

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, August 15, 2013. The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

**Board Members Present:** Rebecca Ebert, Dan Martin, Bill Hottel, Tootie Rinker, Rainee Simpson, John Marker

**Board Members Absent:** Sue Robinson, Sharon Farinholt, Eric Campbell

**Staff:** Renee Bayliss

**Guests & Media:** Judy Kirby, Clearbrook Welcome Center; Jennifer Bell, Downtown Manager; Maricarol Miller, Old Court House Civil War Museum

**Call To Order:** Ms. Rebecca Ebert, Chairman, called the meeting to order.

**Roll Call:** Mrs. Renee Bayliss

### **Approval of Minutes**

The July 2013 minutes were approved on a motion by Dan Martin, seconded by Rainee Simpson.

### **Executive Director's Report – Renee Bayliss for Sally Coates**

Ms. Bayliss reported for Ms. Coates while she attends the Mid-Atlantic Tourism Public Relations Alliance Marketplace in Arlington, VA. Ms. Coates's focus at the Marketplace will be the Patsy Cline Historic House, the exhibition at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley, and the exhibit at the Visitors Center. Ms. Bayliss showed the board a photo of Ms. Coates's display and the promotional materials she will be using.

Ms. Bayliss reminded everyone that this weekend is Civil War Weekend, and displayed the flyer, passport, and bounty bags that will be used as prizes for the participants.

The RFQ for the new Winchester-Frederick County video has been written and sent to 8 potential bidders. The board members were asked to contribute any suggestions on reputable video production companies to which the CVB can send the RFQ. Ms. Bayliss noted that this month the CVB is doing a "blitz" exhibit in the Bristol, VA Welcome Center, and thanked Dan Martin and the Courtyard by Marriott for their work delivering and picking up the exhibit.

Winchester-Frederick County was recently featured in DC Metro Magazine, and Ms. Bayliss displayed copies of the magazine for the board. Ms. Bayliss informed the board that the "LOVE to Win" photo contest is in progress, but entries are slow. She noted that foot traffic in the Visitors Center was up 16% this July over last July, and the website traffic was up 17% over the same period. She also thanked the board members who are working to bring the History Mobile to the Apple Harvest Festival.

Please see Sally Coates Executive Director's Report, which was emailed to all board members for reference.

## **Old Business:**

### **History Mobile Application and Sponsorship – Bill Hottel and Tootie Rinker**

Mr. Hottel reported about his experience at the Sesquicentennial Help Desk, where he learned that having a “school day” in conjunction with the History Mobile’s visit is very important. Ms. Ebert reminded them to include private schools and home school children. He also spoke with a representative from Berryville who is requesting the History Mobile and they plan to coordinate their efforts to improve their chances of bringing it to the area. Ms. Rinker noted the perfect timing for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Third Battle of Winchester that weekend, and was pleased that they have several letters of support to submit with their application.

## **New Business:**

### **Clearbrook Welcome Center – Judy Kirby**

Ms. Kirby gave an introduction and update to the board about the Clearbrook Welcome Center. Her staff has been very consistent, with the majority working there for over 22 years. She noted that one of their main challenges is drawing travelers to the far end of the building where the staff and brochures are located. Her staff is seeing less families visit the center. Ms. Kirby showed the board photos of their displays, and their LOVE artwork. Ms. Kirby discussed their advertising opportunities, and Ms. Jennifer Bell expressed interest in advertising Old Town Winchester. The Welcome Center also has a conference room that is available at no charge for tourism related business, and holds 47 people.

### **Downtown Welcome Center – Jennifer Bell**

Ms. Bell reported on the Downtown Welcome Center that will be located on Boscawen Street. The center will be shared with the Economic Development Authority. Plans for the center have been pushed back, but things are progressing. Ms. Bell asked the board for any advice and suggestions in opening and operating the establishment. One of the Welcome Center’s goals will be to get the word out about Old Town Winchester as a destination. It will be a resource for locals and provide support for starting businesses downtown. The center will have a public restroom, and will be open Monday-Saturday 8am – 5pm. There will be one employee hired to handle the front desk and administrative work. Ms. Bell also plans to create a volunteer program. Several members of the board questioned the hours of operation, and asked if there will be somewhere to send people after 5pm, and suggested a brochure for what to do after 5pm.

Ms. Maricarol Miller announced to the board that there will be medical lectures at the Old Court House Civil War Museum for Civil War Weekend, and that the NSSA Fall National Competition and Tough Mudder are coming up in October.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m. on a motion by Dan Martin; seconded by Rainee Simpson, motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted by Renee Bayliss, Visitor & Community Relations Specialist, City of Winchester