



Prince William County Office of Tourism
Tourism Advisory Board Meeting
The Winery at LaGrange
Wednesday, July 27, 2022 - 9:00am

<u>Board Members Present</u>	<u>DPRT/Tourism Staff Present</u>	<u>Board Members Absent</u>
Gwenn Adams Maureen Brennan Jacqueline Connor Jennifer Decker Michelle DeWitt Claudia Friar Jim Larkin Thida Win-Love	Kevin Costello Seth Hendler-Voss Mark Kowalewski Michael Rojas Mike Stoupa	Asad Chaudhry Cathy Madigan Bethany Webb

I. **Call to Order** - Tourism Advisory Board Chair, Michelle Dewitt, called the meeting to order at 9:13 am.

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

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

Ayes: Brennan, Connor, Decker, DeWitt, Friar, Larkin, Win-Love

Nays: None

Abstain from Vote: None

Absent from Vote: Adams

Absent from Meeting: Chaudhry, Madigan, Webb

III. **Citizen Time** - No citizens present

IV. **Acceptance of April 27, 2022 Board Minutes**

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

Ayes: Brennan, Connor, Decker, DeWitt, Friar, Larkin

Nays: None

Abstain from Vote: Win-Love

Absent from Vote: Adams

Absent from Meeting: Chaudhry, Madigan, Webb

V. Board Chair Time (Chairman DeWitt)

a) **Introduction of New Tourism Director-** Kevin Costello

b) **Welcome New Board Members**

- Jacqueline Connor of Hylton Performing Arts Center – Culture/History Industry
- Thida Win-Love of IMG Hotels- B&B/Hotel/Motel Industry
- Claudia Friar of Jiffy Lube Live- Entertainment Industry

VI. Tourism Director Update (Kevin Costello)

a) **Update on Open Tourism Positions**

Marketing Manager - Of the 18 applications reviewed, five candidates were selected for interviews. Three have indicated their interest and web-based interviews have been set for week of August 1st. In-person interviews will be scheduled shortly thereafter.

Other Positions - Possibly two part-time positions can be combined into one full-time position, but this is still being determined.

b) **Transient Occupancy Tax Revenue Report-June 2022** – The final June report on TOT collections was not available from county finance. Kevin will send updated report to Board when available. ADR increased significantly over last year in April/May 2022. Jennifer Decker said staffing is still an issue with Hampton Inn Manassas and Thida Win-Love said her hotels (Gainesville and Woodbridge) are mixed in terms of occupancy and rates. Sleep Inn Dumfries has closed.

c) **2021 Annual Report** – No additional talking points at this time.

VII. Departmental Updates (full details can be found in the handout provided)

Sales, Marketing, and Sports Tourism FY22- Q4 (April-June 2022)

- a) **Sales** –Sales dept. will be attending Student and Youth Travel Association’s annual conference to be held in Washington DC, plan to host a pre-familiarization tour, and dine-around in partnership with Toby’s Dinner Theatre.
- b) **Marketing** – Progress has slowed due to staffing in the Marketing Dept. Projects completed include radio advertisements, summer Google Ads campaign and Fox5 Zip Trips in Occoquan and Stonebridge held this past spring/summer.

- c) **Sports** – Focus is on the Sports Fest event. Ten different travel tournaments will be occurring concurrently in PWC, across nine different sports. Sports tournaments will be a mix of youth and adult categories. Michael will send map of events to the Board. The event is scheduled for October 7–10, 2022 with an opening ceremony to occur on Friday night at Pfitzner Stadium. Sunday closing ceremonies will include a presentation of medals “swag bags” for participants and will feature a live band. The event is to be funded through monies from an ARPA grant. Success of the event will determine if it becomes an annual signature event. The event will be publicized and promoted through a website (rough draft provided by Kevin) that should be completed soon, an email marketing campaign and through social media advertising. Event organizers will do their own marketing to their databases. The focus will be on two target audiences: 1) local, regional and national participants who will play in the tournaments (marketed to by event organizers) and 2) spectators. On Saturday there will be a “festival village” with food and vendors who will cater to those participants. No admission fee is currently planned for festival village.

