

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, January 17, 2019. The meeting began at 8:08 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Board Members Present: Lani Pendleton, Andy Gyurisin, Karen Helm, Kristen Laise, Eddie Richard, Sharon Farinholt, Mary Braun

Board Members Absent: Shannon Moeck, Priya Patel

Staff: Justin Kerns, Renee Bayliss

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Blaine Dunn, Frederick County Board of Supervisors; Jennifer Bell, Winchester Downtown Manager; John Hill, Winchester City Council; Richard Kennedy, Top of Virginia Regional Chamber; Brian Brehm, Winchester Star; Mike Diaz, Mayor of Stephens City

Call To Order: Andy Gyurisin, Vice-Chairman, called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

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

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns reported on the activities of the past month including announcing his position as vice-chair on the Chamber of Commerce's Marketing and Branding Committee. His guest on Tourism Tuesday for December was Kathy Nerangis for First Night Winchester. The Visitors Center sold admission buttons, as in previous years. Mr. Kerns and Mrs. Bayliss met with the owner of Classy Cowboy Chauffer, a tour bus service. CVB staff and representatives from the Patsy Cline Historic House hosted a film crew from BBC Ireland that is doing a documentary on the influence of Scots-Irish influence on Rock 'n' Roll. CVB staff is also assisting the airport with a new "Wings and Wheels" event. Mr. Kerns reported that he has been attending FY20 budget meetings with the Tourism Board Marketing Committee and Frederick County. He also announced that advertising sales for the 2019/2020 Visitors Guide have closed.

Committee Reports:

Marketing Committee – Kristen Laise and Sharon Farinholt

The marketing committee met and reviewed the Strategic Plan and budget process. Kristen Laise noted that it is a challenge to market the destination with the current budget.

Board Appointment and Nominations Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Karen Helm

The committee will meet before the next meeting, at which time they will present options.

Unfinished Business:

HOG Rally Update – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns reported that the HOG Rally organizer arrives today for a 5-day planning visit. He noted that Candy Hill Campground is sold out for the rally, and that it has been decided that the Butler Map will be printed, with support on printing costs from Grove's Harley Davidson and the Economic Development offices.

Strategic Plan update – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns said that he is waiting to get on the upcoming agendas for City Council and Board of Supervisors to be able to present the strategic plan.

New Business:

Willa Cather, Virginia Women’s Monument Nomination – Justin Kerns

A recent article in the Winchester Star described the new Virginia Women’s Monument and that Willa Cather was not included. When contacted, officials noted that if it can be demonstrated that she meets the criteria, her name can be added, so Mr. Kerns is contacting the Willa Cather Institute at Shenandoah University to work on submitting an application for her inclusion.

Public Comments

Kristen Laise asked Renee Bayliss to give an update on the Guided Walking Tours rack card. She noted that the participating groups met to discuss changes and that the card is being redesigned this year.

Jennifer Bell announced that Winchester on the Rocks cocktail contest is this month, followed by Chocolate Escape and a press conference for the 2019 events will be held on February 6. She also noted that Winchester’s 275th anniversary is this year. Blaine Dunn noted that the 275th anniversary of Winchester could be used as a promotional tool for tourism. Sharon Farinholt noted that it is the 10th anniversary of her business, Crown Trophy. Mike Diaz announced that the Newtown Heritage Festival is May 24-25. Richard Kennedy reported that the Chamber’s Greater Good Awards is coming up. Andy Gyurisin announced that numerous businesses are doing promotional discounts for federal employees, including the Alamo Drafthouse. Alamo has a full lineup of events for Black History Month in February. He also reported that he is participating with a South End Initiative group that includes businesses from Firefly Café to the Town of Middletown. Eddie Richard described some of the new projects at Richards Fruit Market, which includes Winter Beef Boxes and children’s birthday parties. Mary Braun announced that upcoming events at the Discovery Museum include Sensory Night and Fandemonium. Kristen Laise reported that Belle Grove’s Preview Night for what’s happening at Belle Grove in 2019 will take place on February 9, and they are currently working on renovating the barn to serve as a new Visitors Center. Karen Helm noted that the Patsy Cline Historic House will be open seven days a week for the 2019 season. Lani Pendleton announced that LaQuinta is hosting a marketing event with Dave Miles.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 on a motion by Sharon Farinholt, seconded by Kristen Laise.

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