



**Prince William County Office of Tourism  
Advisory Board Meeting**

**Prince William Ice Center  
Wednesday, April 27, 2022  
(9:00 am- 10:00 am)**

**Board Members Present**

Gwenn Adams  
Maureen Brennan  
Asad Chaudhry  
Jennifer Decker  
Michelle DeWitt  
Jim Larkin  
Bethany Webb

**DPRT/Tourism Staff Present**

Seth Hendler-Voss  
Mark Kowalewski  
Susan Plattner  
Michael Rojas  
Mike Stoupa  
Nicole Warner

**Board Members Absent**

Bryan Dolieslager  
Cathy Madigan

**I. Call to Order** – Tourism Advisory Board Chair, Michelle Dewitt called the meeting to order at 9:19 am.

**II. Acceptance of April 27, 2022 Agenda**

**VOTE:** By unanimous consent, the Tourism Advisory Board members present accepted the meeting agenda for April 27, 2022.

**Ayes:** Adams, Brennan, Chaudhry, Decker, DeWitt, Larkin, Webb

**Nays:** None

**Abstain from Vote:** None

**Absent from Vote:** None

**Absent from Meeting:** Dolieslager, Madigan

**III. Citizen’s Time**

The Board welcomed the Honorable Derrick Wood, Mayor of Dumfries; Keith Rogers, Dumfries Town Manager and Neabsco Supervisor, Victor Angry.

**IV. Acceptance of January 27, 2022 Tourism Advisory Board Minutes**

**VOTE:** By unanimous consent, the Tourism Advisory Board members present accepted the January 27, 2022 Tourism Advisory Board meeting minutes.

**Ayes:** Adams, Brennan, Chaudhry, Decker, DeWitt, Larkin, Webb

**Nays:** None

**Abstain from Vote:** None

**Absent from Vote:** None

**Absent from Meeting:** Dolieslager, Madigan

**V. Presentation- The Honorable Derrick Wood, Mayor of Dumfries**

Mayor Wood spoke on the history of Dumfries, the growth within the community, Rosie's para-mutual gaming machines and status of the Rose project. The project will include conference space for 1500, a 320-room hotel with eight restaurants. The hill side of the property (80 acres) is planned for three soccer fields, a public recreation area, trails and children's play area. Phase 1 of the Rose project is scheduled for completion in 16 months. Completion of the park is scheduled for 2023 and the buildings open in winter of 2024.

**VI. Board Chair Time (Chairman Michelle DeWitt)**

**a) Board Member Updates**

Jacqueline Connor of the Hylton Performing Arts Center joins the Tourism Advisory Board representing the history/culture industry. Jacqueline fills the seat vacated by Eileen Kennedy.

Anastasia Podorsky will be departing the Tourism Advisory Board in May which will leave an open seat for a representative of the Entertainment Industry. If any Board members have suggestions to fill this seat, please give their names to the Tourism Office.

**b) 2022 Advisory Board Retreat & Master Plan Discussion**

The Board Retreat is scheduled to follow immediately after the July 27, 2022 regular Tourism Advisory Board meeting and facilitated by the new Tourism Director. The meeting should end around 12:30 or 1:00pm. The goal is to develop a Tourism Master Plan to bring to the BOCS for adoption. Discussion will be on strategy, goals and impact of the Advisory Board. Location TBD.

**VII. Tourism Director Update (Seth Hendler-Voss)**

**a) Update on Open Tourism Positions**

**Tourism Director** -Seth thanked those who served on the selection panel for the Director position. The finalist is Kevin Costello. Seth will inform the Board of Kevin's decision upon acceptance of the position.

**Marketing Manager** - This position is currently being advertised for the second time and interviews will be scheduled as soon as possible. If a new Tourism Director is in place before this position is filled, the Director will participate in the selection process.

**Media & Partner Relations Specialist** - Nicole Warner will be leaving this position in April. Seth thanked her for her service. To increase marketing efforts this position will be evaluated and structural changes to the position are likely.

**b) Transient Occupancy Tax Revenue** (report provided in board packets)

TOT collection is doing much better than during pandemic. It looks like goals will be met for the fiscal year, tracking at 2018 levels in terms of revenue collections. It is expected that this fiscal year will bring in \$3.8M in TOT and budgeted to bring in \$4.4M in FY23.

