

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, June 20, 2019. The meeting began at 8:00 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: Greeley Myers, Old Town Advancement Commission; Brian Brehm, Winchester Star

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

Roll Call: Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The May minutes were approved on a motion by Priya Patel, seconded by Shannon Moeck.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns gave an overview of the past month's activities, including meeting with the Frederick County EDA regarding sports tourism and agritourism, and a meeting with VRLTA about I-81 and its impact on tourism. He noted that the tourism office assisted travel writer Joe Tennis, and that after months of planning, the Wings & Wheels event at Winchester Regional Airport was a big success. He announced that the Spottswood Poles Night took place at Jim Barnett Park. The tourism office assisted with the historical marker and dedication program, which was well attended. Mr. Kerns also traveled to Washington, DC to participate in the Southeast Tourism Society's Congressional Summit. The group met with lawmakers to educate them on issues affecting tourism. Mr. Kerns and Mrs. Bayliss visited Thorndale Farm in Middletown to meet the owner, who is planning film festival. The site was used to shoot a short film on Frederick Douglass.

Mrs. Bayliss also noted that she planned and attended an Artisan Trail tour with a group from the Village at Orchard Ridge. They visited artist studios and a farm market. Kristen Laise said she is reviewing the letter that she plans to send to the Artisans Center of Virginia evaluating the effectiveness of the program, and emphasizing the significant investment that was made in our local Artisan Trail.

Committee Reports:

Board Appointment and Nominations Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Karen Helm

Kristen Laise asked for a motion to recommend the nominees that were introduced to the board last week to the Board of Supervisors and City Council. Shannon Moeck made a motion, seconded by Lani Pendleton, all in favor.

Marketing Committee – Kristen Laise and Sharon Farinholt

The marketing committee did not meet in the past month, but the new committee is Kristen Laise and Lani Pendleton.

Tourism Ambassador Committee – Eddie Richard and Shannon Moeck

The Tourism Ambassador Committee did not meet, but they will start planning the next training, and will hold it at a new location. Mr. Kerns noted they like to try different venues.

Unfinished Business:

HOG Rally Update – Justin Kerns

Karen Helm reported that the pre-event at the Patsy Cline Historic House went well, and the trolley organized by the tourism office was helpful. Kristen Laise asked about the routes the motorcycles will be driving, and Mr. Kerns distributed the Butler Maps, which include maps of the routes. He also told the board about the commemorative Winchester Jack Daniels bottles the HOG Rally is selling, the motorcycle parade, and the Poker Run.

Strategic Plan update – Justin Kerns

No updates to share at this time.

Newcomer's Event – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns announced that the event will be on July 11, from 5-7:30pm. He also reported on the activities that are planned, in addition to food offered by five local restaurants.

New Business:

Thank outgoing Board Members – Justin Kerns and Kristen Laise

Kristen Laise and Justin Kerns thanked the members for their service on the board. Greeley Myers noted that he will be the new representative for Old Town Winchester. It was also noted that Judy McKiernan will be the new liaison from Winchester City Council.

Public Comments

Kristen Laise said that the Garden Fest at Belle Grove Plantation had double the attendance this year than previous years. She also announced that they will be hosting a Soul Food event in August. Lani Pendleton reported on an educational initiative she is involved with at Quarles Elementary School. Shannon Moeck said that Cedar Creek and Belle Grove NHP hosted their first Twilight Hike, and it rained but still went well. The park is also hosting History at Sunset programs, and the next one is on the topic of historic photographic images. Eddie Richard announced that Richard's Fruit Market now has a small exhibit of apple history through the years at their farm. They have also added a fish pond. Kristen Laise reminded everyone that Belle Grove Plantation is closed July 4. Karen Helm announced that the Patsy Cline Historic House will be open July 4. Andy Gyurisin gave an update on events at the Alamo Drafthouse, including numerous special guests and an event that will have Delorean cars on display. Greeley noted that Old Town Winchester is prepping for the HOG Rally, upcoming summer events, and told the board that he is the chair of the Tourism Taskforce for Old Town Winchester. Priya Patel reported that the Tru Hotel will be opening the end of July/beginning of August.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:23 on a motion by Andy Gyurisin, seconded by Priya Patel.

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