

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, March 15, 2018. The meeting began at 8:10 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

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

Board Members Absent: Priya Patel

Staff: Renee Bayliss, Justin Kerns

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Jennifer Bell, City of Winchester Downtown Manager; Brian Brehm, Winchester Star; Rick Copeland, Misty Mountain Meadworks

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

Roll Call: Mrs. Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The February minutes were approved on a motion by Eddie Richard, seconded by Sharon Farinholt.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns reported that the Economic Development Strategic Planning and draft report is complete, and the final will be available soon. He is in the early stages of discussions with partners to expand the Fields of Gold agri-tourism program into Winchester-Frederick County. He noted that Mrs. Bayliss attended a Go Blue Ridge Travel Summit, and she reported that it was well attended and the keynote speaker was the President of Schenck Foods. Mr. Kerns also hosted a site visit with a group considering locations for a large event in 2019. He also made connections with several producers scouting the Winchester area and Virginia as a film location. He also gave updates on the Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership's plans and the Shenandoah Spirits Trail's latest initiatives.

Committee Reports:

Marketing Committee – Kristen Laise and Sharon Farinholt

The Marketing Committee had a meeting with Mr. Kerns and reviewed a spreadsheet of ad buys for the upcoming year. They are working on negotiating lower rates for some of the advertisements. It was also noted that a lot of this year's placements are in the DC area. The board also asked about potential budget increases, but Mr. Kerns reported that the CVB is not requesting additional funding this year.

Strategic Plan Committee –Mary Braun and Dan Martin

Mary Braun met with Mr. Kerns and they discussed whether the Strategic Plan should cover three years or five, created a list of possible facilitators, and a list of potential participants. She asked Mr. Kerns what is the goal for starting this process, but Mr. Kerns noted that he hopes to start soon, but it is not in the upcoming budget and he may need to find funding for the project.

Nominations Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Karen Helm

The Nominations Committee has not met. Sharon Farinholt asked which members are terming off the board, and Mr. Kerns replied that Eric Campbell and Dan Martin are the members that need to be

replaced. Eric Campbell noted that one of his associates is interested, and would be a good fit if the committee would like another representative from the National Park Service. Sharon Farinholt also noted another hotelier that has expressed interest.

Unfinished Business:

Website Refresh – Renee Bayliss

Mrs. Bayliss reported that the website is on hold until the Visitors Guide is completed and sent to the printers.

Tourism Ambassador program update – Justin Kerns

The date of the program is now April 17 and 19, 10am-noon. There will be identical material presented at two locations, Middletown and Winchester. Kristen Laise asked about registration, and Mr. Kerns said that he will send out an EventBrite invitation.

LOVEworks Program Community Taskforce – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns noted that two meetings have been held. The group decided on creating just one “LOVE work” and discussed options for locations. They considered how to include both the city and the county. The top three locations are the Old Court House lawn, Handley Library, and the Visitors Center.

New Business:

Kyle Petty’s Ride Across America event update – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns told the board about the upcoming motorcycle ride for charity, which will be passing through the area and is staying overnight at the Clarion Inn and Conference Center.

Special Guest Presentation – Rick Copeland, Misty Mountain Meadworks

Mr. Copeland started his meadery in 1983, and is located in Frederick County. He sources his own honey on his property is one of only ten mead makers in Virginia. He has recently moved his business to an expanded facility. He noted some of the challenges of operating a meadery and how regulations have changed. He said that the most popular variety is Wildflower Honey Mead and invited board members to visit Murphy Beverage in Old Town Winchester for a tasting.

Public Comments

Jennifer Bell announced upcoming events in Old Town Winchester, including the Old Town Farmers Market. Kristen Laise noted that Belle Grove Plantation opens this weekend with a special event. Eddie Richard said that Richards Fruit Market will be open for one day this weekend. Andy Gyurisin announced a variety of fundraisers that Alamo Drafthouse Cinema will be hosting soon. Mary Braun said the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum will be celebrating its 22nd anniversary soon, and they are adding a new event, a fundraising run.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 on a motion by Kristen Laise, seconded by Karen Helm.

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