

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, July 20, 2017. The meeting began at 8:05 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

**Board Members Present:** Dan Martin, Andy Gyurisin, Kristen Laise, Justin Kerns, Karen Helm, Mary Braun

**Board Members Absent:** Eric Campbell, Eddie Richard, Sharon Farinholt, Priya Patel

**Staff:** Justin Kerns

**Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media:** Felicia Hart, Director of Community Dev & Tourism for Front Royal; Jennifer Bell, Winchester Downtown Manager; Lauren Haan, Winchester-Frederick County CVB intern; David Smith, Mayor of Winchester; Josh Janney, Winchester Star

**Call To Order:** Dan Martin called the meeting to order.

**Roll Call:** Lauren Haan

### **Approval of Minutes**

The June minutes were not approved because there were not enough board members present.

### **Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Kerns discussed the progress he has made with the new Patsy Cline exhibit in the Visitor's Center. He also discussed his experience in Washington D.C. for the Southeast Tourism Society's Annual Congressional Summit. He noted that he just shared information about Winchester and didn't lobby anything. Mr. Kerns would like to see more large group tours coming through Winchester and he met with Kate from MARS to discuss collaborations as well as give her information about what to do in our area. The PR 101 workshops for local businesses occurred this past week on July 17<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Kerns received good feedback from that and is waiting for a presentation from guest speaker, Rachel McAllister, to send out for those who missed the workshop or would like to review it.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Marketing Committee— Sharon Farinholt and Kristen Laise**

Photography for the advertising campaign was nearly finished; however the photographer is not well and unable to work currently, so that has been put on hold.

#### **MATPRA Marketplace Committee—Karen Helm and Mary Braun (Justin Kerns reporting)**

The MATPRA Marketplace Committee has been meeting regularly. Many interesting things were learned at the workshop, including information about the background of many travel writers. A good number of them are freelance, therefore they can usually accept compensation as well as be published in multiple publications. Lauren Haan and Justin Kerns have been working more on finalizing FAM tours and assigning attendees to each tour.

### **Unfinished Business:**

#### **Tourism Master Plan—Justin Kerns**

Mr. Kerns discussed the activities of the past month, including an update on the Master Plan; he spoke with Berkley Young from Roots Rated who suggested doing a Retreat and a Strategic Plan rather than a Master Plan for \$7,500.

### **Website Refresh Update**

Mr. Kerns also gave an update on the website refresh, Renee Bayliss is out on maternity leave and will finish that when she returns.

### **Short Presentation—Felicia Hart**

Ms. Hart discussed community development in Strasburg, VA. She has a MOU with the county, stating that the town manages her sector, the tourism division. Her division has a robust budget and many assets that they were not tapping into. She now has been working with the assets her town has to offer and doing what she can to improve it. Recently, the Front Royal Visitor Center won Trip Advisor's Certificate of Excellence. One thing Ms. Hart is working on now is getting good photography of her region to help promote it. Her town has had different investors invest in property recently bringing a lot of new, beneficial businesses to the community. She has been very successful in working with other entities to make the process of starting a new business as easy as possible for new people coming to the area.

### **Public Comments**

Jennifer Bell presented some upcoming events in Old Town Winchester including Fire and Rescue Appreciation Night, Friday Night Live, Old Town Farmers Market, Shape Up Sundays, National Night Out and Classic Movie Night. Kristen Laise spoke about Belle Grove's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a museum. To celebrate on August 13<sup>th</sup>, they will be open 1-5 p.m. for free entry. They will include cake and ice cream, as well as other activities. On August 26<sup>th</sup>, Belle Grove will also be hosting a wine Festival with performers and booze produced locally. Andy Gyurisin mentioned some events happening at the Alamo including an 80's skate movie screening and inviting local skaters to come and skate at the Alamo. They are also hosting several festivals coming up and a kids' camp to benefit the Evans Home and Bright Futures. Mary Braun also discusses events at the Discovery Museum including a Harry Potter Day, Astronomy Night and an evening fundraiser on August 26<sup>th</sup>. Karen Helm noted that the number of visitors at the Patsy Cline House is good, but bus tours are down. Mayor Smith added that bus tours are down nationally because of a new travelling trend. Smithsonian Free Museum day is coming up on Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> and the Patsy Cline House, Belle Grove, the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley and the Discovery Museum will be participating in it.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 a.m. on a motion by Karen Helm, seconded by Kristen Laise.

Respectfully Submitted by Lauren Haan, Winchester-Frederick County CVB intern