In the FY23 adopted budget, the non-salary operating budget will be less than it was in 2019. Previously in this current fiscal year the budget was reduced by \$250,000 and tourism is expected to get back \$65,000 - \$70,000 of that amount in FY23. If revenue projections dictate it will be totally restored back to \$250,000 in FY24.

**c) Grants**

Currently the Office of Tourism has two marketing leverage grants in the works— Find Your Trail Campaign and a Sports Events incentive for the next USA-BMX Nationals event which is currently being bid on for calendar year 2023.

Lift up Lodging Grant funds (\$4M) were issued to 90% of hoteliers in Prince William County. The remaining funds allotted for the program should be moved to another program. The Restore Retail Grant (\$6M) was managed by the PWC Dept of Economic Development.

**d) 2021 Annual Report** (report provided in board packets)

**FY23 Budget** - The 4% meal tax was approved by the BOCS effective July 1, 2022. Approximately 1100 eating establishments and those that sell prepared food will be affected by this tax. More information on the tax will be forthcoming from the PWC Finance Dept. This tax should generate approximately \$24M dollars for the county with 14% going to schools and the balance to the county but no funds are going to tourism. This is not a tourism initiative.

**e) PWC News**

This weekend is the celebration of the Bi-Centennial of the Brentsville Historic Courthouse Center.

The county is in need of lifeguards for the county's two waterparks. Please refer friends and family to [www.pwcparksjobs.com](http://www.pwcparksjobs.com) to apply.

The Dept of Parks, Recreation and Tourism is experiencing unprecedented capital investments in the parks system. There is over \$50M in ongoing capital projects in PWC and that is investment of tourism assets.

**VIII. Tourism Sales, Sports Tourism and Marketing Updates** (report provided)

The tourism staff presented updates for Q3 FY2022 (January – March 2022). For the detailed report please refer to the handout provided in the board packets.

**IX. Advisory Board Member Time**

**Maureen Brennan** (PW Ice Center) - The Ice Center has recently acquired new owners. An addition of a dedicated George Mason locker room will be built as well as an upstairs level with bar. Business is picking up but not back to pre-Covid.

**Jim Larkin** (MurLarkey Distilled Spirits) -The distillery is busy and growing their bottle sales. It is tough to market new spirit products at this time. The tasting room has been busy. No staffing issues.

**Jennifer Decker** (Hampton Inn) - The hotel is busy with school and senior tour groups. Government travel is picking up.

**Asad Chaudhry** (Comfort Suites) - Bus groups are down by half compared to 2018-19 but up compared to 2020-21. Bookings have started coming in for next year. The hotels in this area are experiencing some crime which is affecting their business. They are beginning to see more tour buses.

**Bethany Webb** (Potomac Mills) - The mall retailers are 98% occupied. They are starting to see tour buses again. International business hasn't picked up but domestic and local are doing well.

**Gwenn Adams** (National Museum of the Marine Corps) - Student and tour groups are back. They are down several staff members including Gwenn's assistant. Final phase is in progress. Audio/visual is the last part of the final phase to be completed in 2023. Summer camps filled up quickly and the summer concert series begin soon.

**X. Adjournment**

**VOTE:** By unanimous consent, the Tourism Advisory Board members present adjourned the board meeting at 11:02 a.m.

**Ayes:** Adams, Brennan, Chaudhry, Decker, DeWitt, Larkin, Webb

**Nays:** None

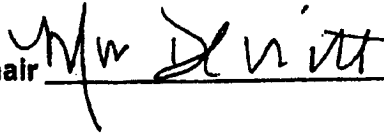
**Abstain from Vote:** None

**Absent from Vote:** None

**Absent from Meeting:** Dolieslager, Madigan

The next Tourism Advisory Board Meeting will be held Wednesday, July 27, 2022  
Location TBD

Michelle DeWitt, Advisory Board Chair



Kevin Costello, Tourism Director



Susan Plattner, Recording Clerk



**For ongoing updates, please remember to read our Monthly  
Partner E-Newsletter or look for us on  
Facebook @ "PWC Tourism News"**