

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, September 22, 2016. The meeting began at 8:05 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Board Members Present: Dan Martin, Eric Campbell, Andy Gyurisin, Kristen Laise, Eddie Richard, Sharon Farinholt, Mary Braun

Board Members Absent: Karen Helm, Priya Patel

Staff: Renee Bayliss, Justin Kerns

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Josh Janney, Winchester Star; Robert Hess, Frederick County Board of Supervisors.

Call To Order: Mr. Dan Martin, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Mrs. Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The July meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Sharon Farinholt, seconded by Eric Campbell. The August meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Eric Campbell, seconded by Kristen Laise.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns gave an overview of the past month's activities, including Tourism Tuesday, meetings with the Shenandoah Valley DMO group, the Virginia Restaurant, Lodging and Tourism Association, and the Winchester City Manager, in addition to the progress of the ABC license application. Mr. Kerns also attended the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance (MATPRA) Marketplace. He distributed copies of the new Shenandoah Spirits Trail pocket maps. The board reviewed the maps, and Ms. Kristen Laise asked about Backroom Brewery not being included. Mr. Kerns replied that Warren County was asked if they wanted to participate in the project, but declined.

Ms. Sharon Farinholt asked about the status of bus parking in Old Town, because she had seen a No Bus Parking sign on Cork Street. Mr. Kerns noted that a bus parking space on Fairfax Lane is being tested as a new potential space.

Mr. Kerns announced that the CVB received a grant from Virginia Tourism Corporation, and that Winchester-Frederick County has won the bid to host the MATPRA Marketplace for 2017. Ms. Kristen Laise offered to host writers that may be interested in covering the National Sheepdog Trials that will be held around the same time. Several board members noted that they predict other businesses and attractions will also be interested in hosting the writers.

Finally, Mr. Kerns distributed Virginia Tourism Corporation's economic impact numbers, and thanked those who participated in the branding focus group.

Committee Reports:

Marketing Committee –Sharon Farinholt and Kristen Laise

The Marketing Committee discussed participating in the branding focus group meeting. They noted that two interesting points that came up in the meeting were that Winchester is not a "college town" and our area is not "Northern Virginia."

Branding Committee – Andy Gyurisin

Mr. Gyurisin noted that he had a prior commitment and was not able to participate in the branding focus group, but expressed interest in sharing the online focus group survey on social media. Mr. Kerns explained the next steps in the branding process, including the survey and the branding strategy. Ms. Farinholt asked how the brand will be chosen. After a discussion, it was determined that the branding committee will choose several of the top options and present to the full Tourism Board for a vote.

By-laws Committee – Dan Martin

Mr. Martin reviewed the potential updates to the by-laws, which included changing the term “hotel” to “lodging,” and also reported that after questions at the last meeting, it was determined that voting by email is not permissible. Finally, he noted that he does not see any issues with the existing term limit verbiage, and reiterated that the board agreed that the annual review of the Executive Director needs to stay in the by-laws. Ms. Farinholt asked if there is anything in the by-laws about removing a board member. Several board members reviewed the by-laws and determined that there is verbiage in the instance that a board member needed to be removed. The board also decided to update the by-laws so that the marketing committee is made a permanent committee.

Unfinished Business

Artisan Trail Inaugural Celebration – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns and several board members reported on the Artisan Trail Launch Party, which was held at the George Washington Hotel. The Trail is now in the process of distributing the promotional brochures.

New Business

MATPRA Marketplace Hosting 2017 – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns reported that hosting the MATPRA Marketplace will bring a group of about 110 travel writers and DMO representatives to Winchester. The group is being hosted by the George Washington Hotel. The CVB will need to organize businesses to provide other venues, food, bus transportation, and sponsorships.

Public Comments

Ms. Braun announced that the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum’s carnival was a successful fundraiser, and Mr. Martin noted that the Shenandoah Valley Apple Harvest Festival experienced record numbers. Ms. Farinholt informed the board that a new Chamber of Commerce president is starting soon. Mr. Gyurisin noted that the Lost Weekend film festival is this weekend, and the Country Inn & Suites is getting booked up. Ms. Kristen Laise announced that Belle Grove has several special programs this weekend, including a behind-the-scenes tour, and free admission for Museum Day Live.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 am on a motion by Dan Martin, seconded by Eric Campbell.

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