

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, May 16, 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, Priya Patel

Board Members Absent: Sharon Farinholt

Staff: Justin Kerns, Renee Bayliss

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Jennifer Bell, Winchester Downtown Manager; Richard Kennedy, Top of Virginia Regional Chamber; Gwen Walker, Winchester Area NAACP; Heather Butler, Newtown Music Center

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

Roll Call: Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The April minutes were approved on a motion by Andy Gyurisin, seconded by Lani Pendleton.

Committee Reports:

Board Appointment and Nominations Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Karen Helm

Mr. Gyurisin introduced the two candidates for the board, Gwen Walker and Heather Butler. Ms. Walker gave an overview of her participation on local boards, and noted her involvement in black history events and initiatives, the arts, and experience working with local attractions. Ms. Butler provided information on her music background, and community involvement in the Stephens City area. She owns Newtown Music Center in Stephens City. Mrs. Helm and Mr. Gyurisin noted that the two candidates are part of the community that have not been represented on the board in the past.

Marketing Committee – Kristen Laise and Sharon Farinholt

It was noted that Sharon will no longer be serving on the board and there will need to be a replacement on the Marketing Committee. Lani Pendleton expressed her interest in taking Sharon's place.

Tourism Ambassador Committee – Eddie Richard and Shannon Moeck

Mr. Kerns has been posting updates to the Facebook group that was created for the graduates of the Tourism Ambassador program.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns reviewed the activities of the past month, including HOG Rally meetings, Wings & Wheels event planning meetings, travel writer FAM tour, a meeting to discuss the Taste of Blue Ridge with Nancy Craun, and the presentation he and Mrs. Bayliss attended on OTT. OTT is "Over the Top" advertising – or advertising on internet television, rather than conventional cable. He also reported that he made a presentation to Frederick County on the draft strategic plan. He reminded the board of the Civil War Trails project to find sponsors for the Civil War markers in our area, and noted that the Old Town Advancement Commission is going to support the one in front of the Taylor Hotel. He also announced that the Tourism Office will have an intern working with Renee later this summer.

Unfinished Business:

HOG Rally Update – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns said that participants have registered from 37 states and four countries. He has been meeting with other City staff, including Emergency Management, regarding the event. Karen Helm asked about the expected attendance, and Mr. Kerns replied that they are anticipating 2,500-3,000 participants. Andy Gyurisin announced that a coalition of businesses between Kernstown and Middletown have developed a Poker Run as part of the rally, to benefit NW Works. Karen Helm noted that the Patsy Cline Historic House is hosting a special reception for attendees, and will have extended hours.

Spotswood Poles Memorial Initiatives update – Justin Kerns

There is a special evening for Spottswood Poles planned in June at a Winchester Royals game. A street in Jim Barnett Park was named after him, and an interpretive marker will be unveiled at Spottswood Poles Night.

Newcomer’s Event – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns reported that the Newcomer’s event is being planned for the second week of July. It will be a weekday, evening event.

New Business:

Marketing Campaign Award – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns announced that the Winchester-Frederick County CVB’s marketing campaign was recognized by the VADMO organization’s Virgo Awards for best Marketing Campaign, Small Budget category.

SVTP Stakeholder Presentation – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns told the board about the Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership’s event that was held at the Hotel Madison. The organization gave a presentation to stakeholders about their current accomplishments. Mr. Kerns showed part of the presentation on the projector, which also included promotional videos that SVTP had produced to advertise the Shenandoah Valley’s tourism assets to travelers.

Public Comments

Eddie Richard announced that his market is opening May 24. They are planning a Family Fun Day event in June. Shannon Moeck reported that Cedar Creek & Belle Grove National Historical Park will be having new Twilight Hikes, including one on May 25. Other upcoming events they have planned for the summer include History at Sunset programs and another in August with the topic of Soul Food in the Shenandoah Valley. Priya Patel announced that the Tru Hotel will be opening in August. Andy Gyurisin reported that the Comfort Inn is scheduled to open in December or January. Councilman John Hill thanked everyone on the board for their service and said that he acknowledges the good work that is being done.

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

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