

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, April 19, 2018. The meeting began at 8:07 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, Priya Patel, Mary Braun

Board Members Absent: Karen Helm, Sharon Farinholt

Staff: Renee Bayliss, Justin Kerns

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Jennifer Bell, City of Winchester Downtown Manager; Blaine Dunn, Frederick County Board of Supervisors; John Hill, Winchester City Council

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

Roll Call: Mrs. Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The March minutes were approved on a motion by Eddie Richard, seconded by Mary Braun.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns presented the new Visitors Guide, and noted that the print quality has been improved with the new printer that is being used. Mr. Kerns met with Scott Balyo, the new director of CRUSA, and they discussed possibilities for regional partnerships. He will be the guest speaker at next month's Tourism Board meeting. Mr. Kerns also discussed the presentations at the regional SVTA meeting, which included I-81 corridor improvements and LGBT travel. In the past month, he participated in the tourism component of the City of Winchester's INSIGHT training program and presented on the Tourism Tuesday radio show. Mr. Kerns also thanked Eddie Richard for hosting the AAA FAM tour that came through the area at Richard's Fruit Market.

Committee Reports:

Marketing Committee – Kristen Laise

The Marketing Committee noted that the CVB was approached to purchase advertising in the Kennedy Center's program for Hamilton. They noted it was not in the budget at \$10,000, but it was interesting that the sales person approached Winchester as a potential advertiser. Blaine Dunn noted that the CVB could present these types of opportunities to the localities to consider the option for additional funding.

Strategic Plan Committee –Mary Braun and Dan Martin

The Committee has not met in the past month.

Nominations Committee – Andy Gyurisin

The Nominations Committee is continuing efforts to identify and contact potential members.

Unfinished Business:

Website Refresh – Renee Bayliss

Mrs. Bayliss reported that work on the website has picked back up and she is making progress. She has a meeting with the web developer next week, and it is getting close to completion.

Tourism Ambassador program update – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns hosted one training program at Handley Library, and the second program is today at Lord Fairfax Community College. The class is on the tourism industry and local assets.

LOVEworks Program Community Taskforce – Justin Kerns

The LOVEworks Committee did not meet in the past month.

New Business:

Perception and Awareness Study Results – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns presented the results of the perception and awareness study. The study was conducted among residents of Northern Virginia. He noted that the number one word associated with our community was “country.” The results also suggested that people living in Northern Virginia seem to perceive the Winchester area as very far away in distance. The board discussed how the tourism office and the community can raise awareness, since so many in the area of Northern Virginia are completely unaware of Winchester. Andy Gyurisin asked whether the numerous groups marketing our area (including the Shenandoah Apple Blossom Festival) may be sending mixed messages, and that it’s important that those messages be in line with one another.

Special Guest Presentation – Sean Murphy, Virginia Center for Literary Arts

The special guest will attend at another meeting, as his attendance was not confirmed.

Public Comments

Mary Braun announced that the next event at the Shenandoah Valley Discovery Museum is their Anniversary celebration. Kristen Laise noted that Belle Grove’s Beer Fest is coming up. Jennifer Bell reported that Rally in the Alley is this weekend, and that new businesses opening in Old Town include a wine tasting room and Broken Window Brewing.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 on a motion by Priya Patel, seconded by Mary Braun.

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