

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, September 18, 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, Sharon Farinholt, Priya Patel, Eric Campbell, Theresa Gaines

**Board Members Absent:** Eddie Richard

**Staff:** Sally Coates, Renee Bayliss

**Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media:** Rob Aitcheson, Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation; Derek Gomes, Winchester Star; Jennifer Bell, Winchester Downtown Manager; Lisa Adams, 612 Vineyard

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

**Roll Call:** Mrs. Renee Bayliss

### **Approval of Minutes**

The August 2014 minutes were approved on a motion by Tootie Rinker, seconded by Bill Hottel.

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

Virginia Tourism Corporation recently announced that data from the United States Travel Association shows an increase in tourism revenue in every region of Virginia. Mrs. Coates told the board that the City of Winchester saw an increase of 4.7% over 2012, and that Frederick County's increase was 5.2%. The economic impact figures for cities and counties in the Commonwealth of VA is posted at [www.vatc.org/research/economicimpact/](http://www.vatc.org/research/economicimpact/). Mrs. Coates also reported on the efforts being made to replace the aging signage on Pleasant Valley Road directing visitors to the Visitors Center and Abram's Delight. She provided the board with a mock-up of the new sign, which will include a permanent monument base due to new regulations for the corridor enhancement district.

Tourism stakeholders are being given an opportunity to purchase listings in the 2015 Virginia Travel Guide. Mrs. Coates noted that the listings are \$200 and help offset the costs of the Winchester-Frederick County Convention & Visitors Bureau's ad. She added that participation by local businesses and attractions helps improve the presence of Winchester-Frederick County in this important marketing piece.

### **Report on visit from travel writer – Renee Bayliss**

Mrs. Bayliss briefed the board on a recent visit from a travel writer who came to the area after a connection made by Mrs. Coates at the MATPRA Marketplace. The writer, Malerie Yolen-Cohen, is from Connecticut and blogs for the Huffington Post and others. Mrs. Bayliss helped her check into her hotel, oriented her to the downtown area, took her to lunch and answered her questions, signed her up for an Old Town ghost tour, and gained her admission to the Historical Society museums. She also planned to visit the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley and the Patsy Cline Historic House the following day.

### **New Business:**

#### **612 Vineyard – Lisa Adams, Owner**

Ms. Adams introduced the board to her establishment, 612 Vineyard, which opened in March. She explained that it is a family-run business, operated out of her home on a scenic property. The winery's tagline is "Unwind Your Attitude." Ms. Adams is learning the winemaking process, and has several varieties of grapes growing, including Norton, which is a native variety. She provided the board with the tasting notes for the wines that are offered, and a listing of upcoming events.

#### **Third Winchester and other Civil War Events – Rob Aitcheson, Communications and Merchandising Coordinator, Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Foundation**

This weekend is the 150<sup>th</sup> Commemoration of the Third Battle of Winchester, and Mr. Aitcheson described the events that would be taking place for this special event. A motorcoach tour, a variety of tours and programs, living history, cannons, cavalry demonstrations, and more will be available to participants. Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation is anticipating thousands to attend from Canada and all across the United States. The major attraction will be the battlefield programs on Saturday, which are open to Winchester-Frederick County residents free of charge.

### **Public Comments**

Mr. Hottel reminded the board of the Civil War HistoryMobile, which will be at the Apple Harvest Arts & Crafts Festival, in conjunction with the Third Battle of Winchester commemoration. Mrs. Helm reported on the success of the Patsy Cline Music Festival, and Mrs. Jennifer Bell reported on upcoming events in Old Town Winchester, including the first events that will be held at the newly completed Taylor Pavilion. Ms. Rebecca Ebert also invited the board to attend the Handley Library gala.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 am on a motion by Sharon Farinholt, seconded by Karen Helm.

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