

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, July 30, 2015. The meeting began at 8:10 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Board Members Present: Rebecca Ebert, Karen Helm, Bill Hottel, Priya Patel, Eddie Richards, Sharon Farinholt, Kristen Laise

Board Members Absent: Dan Martin, Eric Campbell

Staff: Amy Simmons

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Jennifer Bell, Winchester Downtown Manager; Derek Gomes, Winchester Star; John Hill, City Councilor; Greg Lawson

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

Roll Call: Mrs. Amy Simmons

Approval of Minutes

The June 2015 minutes were approved on a motion by Karen Helm, seconded by Sharon Farinholt.

Executive Director's Report – Amy Simmons

Mrs. Simmons reported that *Kiplinger's Personal Finance* magazine listed the Winchester area as one of 10 great places to retire. Also, *Washingtonian Magazine* featured Old Town Winchester in their Great Small Towns issue in August. Mrs. Simmons mentioned that the Winchester-Frederick County display has been removed from the Virginia Welcome Center in Manassas and will be set up today in Bristol. The display will stay in Bristol for the month of August and then travel back to Manassas in October as part of the schedule set by the previous director. July's Tourism Tuesday radio show featured special guests Julie Armel from the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley and Wendy May with the Winchester-Frederick County Artisans Trail. The next show will be on August 18th and will feature the upcoming Civil War Weekend. Mrs. Simmons reported that she is working closely with a writer from *Where to Retire Magazine* who wants to do a multi-page feature on Winchester as a great place to retire. Mrs. Simmons showed the Board the full page ad placed in *Southern Travel & Lifestyles Magazine* which included advertorial space for additional information. Mrs. Simmons also mentioned that she received an email yesterday from the Virginia Tourism Corporation inviting the WFCCVB to participate in the Road World Championships in Richmond from September 20-27, 2015. The complimentary booth space is available if the WFCCVB wanted to participate. The board discussed the expense it would take to participate in the seven-day event and did not think it was worth the time or money.

Old Business:

New Director Recruitment Update – Amy Simmons

Ms. Rebecca Ebert decided to move Old Business up in the agenda so that the Board could receive the new director recruitment update before discussing new business. Mrs. Simmons reported that the first round of interviews were conducted last week and that more candidates will be interviewed in two weeks. The top two to three candidates will be brought back in August for interviews with representatives from the Tourism Board and the Frederick County Administrator. Following these interviews, both the Board and the Frederick County Administrator will be able to make a recommendation to the City Manager.

New Business:

Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation Donation Request – Amy Simmons

Mrs. Simmons informed the Board that the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation had sent a letter requesting a donation to help save the battlefields. After further discussion, Ms. Ebert made a motion to decline the request. The motion was seconded by Eddie Richards. Ms. Ebert asked Mrs. Simmons to scan and email the letter to the board members. Any donation made can be done on a personal level if the board members chose to do so.

Marketing Plan Review – Amy Simmons

Mrs. Simmons provided an overview and led a discussion through the proposed draft Fiscal Year 2016 Marketing Plan. Following a discussion about whether or not to include all businesses, hotels and attractions on the website, it was recommended that staff develop guidelines for the type of businesses that should be included on the web and in the Visitors Guide. The board also discussed the need for more itineraries and trip ideas on the website. Also, the board suggested that staff provide the current advertising rate card for the visitors guide so the board can discuss whether or not to raise the fees. Due to time constraints, it was recommended that the discussion continue at the next meeting.

Public Comments

No public comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 am on a motion by Bill Hottel, seconded by Karen Helm.

Respectfully Submitted by Amy Simmons, Interim Executive Director, Winchester-Frederick County Convention and Visitors Bureau