

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, November 16, 2017. The meeting began at 8:06 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:** Brian Brehm, Winchester Star; Stephanie Lillard, Virginia Tourism Corporation

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

**Roll Call:** Mrs. Renee Bayliss

### **Approval of Minutes**

The October meeting minutes were approved on a motion by Sharon Farinholt, seconded by Eric Campbell.

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

Mr. Kerns discussed the activities of the past month, including two Tourism Tuesday radio shows, meetings with the Winchester EDA Strategic Plan Steering Committee, and a meeting with Frederick County government about how tourism will be a part of the county's plans in the future. He noted that there will be a new liaison from Frederick County that will be starting in January. Mr. Kerns also attended the VA-1 conference in Norfolk, and reported on the Shenandoah University students' class project to collect hotel data. The students did not have much success collecting information on business and leisure travelers from the hotels. Dan Martin said that he was contacted by the students yesterday, very last minute.

Work on the new website is continuing. Mr. Kerns gave an update on the regional initiatives. Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership has hired Mindy Bianca and Roots Rated for some PR projects. The Shenandoah Spirits Trail meets next on January 25. Sharon Farinholt asked Mr. Kerns about the TV movie, *Santa Girl*, being filmed in the area. He had not been contacted by the film production company, but Mary Braun announced that they had filmed on the roof of the Discovery Museum.

### **Committee Reports:**

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

The Marketing Committee has not met but they asked Mr. Kerns about the budget and timeline for media buying. He said he would provide the budget and that he does not have a specific deadline for when media buys take place.

### **Unfinished Business:**

#### **Website Refresh – Renee Bayliss**

Mrs. Bayliss reported that she is working with the web developer to install an Instagram plugin on the new website that will potentially pull user-generated content from the web and feed it into a photo gallery. She is also working on updating all the listings for attractions, hotels, etc.

### **New Business:**

#### **Virginia Tourism Corporation Conference – Justin Kerns**

Mr. Kerns reported that there was good local representation at the VA-1 conference. One of the highlights of interest to him was the availability of free resources for marketing to international travelers. He also noted that the new director of CRUSA (which markets the DC region to international travelers) is now living in Winchester, and he hopes to meet with him soon. He also displayed a video brochure to the board, a unique marketing piece that combines print and video.

#### **Tourism Strategic Plan Ad Hoc Committee**

The board discussed the creation of the Strategic Plan committee, and the scope of the project. Kristen Laise and Sharon Farinholt suggested three years as a reasonable timeframe for the plan, in order to stay current with trends and changes that may arise.

#### **Plan for presenting new branding and ad campaign**

Mr. Kerns plans to present the new branding and ad campaign to the elected officials in December.

#### **Special Guest Presentation – Stephanie Lillard, Virginia Tourism Corporation**

Stephanie Lillard is the new representative for Virginia Tourism to the Northern Valley and Northern Piedmont regions. She has 12 areas that she will be assisting, and is searching for opportunities for growth. She discussed ways for tourism related businesses to maximize their presence on Virginia.org, opportunities for assistance with funding, and the possibility for hosting a Virginia Tourism Corporation Help Desk in our area.

#### **Public Comments**

Eddie Richard reported that he had a travel writer return to Richards Fruit Market to collect more information. Kristen Laise announced that Belle Grove has been chosen for the special event, Farm to Fork Fondo, which will draw 500 bicyclists to the area in May of 2018. Andy Gyurisin noted that the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema is busy with the Polar Express events and several events with visits from movie directors are upcoming.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 am on a motion by Eric Campbell, seconded by Karen Helm.

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