

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, August 21, 2014. The meeting began at 8:00 a.m. and was held at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center.

Board Members Present: Rebecca Ebert, Theresa Gaines, Bill Hottel, Karen Helm, Tootie Rinker

Board Members Absent: Eric Campbell, Sharon Farinholt, Priya Patel, Eddie Richard

Staff: Sally Coates, Renee Bayliss

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Jo Dietrich, Leisure Publishing; Derek Gomes, Winchester Star; Jennifer Bell, Old Town Development

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

Roll Call: Mrs. Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

The July 2014 minutes were approved on a motion by Tootie Rinker, seconded by Karen Helm.

Executive Director's Report – Sally Coates

In reference to last month's comments from board members about the Canada Geese, Mrs. Coates was happy to report that the Geese Police from Leesburg, VA were hired by Winchester Parks & Recreation to rid the Visitor's Center of these unwelcome guests. So far, their efforts have been successful in keeping the geese off the grounds.

Mrs. Coates reported on her experience earlier this month at the Virginia Hospitality & Travel Association's regional tourism summit in Staunton. She noted that the presenters were in agreement that the Shenandoah Valley is an internationally-known brand. Important tourism trends were discussed at the conference; including an increase in consumer confidence, the strength of leisure travel, and the digital world as a big driver for tourism. Virginia Tourism Corporation's website, Virginia.org, receives 7 million hits per year.

Other items discussed by Mrs. Coates included the progress of the interactive tours for the mobile website, and efforts to expand the events/venues section of the Visit Winchester VA website. Mrs. Coates also displayed several of the CVB's recent print advertisements and read complimentary comments from visitors about their experiences with Visitor Center staff.

Report on Welcome Center Blitz in Bristol – Theresa Gaines

Ms. Theresa Gaines, of the Courtyard Marriott explained her hotel's role in partnering with the Visitors Center to host a "blitz" at the Virginia Welcome Center in Bristol. This has become an on-going, annual

effort that involves creating a display with rack cards, brochures, and more. This year's display also included a contest giveaway for a vacation to Winchester-Frederick County. Ms. Gaines noted that it is a very busy center, and the staff does an outstanding job helping promote our area. Mrs. Coates thanked the staff of the Courtyard Marriott for making the long drive to Bristol to set up and take down the display.

New Business:

Appointment of Theresa Gaines and Karen Helm to the Marketing Committee

Ms. Gaines and Ms. Helm were appointed to the Marketing Committee on a motion by Tootie Rinker, seconded by Bill Hottel.

Appointment of Eric Campbell and Bill Hottel to the Budget Committee

Mr. Campbell and Mr. Hottel were appointed to the Budget Committee on a motion by Theresa Gaines, seconded by Karen Helm.

Presentation on advertising opportunities with Virginia Tourism Corporation – Jo Dietrich, Director of Advertising, Leisure Publishing

Ms. Dietrich explained that Leisure Publishing is the company that produces the Virginia Travel Guide for Virginia Tourism Corporation, in both print and digital versions. She is also involved with online advertising on the Virginia.org website, and described opportunities for banner advertising. Some of the opportunities are seasonal, and include four niche markets: Foodies, Working Moms, History Buffs/Boomers, and Outdoor Recreation. The banner advertising program includes a guaranteed minimum of 1,000 clicks and retargeting behavioral advertising. Retargeting behavioral advertising involves ads that return to target a consumer as they continue to browse the web and visit certain sites.

Comments and Announcements

Ms. Tootie Rinker reminded the board of Main St. Agriculture Day (Sept. 20), Mr. Bill Hottel noted that the Apple Harvest Arts & Crafts Festival is Sept. 20-21, which is the same weekend as Third Winchester's commemoration weekend, Ms. Karen Helm noted that the Patsy Cline Music Festival is August 30, and Ms. Jennifer Bell announced that the Downtown Tailgate is Sept. 5-6, and Old Town Winchester has developed a mobile phone app.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 am on a motion by Theresa Gaines, seconded by Karen Helm.

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