

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, September 17, 2020. The meeting began at 8:05 a.m. and was held virtually.

**Board Members Present:** Lani Pendleton, Andy Gyurisin, Karen Helm, Kristen Laise, Priya Patel, Gwen Walker, Arthur Kearns

**Board Members Absent:** Eddie Richard

**Staff:** Justin Kerns, Renee Bayliss

**Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media:** Blaine Dunn, Frederick County Board of Supervisors; Judy McKiernan, Winchester City Council; Shawn Hershberger, Winchester Economic Development; Brian Brehm, Winchester Star; Holly Redding, Old Town Advancement Commission; Laura Kerr Wiley, Museum of the Shenandoah Valley

**Call To Order:** Gwen Walker, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order.

**Roll Call:** Renee Bayliss

### **Approval of Minutes**

The July minutes were approved on a motion by Priya Patel, seconded by Karen Helm.

### **Status of Tourism in Win/Fred Co. during COVID-19**

Justin Kerns reported that the Northern Shenandoah Valley Covid Emergency Response Team continues to meet weekly and they have been discussing grants and CARES funding. He noted that our lodging occupancy continues to be down by about 20% over last year, but that there was finally one day that exceeded last year.

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

The Executive Director's Report was emailed to board members in advance of the meeting for review. No discussion at this meeting.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Board Appointment and Nominations Committee – Kristen Laise**

Kristen Laise reported that there was a meeting between the City and the County to discuss the process of board appointments, but that progress is being made and they will wait to hear the results. Some of the candidates should be moving through this process this coming month and may be able to start their terms at the October meeting.

#### **Marketing Committee – Kristen Laise**

Kristen Laise said that work continues with Charrette Agency on the ad campaign. After receiving CARES funding, an RFP was put out for a second campaign for fall and winter. The funds need to be spent by the end of December. She noted that the main ad campaign will be delayed while the Covid-19 campaign is running.

#### **Personnel Committee – Andy Gyurisin and Gwen Walker**

The personnel committee has not met.

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

Priya Patel reviewed the budget report, which was distributed to the board.

### **Video Featurette Ad Hoc Committee – Arthur Kearns and Gwen Walker**

Arthur Kearns said that the committee has just finished the video for Winchester Brew Works. He noted that the next topic is lodging, and that Hedgebrook Farm was selected. The next videos will be craft brewing and retail shops. Justin Kerns said that the videos are getting numerous views and excellent reach on social media.

### **Unfinished Business:**

#### **VTC Virtual Canadian FAM Tour update – Justin Kerns**

Mr. Kerns explained how the CVB is partnering with Virginia Tourism to host Canadian travel writers on a virtual familiarization (FAM) tour. Our area has a 15 minute segment, along with several other regional Shenandoah Valley DMOs, and will feature several local attractions with prerecorded videos. The border with Canada is currently closed due to Covid, but this allows them to learn more about the destinations for future travel.

### **New Business:**

#### **County CARES campaign – Justin Kerns**

Due to the city and county governments receiving federal CARES funding, the CVB will be able to use some of the funding from Frederick County to create an advertising campaign marketing our destination as open and safe to visit. The funds must be used by the end of 2020. The Frederick County EDA will be working with CVB staff to hire and execute a campaign using Charrette, the same agency doing the Uncommon to the Core campaign. It will have three rollouts – October, November, and December. The marketing committee and staff still needs to decide if funds will be directed toward developing a media plan to help direct the media placements. Karen Helm asked if the attractions featured in the advertising campaign will be able to view how they are presented before the campaign is launched. Justin Kerns noted that the Patsy Cline House is not included in the fall/winter campaign, but they can certainly be included in the discussions when the spring campaign launches.

### **City and County Liaison Comments**

Blaine Dunn noted that any support the CVB can provide to the entertainment industry or hotels would be very helpful, and that he would like to sit in on the interviews for the two candidates for the Tourism Board. Judy McKiernan said that she very much appreciated Mr. Kerns recent presentation to City Council on the department's progress and activities, and she would like to see him present more often. She also said that they are working on the process with the board candidates and hope to have them approved by October.

Mr. Kerns asked the board if there was any interest in holding the meeting in person. Most members agreed that meeting virtually is fine. Holly Redding offered Winchester Brew Works as a location, if the board would decide to meet in person.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Karen Helm, seconded by Priya Patel at 8:39am.

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