr. Miller said would be a good place for an in-town park.

The goals and objectives of GCAC can be found on its website www.GreaterCrisfieldMD.org.