

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, August 20, 2015. The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Board Members Present: Rebecca Ebert, Karen Helm, Bill Hottel, Dan Martin, Sharon Farinholt, Eric Campbell, Kristen Laise

Board Members Absent: Eddie Richard, Priya Patel

Staff: Amy Simmons, Renee Bayliss

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Jennifer Bell, Winchester Downtown Manager; Derek Gomes, The Winchester Star; Coy Ferrell, James Charles Winery

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

Roll Call: Mrs. Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The July 2015 minutes were approved on a motion by Bill Hottel, seconded by Dan Martin.

Executive Director's Report – Amy Simmons

Mrs. Simmons noted that this weekend is Civil War Weekend. The Visitors Center is participating by hosting author Jonathan Noyalas on Saturday, where he will sign copies of his new book. Mrs. Bayliss also contributed to the event by creating the poster and passport to promote the weekend's activities. Mrs. Bayliss has also been working on putting together trip ideas with various themes - and creating a page for them on the website.

Mrs. Simmons displayed the Southern Living ad and advertorial space that the Convention & Visitors Bureau purchased for the September issue of the magazine. The cost also included an email blast to subscribers and advertising leads.

Tourism Tuesday was this week, and Mrs. Simmons' guests were from Kernstown Battlefield. They also covered Backroom Brewery's InstaMeet, Friday Night Live, Drive-In Theatre's all nighter weekend and the Patsy Cline Music Festival. Finally, Mrs. Simmons reported that one of the travel counselors, Lori Wolfe, will be retiring after nearly 6 years. She has been in charge of keeping brochures organized and in stock, doing the deposit reports for the register each week, and making the schedule for the front desk staff.

Old Business:

New Director Recruitment Update – Amy Simmons, Interim Director

The job opening for the Executive Director position is scheduled to close on August 31. Qualified candidates will continue to be considered for interviews until then.

Presentation: Coy Ferrell, Operations Assistant, James Charles Winery

Mr. Ferrell provided the board with some background on the Bogaty family, owners of James Charles Winery in Frederick County. The family opened their first winery in 1995, and this is their third venture. They produce 10,000 cases of wine a year. The new winery is open daily, is situated on a 30-acre property, and boasts a salon space for special events. They can accommodate bus groups, have some foods available, and are pet and family-friendly. On September 5, from 1-5pm they will host a grand opening party. They also plan to host additional special events and live music on the weekends.

New Business:

Marketing Plan Review – Amy Simmons, Interim Director

Mrs. Simmons distributed copies of the strategic marketing plan. The board picked up discussion where they left off at the last meeting. Items discussed include the advertising plan (print and digital), improvements to the Visitors Guide, and the budget. Ms. Ebert noted that the Tourism Department is now aligned with Economic Development, rather than the Parks & Recreation Department. Ms. Sharon Farinholt discussed the possibility of the Convention & Visitors Bureau working together more often with the Chamber of Commerce. Other items discussed included getting a POS system for the front desk, and creating a Winchester-Frederick County-themed Christmas ornament to sell in the gift shop. Ms. Ebert noted that discussion of the marketing plan will continue at September's board meeting.

Public Comments

Mrs. Jennifer Bell reminded the board of the Friday Night LIVE event tomorrow. Ms. Kristen Laise discussed Belle Grove Plantation's Wine Festival in September. Mrs. Karen Helm provided information on the Patsy Cline Music Festival.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 am on a motion by Karen Helm, seconded by Sharon Farinholt.

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