

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, January 18, 2018. The meeting began at 9:05 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Board Members Present: Eric Campbell, Andy Gyurisin, Karen Helm, Kristen Laise, Eddie Richard, Priya Patel, Mary Braun

Board Members Absent: Dan Martin, Sharon Farinholt

Staff: Renee Bayliss, Justin Kerns

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Blaine Dunn, Frederick County Board of Supervisors; Jennifer Bell, City of Winchester Downtown Manager; Sierra Fox, WDVM News

Call To Order: The meeting began at 9:05am.

Roll Call: Mrs. Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The November minutes were approved on a motion by Mary Braun, seconded by Karen Helm.

The December minutes were approved on a motion by Mary Braun, seconded by Karen Helm.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns discussed the activities of the past month, which included selling ads for this year's Visitors Guide, appearances on two WDVM television spots, The Valley Today radio show with guests from First Night Winchester, participating in Winchester's Economic Development Strategic Planning session, and a presentation to the Frederick County Board of Supervisors about the tourism office's current and future plans, goals, and accomplishments. Mr. Kerns thanked Supervisor Dunn for the opportunity to present.

The Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership held a strategic planning retreat, and should be getting another report back from their research in about a week. The group continues to see opportunities come from the Family Travel with Colleen Kelly TV show that was filmed last year. Mr. Kerns also informed the board of the Shenandoah Spirits Trail event, which will celebrate the one year anniversary of the trail and feature a speaker from the Winery at Bull Run.

Committee Reports:

Marketing Committee –Kristen Laise

The Marketing Committee did not have a formal meeting in the past month. They noted that they are waiting on further details on the marketing budget.

Strategic Plan Committee –Mary Braun

The Strategic Plan Committee has not met yet, and is waiting on results from the City's strategic plan.

Unfinished Business:

Website Refresh – Renee Bayliss

Mrs. Bayliss reported that March 1 is a potential launch date for the new website. She plans to meet with the web developer soon, but is still working on updating listings on the site. Plans could be delayed due to the timeline for completion of the Visitors Guide.

Tourism Ambassador program update – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns noted that the program will take place in the end of April, before the majority of the tourism season starts.

New Business:**LOVEworks Program Community Taskforce – Justin Kerns**

Mr. Kerns announced that there will be a community meeting held to discuss possibilities and form a committee to create a LOVEwork for Winchester-Frederick County. The meeting will be held in mid-February.

Formation of Nominating Committee – Eric Campbell

Mr. Kerns reported that Dan Martin and Eric Campbell's terms on the board will end in June 2018. This will leave openings for one private sector position and one non-profit position, one of which is a hotel/lodging entity. Chair and Vice-Chair positions will also need to be filled. Andy Gyurisin and Karen Helm volunteered to serve on the Nominating Committee. Eric Campbell confirmed that Andy and Karen will form the committee. Mr. Kerns also reminded Priya Patel and Kristen Laise that their terms will be expiring, and to notify him before June whether they want to continue to serve.

Public Comments

Karen Helm reported that the Artisan Trail is working on getting renewals from members, trying to be more active in 2018 with meetings and events, and plans to firm up the membership team.

Jennifer Bell informed the board of the Chocolate Escape and Winchester on the Rocks events that are coming up. She also explained the new Traipse app for Old Town, and invited everyone to check it out and see the latest additions. She noted that the Old Town Development Board has created a Tourism Task Force. Eddie Richard announced that Richard's Fruit Market will be open on Saturday. Mary Braun discussed a new cave exhibit that will be coming to the Discovery Museum. Andy Gyurisin announced that the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema's Lost Weekend Film Club event sold out, they will be hosting a very special guest (Dolores Huerta) in March for the Cesar Chavez documentary, and that they will be hosting numerous Black History Month screenings, which will benefit the NAACP.

Kristen Laise announced that registration for the Farm to Fork Fondo at Belle Grove Plantation in May is now open. Priya Patel announced that the hotels closed out the year very well. Justin Kerns introduced Supervisor Dunn to the board.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 on a motion by Karen Helm, seconded by Priya Patel.

Respectfully Submitted by Renee Bayliss, Creative Design and Visitor Services Manager, City of Winchester