VIII. Advisory Board Members Time

- **Larkin** – MurLarkey is having a record year so far. There is an increase in customer traffic as well as private events. Their spirits were featured (in the background) in the TV show Ozark.
- **Decker** – Hampton Inn Manassas has been very busy. June 2022 was their best month in two years and July looks like it will be even better. LOVE sign is still in construction phase. Unity Reed High School’s art department will be painting the sign. It will have a pollinator garden around it.
- **Brennan** – Summer camps are going well at the Ice Center. Staffing is still a concern.
- **Connor** – Performances for 2022-2023 season have been announced. Attendance was down last season compared to previous years. They did away with vaccine mandate and mask requirement. Single tickets do not go on sale until August, but subscriptions are on sale now. Seeing trend of buying tickets last minute. Subscription model was changed to include Matinee Idylls, Hylton Presents, Hylton Family Series, and American Roots. Hylton Center Extra is planning to have a major headliner in their season again after the success of Leslie Odom Jr.
- **Win-Love** – Gainesville hotels are doing well. Woodbridge and Dumfries hotels are a little slower now. Country Inn and Suites Woodbridge is going through a major renovation and may possibly change brands.
- **Adams** – The Marine Corps Museum is still working on final phase with a new exhibit “Space Flight: Marine Astronauts” featuring space suits, equipment, and more. There will be a panel discussion of astronauts on August 13th. Groups are coming back and numbers are slowing coming back up. In need of more volunteers.
- **Friar** – Jiffy Lube Live is having a good season. Last minute ticket sales is also a trend with them. The 2023 season is not yet set. Customers are spending more on-site than previous years. Jimmy Buffet business has steadily declined every few years, as well as Dave Matthews Band. Their typical attendee is within 10 miles of the venue and concert goers are attending 2 concerts on average. Customers typically find out about a show

- from the artist themselves. Their budget is largely spent on radio and television, followed by digital advertising.
- **DeWitt** – Companies are booking more events at the brewery. Summer heat has been negatively impacting their business slightly.
- **Costello** – Kevin asked for feedback on board and partner meeting locations and suggestions for improvement. Partner meetings are traditionally predominantly networking. Gwenn Adams suggested speakers to talk about specific areas of interest. Jennifer Decker suggested staff provide updates on what tourism team has been working on and that she would like a way to know who is attending the partner meeting. She also liked the speed-dating concept that was done previously. Michelle DeWitt suggested afternoons work better for partner meetings and that it depends on location. Jennifer Decker likes the idea of introducing partners to new venues.
- **Hendler-Voss** – Updates provided on the following:
 - Approved for ARPA VTC spending plan (\$680,000). \$150,000 is budgeted for SportsFest. \$300k product development initiatives were also approved. \$86k on economic impact analysis for tourism grade sports facility. Received private partnership proposal that has been accepted. The facility will be located in eastern PWC but project that is not finalized. \$85k budgeted for light show at Neabsco Creek Boardwalk. \$109k for tourism/information kiosks. \$250k in marketing
 - \$17 million has been allocated for improvement of existing park facilities, geared towards accessibility improvements
 - Rollins Ford Park is also in development
 - Forest Greens Golf Course will be getting a new disc golf course. Soft opening to the public planned at end of September but grand opening will be held during SportsFest in October
 - Summer camps are exceeding 2019 registration. They are not open every day of the week due to lifeguard shortage.
 - Fiscal year 2024 budget planning is starting.
 - Comprehensive Plan update for land-use and transportation scheduled to be completed in the fall. Plan is to improve Pfitzner stadium complex to include family friendly activities and amenities, such as splash pad, covered pavilion, food truck court, artisan market, and playground.
 - Fridays at Five at Connaughton Plaza has begun and targeted more towards local residents.
 - Drive 2.0 survey is closed and a discussion was held virtually about results of the survey. A plan was presented with a \$10k grant approved by VTC to bring in organizers for possible watersports tournaments.
 - The new PWC seal and logo is still in process and currently at the County Executive's office to determine next steps.

IX. Adjournment

VOTE: By unanimous consent, the Tourism Advisory Board members present adjourned the board meeting at 10:35 a.m.

Ayes: Adams, Brennan, Connor, Decker, DeWitt, Friar, Larkin, Win-Love

Nays: None

Abstain from Vote: None


Absent from Vote: None

Absent from Meeting: Chaudhry, Madigan, Webb

2022 Advisory Board Retreat & Tourism Master Planning Session immediately following this meeting

Next Advisory Board Meeting: October 26, 2022 - Location TBD

Michelle DeWitt, Advisory Board Chair 

Kevin Costello, Director of Tourism 

Susan Plattner, Recording Clerk Susan Plattner 10/26/22