

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, April 17, 2014. The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

**Board Members Present:** Rebecca Ebert, Dan Martin, Bill Hottel, Rainee Simpson, Sharon Farinholt

**Board Members Absent:** Sue Robinson, Tootie Rinker, John Marker, Eric Campbell

**Staff:** Sally Coates, Renee Bayliss

**Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media:** Jennifer Bell, Downtown Manager; Dario Savarese, Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival

**Call To Order:** Ms. Rebecca Ebert, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

**Roll Call:** Mrs. Renee Bayliss

### **Approval of Minutes**

The March 2014 minutes were approved on a motion by Rainee Simpson, seconded by Dan Martin.

### **Executive Director's Report – Sally Coates**

Mrs. Coates reported on her experience at the 2014 Visitor Centers Seminar in Richmond, Virginia. This seminar was hosted in Winchester last year. Mrs. Coates visited with tourism associates from around the Commonwealth and participated in a FAM Tour of Richmond attractions. Officials at the seminar stressed the importance of developing new product and connecting destinations.

Mrs. Coates also attended the 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of Shenandoah Valley Travel Association, where Patsy Cline was awarded the Silver Bowl Award for her contribution to tourism in the Shenandoah Valley. In addition, Mrs. Coates participated in the DRIVE Tourism workshop last month in Staunton, Virginia, conducted by Virginia Tourism Corporation.

The Winchester-Frederick County CVB led two tours using the city trolley last month. The Hidden Gems of Winchester Tour was a great success, and tickets were sold out two weeks prior to the deadline. This tour was co-sponsored by Winchester Parks & Recreation and 30 people participated. The second trolley tour was a familiarization (FAM) tour for the hospitality industry and representatives of local attractions. 28 people participated in this tour to learn more about attractions in Winchester-Frederick County.

Last week, Winchester-Frederick County hosted the AAA Blue Ridge Parkway Familiarization Tour. Mrs. Coates thanked Courtyard by Marriott and Wingate by Wyndham for providing the AAA counselors with complimentary rooms, and the other community partners that entertained and hosted these visitors.

The latest edition of Shenandoah Valley and Beyond, which features Abram's Delight on the cover, was displayed for board members. It also includes a two-page spread with photos on Winchester-Frederick County.

### **Old Business:**

#### **Report from Nominating Committee – Dan Martin**

Due to the term expirations of three board members (John Marker, Sue Robinson, and Dan Martin), the nominating committee has begun a search for new tourism board members. The committee has reached out to three potential nominees, and these nominees will be voted on at the May board meeting. The three potential board members represent the hotel industry, agritourism, and a non-profit attraction.

### **New Business:**

#### **News from the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival – Dario Savarese**

Mr. Savarese told the board that changes have been made this year to Weekend in the Park, with the layout being tweaked to improve the event. A new event this year is Apple Blossom's Got Talent. This event will feature Landau Murphy, the winner of America's Got Talent, as one of the judges. The Midway will no longer be on the Loudoun Street Mall, but on surrounding streets.

Apple Blossom continues its promotion with the printed pamphlet of events in addition to television coverage of the preview show and live footage of the parade. The parade will air on Comcast channel 15. Efforts are also being made to stream the parade online.

Mr. Savarese also informed the board of this year's downtown events, including the new, family-friendly Kidzfest. Mr. Savarese invited the board to attend a press conference at 11:30am at the Bright Box Theater to learn more about upcoming downtown events.

Mrs. Jennifer Bell provided rack cards highlighting Old Town Winchester's upcoming events to the board.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Dan Martin noted that he is a guest judge at Marker-Miller's Apple Pie Baking Contest.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 am on a motion by Sharon Farinholt, seconded by Rainee Simpson.

Respectfully Submitted by Renee Bayliss, Visitor & Community Relations Specialist, City of Winchester