

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, September 20, 2018. The meeting began at 8:08 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

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

Board Members Absent: Priya Patel, Sharon Farinholt

Staff: Justin Kerns, Renee Bayliss

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Brian Brehm, Winchester Star; Lani Pendleton, LaQuinta Inn & Suites, Shannon Moeck, Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park

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

Roll Call: Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The August minutes were approved on a motion by Mary Braun, seconded by Karen Helm.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns explained how he has been uploading photos and 360 degree videos of local businesses and attractions to Google. Numerous meetings in the past month have included a meeting with Shenandoah University regarding the HOG Rally Charity Run, the OTAC Tourism Taskforce meeting (formerly the Old Town Development Board), a meeting with the new director of the regional airport, and a Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership meeting at the new Hotel Madison and conference center in Harrisonburg. He also had a tour at Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park, where new trails and signage are being installed.

Mr. Kerns displayed a map created by the Outdoor Recreation Committee that identifies areas for hiking, mountain biking, and more. Mr. Kerns and Mrs. Bayliss also met with Woody Bousquet from Shenandoah University about the next edition of the Shenandoah Naturally brochure. It was determined that the CVB would assist with the design of the brochure, and the University would pay for the printing. Mr. Kerns also noted that work has begun on the design of this year's Christmas ornament for the gift shop.

Committee Reports:

Marketing Committee – Kristen Laise and Sharon Farinholt

The marketing committee did not meet in the past month.

Strategic Plan Committee – Mary Braun and Dan Martin

The strategic plan committee has discussed the proposals from the potential facilitators, and they independently determined that Destinations Marketing Group would be the best fit for the CVB at this time. Mr. Kerns also noted that he will have them add in a progress report, which was a recommendation from Mary Braun. The first in-person visit from the company will be in October.

Board Appointment and Nominations Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Karen Helm

The nominees were forwarded to the next regular meeting session of City Council. The board noted that Dan Martin will be able to finish his term and this will be his last meeting. The board thanked him for his many years of service on the Tourism Board.

Unfinished Business:

HOG Rally Update – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns discussed how the HOG Rally is considering options for parking the motorcycles when they have their largest event in Old Town Winchester. Karen Helm suggested that in the past, the City has been able to close Cameron Street in front of City Hall for other events, such as a bike show, to accommodate their parking needs. Mr. Kerns noted that there are several other events taking place during the HOG Rally, including a Willa Cather Conference and a large swim meet at Jim Barnett Park.

Spotswood Poles update – Justin Kerns

There will be a meeting during the first week of October to discuss Spotswood Poles' story with several interested parties.

New Business:

Chair and Vice-Chair Elections discussion – Justin Kerns and Dan Martin

It was noted that board members should bring their potential nominees for consideration to next month's board meeting.

Google DMO Partnership Program – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns announced that the Winchester-Frederick County CVB is now part of the Google DMO Partnership Program. The office is considered a "trusted verifier" and now has access to the 360 degree camera and other tools to verify listings on Google. The Winchester-Frederick County CVB is the second DMO in Virginia to get involved.

Tourism Ambassador Fall Training – Justin Kerns

The next training session of the Tourism Ambassador Program will take place on October 3, 2018.

Public Comments

Mary Braun announced the annual carnival fundraiser for the Discovery Museum. Andy Gyurisin noted that several big name guests including Delores Huerta and actor Stephen Tobolowsky will be at the Alamo Draffhouse. Kristen Laise reminded the board that Belle Grove will be hosting programs for the Cedar Creek Commemoration, even though the reenactment was canceled. Karen Helm announced that more visitors than ever toured the Patsy Cline Historic House at this year's Block Party. Jennifer Bell listed numerous events taking place in Old Town Winchester, including a new event, the Shenandoah Valley Book Festival. Shannon Moeck gave an overview of programs being offered by the NPS for the Cedar Creek Commemoration Weekend. Mr. Kerns also informed the board of an article on Winchester that was recently published in AAA World Magazine.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 on a motion by Mary Braun, seconded by Karen Helm.

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