

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, June 15, 2017. The meeting began at 8:03 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, Priya Patel, Mary Braun

Board Members Absent: Karen Helm

Staff: Renee Bayliss, Justin Kerns

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Jennifer Bell, Winchester Downtown Manager; Brian Brehm, Winchester Star; Lauren Haan, Winchester-Frederick County CVB intern

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

Roll Call: Mrs. Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The May meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Sharon Farinholt, seconded by Mary Braun.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns discussed the activities of the past month, including continued distribution of Visitors Guides. Demand has been high and the magazine format has been quite popular. He noted that he has been preparing for next week's Southeast Tourism Society's Congressional Summit, which he will be attending. Mr. Kerns participated in a FAM trip in Harrisonburg that hosted international travel writers before their conference in Washington, DC. Planning continues for the MATPRA Marketplace event in September. Mr. Kerns also gave an update on regional initiatives, including a new project. The SVTP (Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership) group has contracted with Roots Rated, a business that will create and distribute PR and media stories about the Shenandoah Valley. Roots Rated focuses on outdoor publications. Several board members asked about the cost of using this agency, and Mr. Kerns noted that it would be an expensive service to use as an individual destination, but the partnership makes it more affordable.

Committee Reports:

Marketing Committee – Sharon Farinholt and Kristen Laise

The marketing committee has not met in the past month. Mr. Kerns noted that photography is nearly complete for the advertising campaign, and several images of Patsy Cline have been approved for usage as well.

MATPRA Marketplace Committee – Karen Helm and Mary Braun (Justin Kerns reporting)

Mr. Kerns introduced Lauren Haan, the JMU student that will be assisting with the MATPRA Marketplace planning. He noted that sponsorships will be open to the local community in about a week.

He also reminded board members of the public relations workshop that will be held to help local businesses prepare to tell their story for travel writers. It is free to attend.

Unfinished Business:

Tourism Master Plan – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns told the board that the SVTP group is contracting a business from Charlotte, NC to assist with their tourism master plan, and that he may ask for feedback from them regarding the CVB's tourism master plan. Mary Braun asked if the master plan will address the various regional organizations' roles and how they overlap with the CVB's goals. Mr. Kerns gave the board some background information and history on both the SVTP and SVTA (Shenandoah Valley Travel Association) organizations.

Public Comments

Mary Braun from the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum informed the board of the new, upcoming Sunset Series at the museum, an evening event for adults. She also told the board about the ribbon cutting that was held at the Clearbrook Welcome Center to unveil the Triceratops climbing head that the museum donated and was installed there. Andy Gyurisin reported on the success of the visit from the Rick and Morty truck, which saw about 700 visitors to the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema. Mr. Eddie Richard reported that Richard's Fruit Market will be opening in June for the first time ever. Mr. Dan Martin reported on the success of the Rotary Club's rummage sale, and Priya Patel told the board that last weekend was very busy for local hotels. Sharon Farinholt gave an update on planning for the annual Business Symposium, and several board members asked about how the CVB could be involved. Kristen Laise and Eric Campbell both reported that attendance has been average at Cedar Creek & Belle Grove, and Kristen reminded the board of the Art in the Barn event that will be held this weekend at Belle Grove Plantation. Jennifer Bell noted upcoming events in Old Town Winchester, including Friday Night Live, Shape Up Sundays, and the reception that will be held at Piccadilly's Public House with Virginia Tourism Corporation for the Virginia Main Street event in July.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 am on a motion by Kristen Laise, seconded by Priya Patel.

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