

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, February 28, 2019. The meeting began at 8:05 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

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

Board Members Absent: Priya Patel

Staff: Justin Kerns, Renee Bayliss

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Jennifer Bell, Winchester Downtown Manager; Brian Brehm, Winchester Star

Call To Order: Kristen Laise, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The January minutes were approved on a motion by Eddie Richard, seconded by Andy Gyurisin.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns reported on the activities of the past month, which included several meetings to discuss preparations for the HOG Rally in June, Tourism Tuesday shows, which featured guests from the HOG Rally and the new Back 2 the Grind coffee shop, and a luncheon Mr. Kerns attended for a progress update on Winchester's Economic Development Strategic Plan. Mr. Kerns also met with John Jacobs from Shenandoah University to discuss Willa Cather and submit an application for her name to be added to the Wall of Honor in Richmond. The Visitors Bureau also hosted representatives from Virginia Tourism Corporation's International Marketing Group, as they were shown around the Winchester area on a familiarization tour. In addition, budget meetings with both the City and the County continue. Renee Bayliss gave an update on the status of the 2019-2020 Visitors Guide, in addition to noting that she is working on the design of wayfinding signs for Winchester.

Committee Reports:

Marketing Committee – Kristen Laise and Sharon Farinholt

The marketing committee did not meet in the past month. Sharon Farinholt will need to be replaced soon, since her term on the board is expiring.

Board Appointment and Nominations Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Karen Helm

The committee has found a potential candidate from Stephens City, and she will be submitting an application to the City of Winchester.

Unfinished Business:

HOG Rally Update – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns reported that participants from 29 different states and several different countries have already registered for the June event.

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.

Spotswood Poles Memorial Initiatives update – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns noted that some potential initiatives are being presented, and he is looking forward to hearing what is adopted.

New Business:

Tourism Ambassador Task Force request – Justin Kerns

In an effort to keep the graduates connected, Mr. Kerns said the Tourism Ambassador program would benefit from having a Taskforce from the board to keep them involved. Suggestions for programs included t-shirts, which could be worn by ambassadors at events to welcome visitors, recognitions or awards, social events like mixers to get the ambassadors back together, and a Facebook group. Eddie Richard and Shannon Moeck volunteered to be on the Taskforce.

FY2020 Budget Proposal – Justin Kerns

The board was shown the Powerpoint presentation that Mr. Kerns presented to the Frederick County Board of Supervisors. Mary Braun asked Mr. Kerns about how his salary would be affected if the budget was increased, and inquired regarding raises and COLA increases. Mr. Kerns noted that he appreciates her inquiry, but he is focused on the new programs and initiatives. Jennifer Bell noted that while there are COLA increases, most likely any significant salary increases occur after a reclassification of an employee's position. Mary Braun also noted that the board would attend budget presentations, if he would like. Mr. Kerns noted that he has not made a formal presentation to City Council, and met with the City Manager regarding the budget proposal.

Public Comments

Jennifer Bell noted the upcoming events in Old Town Winchester. Karen Helm announced the Patsy Cline Historic House will be open seven days a week this year, and is looking for volunteers. Shannon Moeck reported that the National Park Service will be hosting a Star Party on April 13. Kristen Laise reported that Belle Grove will be opening March 23, and their new Barn and Welcome Center will be opening April 13. Lani Pendleton reported that LaQuinta Inn and Suites is hosting a Chamber Business and Breakfast in March. Eddie Richard announced that Richard's Fruit Market will be hosting a special event for World Down Syndrome Day. Andy Gyurisin informed the board that the first South end business meeting took place, and he let them know about the upcoming HOG Rally. He also noted that the latest Lost Weekend Film Festival at Alamo Draffhouse Cinema sold out.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 on a motion by Shannon Moeck, seconded by Andy Gyurisin.

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