

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, March 19, 2015. The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Board Members Present: Rebecca Ebert, Karen Helm, Tootie Rinker, Eddie Richard, Sharon Farinholt, Priya Patel, Eric Campbell

Board Members Absent: Bill Hottel

Staff: Sally Coates, Renee Bayliss

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Mayor Elizabeth Minor, Winchester City Council; Amy Simmons, City of Winchester; Dario Savarese, Full Circle Marketing

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

Roll Call: Mrs. Renee Bayliss

New Business and Special Presentation

Mr. Dario Savarese gave a presentation on the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival. Brochures for this year's festival were distributed. The festival has been able to increase their reach with promotional videos on television and social media due to grants that were awarded to them by Virginia Tourism Corporation. The festival has continued to grow, and events have been spread across ten days to a full festival schedule. A new component this year will be Winchester Ciderworks tours, which will include orchard tours and tastings of hard apple cider. Mr. Savarese also noted that Apple Blossom would like to continue to increase support from area hotels to promote the festival. Finally, he commented on the event schedule for Old Town Winchester, which includes Sunday concerts, free classic movies, and the continuation of annual events. A rack card detailing the events was distributed to the board.

Approval of Minutes

The February 2015 minutes were approved on a motion by Tootie Rinker, seconded by Eddie Richard.

Executive Director's Report – Sally Coates

Ms. Coates reminded the board that she will be retiring, and reflected on her career, noting that she loved her job at the Convention & Visitors Bureau. She introduced the Interim Director, Amy Simmons, who is also the City of Winchester's Public Information Officer.

Ms. Coates informed the board of the past month's activities, including providing support for one of the final Civil War Sesquicentennial grants, to include installation of signage at the Third Winchester

Battlefield. The CVB hosted a meeting at the Visitors Center for a group of museum directors, made a presentation at Frederick County Middle School's Career Café, and helped organizers with the Blue Ridge Parkway to plan their annual AAA FAM Tour April 11-12. Ms. Coates thanked Ms. Patel for hosting the counselors at the Wingate Hotel, and noted the importance of all the contributing partners for this event.

The Wilderness Road: Virginia's Migration Trail has recently completed panels that will be on display in the Visitors Center as an exhibit detailing the early settlement of the area. This has been a long awaited project that started shortly after Ms. Coates began working at the Visitors Center.

Finally, Ms. Coates presented the board with the 2015 Civil War Walking Tour rack cards and the 2015 Official Visitors Guide to Winchester-Frederick County, which was just delivered. She noted several improvements that have been made this year. A new and updated Interstate rack card has also been produced and is being distributed.

Old Business:

Report from Nominating Committee – Karen Helm & Priya Patel

Karen Helm informed the board of the progress of the nominating committee. They suggested the appointment of Kristen Laise, Executive Director of Belle Grove Plantation, (non-profit representative) and Dan Martin, with the Courtyard by Marriott, (for-profit, hotel industry representative). Ms. Rebecca Ebert made a motion to approve the nominations, seconded by Eric Campbell, all in favor.

Report from Artisan Trail Management Committee – Karen Helm

Karen Helm reported that the Artisan Trail Lunch & Learn meeting was well attended. A naming event will take place in May. The Committee is alternating City/County locations for each of their events.

Public Comments

Mayor Minor thanked Ms. Coates for her service as the Executive Director of the Winchester-Frederick County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 am on a motion by Karen Helm, seconded by Priya Patel.

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