

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, October 16, 2014. The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

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

Board Members Absent: Theresa Gaines

Staff: Sally Coates, Renee Bayliss

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Derek Gomes, Winchester Star; Karen Vacchio, Frederick County Parks & Recreation; Andrew Keefauver, Frederick County Parks & Recreation

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

Roll Call: Mrs. Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The September 2014 minutes were approved on a motion by Tootie Rinker, seconded by Sharon Farinholt.

Executive Director's Report – Sally Coates

Mrs. Coates reported on her experience this past month at the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA). The location of the event in Carlisle, PA affected attendance. She estimated that there were half as many travel writers as there were at last year's event in Arlington, VA. Mrs. Coates also informed the board of the "blitz" that the CVB is participating in at the Welcome Center in Manassas. A Winchester-Frederick County display, along with Visitor Guides and other brochures will be showcased for a month. The CVB has also participated in exhibits at the City of Winchester's employee Wellness Fair and will showcase material at the Cedar Creek Reenactment this weekend.

Mrs. Coates also updated the board on several projects that are in progress, including the development of the Artisans Trail, mobile iTours, a new monument sign for the Visitors Center, finalizing the RFQ for the 2015 Visitors Guide, and upgrading the speed of the CVB's internet service.

Several publications were provided to the board that included advertisements or articles featuring Winchester-Frederick County. These included a full-page ad in Southern Travel & Lifestyle magazine, an article in the New England Antiques Journal, and most notably, a feature in Southern Living Magazine's November 2014 edition.

Mayor Charles Harbaugh was Mrs. Coates guest on this month's Tourism Tuesday radio show. He discussed the 150th Anniversary of the Battle of Cedar Creek events that will be taking place this weekend.

New Business:

Report on Development of Short Promotional Video – Renee Bayliss

Mrs. Bayliss informed the board of efforts she has made to promote the Convention & Visitors Bureau's (CVB) new 30 second video online. The video has been posted online on various websites, including Vimeo, YouTube, Facebook, and the homepage of the CVB's website. Mrs. Bayliss boosted the post on Facebook, and has begun a Google Adwords for Video campaign.

Report from Marketing Committee – Karen Helm

Ms. Karen Helm reported on the meeting that was held by the Marketing Committee. She noted that they have reviewed the 2014-2015 Strategic Marketing Plan, and small edits and updates have been made. The plan is kept flexible as well, so that changes can be made throughout the year.

Introduction to our area's first Battlefield Half Marathon – Andrew Keefauver and Karen Vacchio

Ms. Karen Vacchio gave an introduction to the Frederick County Parks and Recreation Department. She informed the board of the variety of programs and events that are offered, including several successful running events. The department's newest event is the Battlefield Half Marathon, which will be a closed course race that covers the Kernstown Battlefield and surrounding area. The race will benefit the non-profit organization, WATTS. The event will also include a Health and Wellness Expo, music, and children's activities at Creekside. 600 runners have registered for the event so far. Mr. Keefauver reported that approximately 60% of the runners are from out of the area. Rooms are also blocked for participants at the Country Inn & Suites in Kernstown.

Public Comments

Mr. Eddie Richard reminded the board that the Apple Festival at Richard's Fruit Market is this weekend, and the Virginia Gourd Festival will take place in November. Ms. Karen Helm reported that the Patsy Cline Historic House will be closing October 31, and will not open again until April. There will be no Christmas Tours this year. Ms. Rebecca Ebert noted that the Historical Society's museums will be closing for the season as well, but they will have Christmas Tours in December.

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

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