

The regular monthly meeting of the Winchester-Frederick County Tourism Board was held Thursday, January 16, 2014. 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, Sharon Farinholt, John Marker, Eric Campbell

Board Members Absent: Sue Robinson

Staff: Renee Bayliss, Sally Coates

Non-Voting Board Members, Guests & Media: Jennifer Bell, Downtown Manager; Vic Bradshaw, Winchester Star; Mayor Elizabeth Minor, Winchester City Council; Dave Steigmaier, Congressman Frank Wolf's Office; Tim Farmer, Blandy Farm/State Arboretum of Virginia.

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

Roll Call: Mrs. Renee Bayliss

Approval of Minutes

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

Executive Director's Report – Sally Coates

Mrs. Coates informed the board of her trip to the AAA Marketplace in Greensboro, NC where she worked a booth in cooperation with Virginia Tourism Corporation, and met AAA employees from North and South Carolina. This past month, she also participated in the Top of VA Regional Chamber's panel discussion that focused on government and economic development, and heard a third presentation on mobile apps. Mrs. Coates and Mrs. Bayliss met with representatives of the Artisans Center of Virginia about their network of artisan trails.

Two activities developed by the CVB in partnership with Winchester Parks & Recreation were featured in the latest Parks & Recreation Activities Guide, and include a Historical Geocaching Tour of Winchester, and a Hidden Gems of Winchester Trolley Tour.

Mrs. Coates also announced that Jim Stallard is finishing ad sales for the 2014-2015 Visitors Guide, Winchester was featured in the Cooperative Living Magazine, the HistoryMobile will visit Winchester-Frederick County three times in 2014, and she is in the process of developing a day-long FAM Tour for front-line employees in the hospitality industry.

Mrs. Coates noted that Mrs. JudySue Kempf was not able to attend the meeting today to provide a report on the Patsy Cline Historic House, but wanted to let the board know that 31 bus tour groups are already booked to visit the historic home this year.

New Business:

2015 Budget Report – Bill Hottel

Board members were provided with copies of the 2015 budget. Mr. Hottel reviewed the highlights of the budget, and explained the fund balance, costs associated with computer replacements, and thanked Mrs. Coates and Mr. Campbell for their work and for participating on the budget committee. Ms. Rebecca Ebert asked for a motion to approve the 2015 budget. Ms. Tootie Rinker made a motion, Dan Martin seconded, and passed unanimously.

Report on Geocaching – Renee Bayliss

Mrs. Bayliss introduced the recently launched “Historical Geocaching Tour of Winchester.” She explained that the tour visits several historical points of interest and challenges participants to learn local history as they solve puzzles and use GPS units that will bring them to their final destination, where a special Winchester-Frederick County, Virginia collectible “path tag” is given as a reward. Geocachers from several states have already completed the tour, and feedback has been very positive.

Presentation Regarding Upcoming Events at the Virginia State Arboretum/Blandy Farm – Tim Farmer

Mr. Tim Farmer, Public Relations Coordinator for Blandy Experimental Farm, gave a presentation to the board on the VA State Arboretum and its current and upcoming programs and events. He provided a brochure with Spring Programs that include workshops, tours, and the Garden Fair. He noted that Blandy is partnering with Winchester Parks and Recreation for several programs this spring.

Public Comments

Mrs. Jennifer Bell, Downtown Manager, gave an update on the Downtown Welcome Center and introduced the Chocolate Escape event in February, which will feature dessert samplings and store promotions. Mr. Dave Steigmaier noted that his church is hosting a community banquet to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. this weekend. Ms. Sharon Farinholt announced that a half marathon event sponsored by Frederick County Parks and Recreation will take place this spring, starting at the Kernstown Battlefield.

Ms. Rebecca Ebert asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting, Dan Martin made a motion, seconded by Rainee Simpson, meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

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