

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, August 15, 2019. The meeting began at 8:05 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, Eddie Richard, Shannon Moeck

**Board Members Absent:**

**Staff:** Justin Kerns, Paige Bridgeforth (intern)

**Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media:** Judy McKiernan, Winchester City Council; Cynthia Schneider, Top of Virginia Regional Chamber; Shawn Hershberger, City of Winchester Development Services Director; Brian Brehm, Winchester Star

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

**Roll Call:** Paige Bridgeforth

### **Approval of Minutes**

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

### **Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Kerns discussed new data that he obtained from the Winchester Parking Authority's Park Mobile app. He was able to have a heat map created by the City's GIS department that shows where people are coming from that have parked in Old Town Winchester (M-F, 9am-5pm). He noted that the cost of the Spottswood Poles historical marker will be covered by a private donor, and that the initial concept for the marker was approved. Mr. Kerns said he anticipates a good turnout for Civil War Weekend, due to increased interest online and an ad that the CVB placed in the Cooperative Living Magazine. Winchester will be hosting a new event called Winchester Wedding Weekend, which will market Winchester as a wedding destination. Mr. Kerns said the event will visit six different venues, one of which is 6 Pastures, an upscale barn venue, which is a great example of an agritourism business the CVB hopes to support and encourage. Eddie Richard noted that there is an abundance of new barn venues. Mr. Kerns also announced that there has been a 12% increase year over year in AirBnB rentals, the majority of which are leisure travelers.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Board Appointment and Nominations Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Karen Helm**

The committee reported that they are in the waiting period.

#### **Marketing Committee – Kristen Laise and Lani Pendleton**

The marketing committee reported that they received responses for the ad campaign RFQ from seven firms. They have narrowed the possible candidates to three. The firms will be brought in for face to face meetings. The committee is looking for one that will bring a new creative approach and they noted a strong need for more video as part of the campaign.

**Personnel Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Shannon Moeck**

The committee had a conference call and discussed training opportunities, ways to provide feedback, and plans to continue the intern program.

**Finance Committee – Priya Patel and Kristen Laise**

The committee plans to meet soon to discuss budget, coordinate with Marketing Committee, and take the new ad campaign into consideration.

**Tourism Ambassador Committee – Eddie Richard and Shannon Moeck**

The committee has not met in the past month.

**Unfinished Business:**

None.

**New Business:****Ideas and input from Committee Members**

It was noted that the Newcomers Event attendees gave positive feedback, and asked that the food be placed in the back of the Visitors Center, and to have more food selections. The next event will be October 17, and it will be held quarterly. New ways of marketing the event to large employers was discussed.

**Public Comments**

Cynthia Schneider discussed a complaint that was received at the Chamber of Commerce about parking fee enforcement from a visitor. Andy Gyurisin informed the board of events at the Alamo Drafthouse and the new hotel property, which should be completed in December or January. Karen Helm discussed the Patsy Cline Block Party and the Ken Burns film featuring Patsy Cline that will have a special screening event at the Alamo Drafthouse. Shannon Moeck noted that Cedar Creek and Belle Grove National Historical Park has seen very good attendance for their walking tour of Middletown. They are also offering new, in-depth tours of battlefields. Kristen Laise reported that Belle Grove's Wine Fest is coming up, and the Soul Food event was sold out, with over 200 people in attendance. Priya Patel reported that the Tru Hotel will now open in late October or early November. Lani Pendleton noted that her new youth reading program is taking off. Andy Gyurisin gave a suggestion for a guest speaker for next month's meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 on a motion by Kristen Laise, seconded by Priya Patel.

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