

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, June 21, 2018. 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, Mary Braun, Sharon Farinholt, Eddie Richard

Board Members Absent: Priya Patel

Staff: Justin Kerns

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Jennifer Bell, City of Winchester Downtown Manager; John Hill, Winchester City Council; Brian Brehm, Winchester Star; Lani Pendleton, LaQuinta Inn & Suites

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

Roll Call: Sharon Farinholt

Approval of Minutes

The May minutes were approved on a motion by Mary Braun, seconded by Eric Campbell.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns reported that he has been working with a group that will be bringing a very large event to the area in 2019. An announcement will be made soon, to take place on the Old Court House Lawn. He noted that the recent Farm to Fork Fondo event was a success. This month, he also had a discussion with the company Civitas, and they help communities identify funding opportunities through Tourism Improvement Districts. This is not available yet in Virginia, but is being explored. Mr. Kerns hosted a guest from Amuse Arts & Crafts Festival on the Tourism Tuesday Radio Show. FOX5 will be in Winchester filming for a "Zip Trip" segment, and Mr. Kerns has been assisting as needed.

Mr. Kerns was approached by a gentleman who has started a website called "Run Winchester." The site will have information on running routes. He also hoped to sell some of his branded T-shirts in the Visitors Center. The board discussed how the Visitors Center may be approached by many businesses and non-profits that would like to sell their items in the gift shop. Mr. Kerns clarified that the CVB sells items wholesale, not on consignment, and may choose what is suitable to offer for sale.

Mr. Kerns also reported that the CVB was featured in the paper regarding outdoor recreation and developing online trail maps for the George Washington National Forest. Kristen Laise and Eric Campbell suggested contacting the Forest Service in Edinburg for existing trail maps. He also announced that the Spirits Trail is printing a new map with an added passport, and that the Artisan Trail is developing trolley tours. Andy Gyurisin asked if anything was done to promote the Pride Celebration this month. Mr. Kerns reported that the CVB worked with Virginia Tourism to create and promote the event and an itinerary. Finally, he announced that the African-American Heritage and History & Architecture brochures have been updated and reprinted.

Committee Reports:

Marketing Committee – Kristen Laise and Sharon Farinholt

The marketing committee met with the Winchester EDA and the Frederick County EDA to get feedback on the marketing campaign and to see if the CVB's marketing is supporting their marketing efforts.

Strategic Plan Committee – Mary Braun and Dan Martin

Mary Braun and Justin Kerns met this past month. Since Dan Martin's term is expiring, he will need to be replaced. Mary Braun asked for a timeline for completion, and Mr. Kerns replied that any plans should be firmed up by December since that is when the budget will need submitted.

Board Appointment & Nominations Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Karen Helm

It was announced that the reappointments and new appointments of board members have not been approved by City Council at this time. Mr. Kerns noted that the appointments were discussed in Executive Session, so the board is now waiting on their guidance. Kristen Laise asked who the new potential members are, and Mr. Kerns replied that they are Lani Pendleton from LaQuinta Inn & Suites, and Shannon Moeck with Cedar Creek & Belle Grove National Historical Park. Mary Braun asked the board if it would be possible to vote to extend the terms of Dan Martin and Kristen Laise until the appointments are approved. Mary then made a motion to extend their terms, seconded by Sharon Farinholt, all in favor. Eric Campbell pointed out that if his term were extended, he would no longer be able to attend since he is taking an assignment at Monocacy National Battlefield. Mary Braun asked if we could have more information in the future about nominees, such as a resume or letter of interest. It was noted that that would need to be an edit to the by-laws. Mary thanked Dan and Eric for their service on the board.

Unfinished Business:

Website Refresh – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns reported that there was a setback on the developer's end, but that the CVB is in the final proofing stage.

LOVEworks Program Community Taskforce – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns reported that the taskforce has not met and is waiting to hear the results from a meeting with Shenandoah University regarding placement of the LOVEworks.

New Business:

Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

Mary Braun made a motion to delay the election of Chair and Vice-Chair, due to the board appointments not being approved. The motion was seconded by Sharon Farinholt.

Presentation of Comparative DMO Study

Mr. Kerns presented a comparative analysis he compiled with the budgets and tax information of the CVB alongside other localities.

AirBnB Legislation Update (Winchester City)

Mr. Kerns announced that AirBnB properties located in the City of Winchester will now be required to obtain a CUP and pay bed taxes. He noted that the City and County have 76 properties currently listed on AirBnB and this number continues to grow. Frederick County requires properties to have a CUP.

Virginia Tourism Marketing Grant Sponsorship

Mr. Kerns told the board that he has been approached by Go Blue Ridge Travel to sign their grant application as a sponsor. Several Winchester businesses are partnering on the grant. After a discussion, Andy Gyurisin said it was difficult for the board to determine without more information about the grant. Mr. Kerns noted that he wanted to bring it to the board just in case there were any objections.

Public Comments

Mary Braun announced that the Discovery Museum will be hosting events related to the Children's Literature Conference. Kristen Laise reported that there will be an Art Show at Belle Grove Plantation. Eddie Richard noted that Richards Fruit Market opened last Thursday, and they will be expanding their petting zoo. Eric Campbell reported that Shannon Moeck will be taking over his duties during his new detail at Monocacy. Karen Helm announced that the Patsy Cline Historic House is focusing on their gift shop space and has been busy with bus groups.

John Hill asked about the African American Heritage walking tour, and what it would take to get some of the sites to be open to the public. It was discussed that because many of the sites are privately owned, the property owner would need to be contacted and go through a process of permitting to be able to be open to the public. Kristen Laise noted that some of the sites are churches and may be able to host public programs.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:24 on a motion by Mary Braun, seconded by Kristen Laise.

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