

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, July 18, 2019. The meeting began at 8:04 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Board Members Present: Lani Pendleton, Andy Gyurisin, Karen Helm, Kristen Laise, Priya Patel

Board Members Absent: Eddie Richard, Shannon Moeck

Staff: Justin Kerns, Renee Bayliss

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Blaine Dunn, Frederick County Board of Supervisors; Greeley Myers, Old Town Advancement Commission; Cynthia Schneider, Top of Virginia Regional Chamber; Brian Brehm, Winchester Star

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

Roll Call: Renee Bayliss

Changes to Agenda

It was decided to discuss the Board and Commission Member Guidelines at another date, and to add a discussion on making the Marketing Committee permanent. Priya Patel made a motion to approve the changes, seconded by Andy Gyurisin.

Approval of Minutes

The June minutes were approved on a motion by Andy Gyurisin, seconded by Karen Helm.

Executive Director's Report

Mr. Kerns distributed a newly formatted Executive Director's report for the board to review. He discussed new data that is available from the Winchester Parking Authority on where its customers are coming from that park in Old Town Winchester. Mr. Kerns met with the eSports team organizers from Shenandoah University. They will be hosting an educational summit on eSports in September. He also met with the owner of a new brewery that will open in Frederick County. In addition, he has been assisting with the details for the Spottswood Poles historical marker, including location and verbiage. Mr. Kerns reported that Mrs. Bayliss has been working on promotion of the Civil War Weekend events, scheduled for August 16-18. He announced that he will now include the board on his emailed weekly report to the City Manager.

Committee Reports:

Board Appointment and Nominations Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Karen Helm

Andy Gyurisin reported that Gwen Walker is now going through the process to be approved as a board member, and that they are still waiting on Heather Butler.

Marketing Committee – Kristen Laise and Lani Pendleton

The marketing committee met twice, and reviewed the list of potential agencies for the CVB's new ad campaign. A long list of options was presented and the committee and staff narrowed it down to their top choices. Mr. Kerns then sent out a request for quote.

Tourism Ambassador Committee – Eddie Richard and Shannon Moeck

Eddie Richard and Shannon Moeck were not present at the meeting, but Mr. Kerns noted that they are planning to review past events and are working on a location to hold the next session.

Unfinished Business:

HOG Rally Recap – Justin Kerns and Greeley Myers

Greeley Myers reported that members of the Old Town Advancement Commission and vendors he spoke with seemed to feel that the event went well. He said that the Friday Night Live event was well attended. Mr. Kerns noted that the majority of comments on social media were positive. They also stated that the parade turnout was smaller than expected, but that the Butler Maps are selling well. Andy Gyurisin asked Mr. Kerns if the board could have a report from the Rally coordinator on attendance and their impression of how the event went.

Strategic Plan update – Justin Kerns

Mr. Kerns reported that he is waiting to hear when the Strategic Plan presentation will be put on the City Council agenda.

Newcomer's Event – Lani Pendleton

Lani Pendleton said that approximately 40 people attended the event, which perhaps will continue to be held quarterly. Andy Gyurisin asked if the participants could be surveyed to get their feedback. Blaine Dunn suggested contacting local realtors and owners of recently purchased homes to get the word out, in addition to other ideas to attract more attendees.

New Business:

Committees – Justin Kerns and Kristen Laise

It was noted that the Personnel Committee consists of Priya Patel and Kristen Laise, and the Finance Committee needs a public sector representative to join Andy Gyurisin. Kristen Laise proposed that a change to the by-laws be made to change the Marketing Committee to a permanent committee. Andy Gyurisin and Karen Helm agreed. Lani Pendleton made a motion to approve the change, seconded by Karen Helm.

Sports Tourism and Agritourism Advisory Committees – Justin Kerns and Kristen Laise

Kristen Laise and Justin Kerns announced the possible creation of two ad-hoc committees, consisting of two board members each, for agritourism and sports tourism. They said it will be necessary to reach out to the community to get to know these topics. Mr. Kerns noted that there can be up to an additional 10 non-members from the community that can participate on the committees. Priya Patel offered to serve on the Sports Tourism Committee. Karen Helm and other board members agreed that it may be necessary to wait until the two board vacancies are filled before finalizing the committees.

Public Comments

Blaine Dunn noted that he would like to hear about the effect of the FY20 budget increase in the upcoming year. Greeley Myers reported that there is a new Community Arts & Vitality Manager, and said they will be a good resource to connect with tourism. Andy Gyurisin reminded the board of the work the new hockey group is doing, and commended the comic book store Four Color Fantasies for being nominated for a small business award. Karen Helm announced that there will be a preview of Ken Burn's documentary featuring Patsy Cline, at the Alamo Drafthouse Cinema during the annual Patsy Cline Fan Club weekend. Priya Patel said that the Tru Hotel will open in August. Lani Pendleton noted that the ADR of local hotels is up, but for some reason occupancy is down. Kristen Laise announced that the dinner portion of the Soul Food event at Belle Grove is already sold out.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 on a motion by Priya Patel, seconded by Lani Pendleton.

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