

# **Montgomery Regional Tourism Development Council**

## **Meeting Minutes**

May 26, 2016

### **I. Call to order**

Tom Norman called to order the regular meeting of the **MTDC** at **9:05 a.m.** on **May 26, 2016** in the Montgomery County Multipurpose Room 2.

### **II. Present**

Tom Norman (v)	Chair-Blacksburg Hotel Representative
Lisa Bleakley	Executive Director, Tourism
Barry Helms	Christiansburg Town Manager
Ruth Richey	Montgomery County Public Information Officer
Craig Meadows	Montgomery County Administrator
Tom Shaver	General Manager for the Inn at Virginia Tech
Becky Gabris	Regional Manager of Milestone Development
Harry Collins (v)	Secondary Christiansburg Town Council Representative
Jason Dowdy (v)	Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce Representative
Lea Wall (v)	Christiansburg Hotel Representative
Marc Verniel	Blacksburg Town Manager
Sam Bishop (v)	Christiansburg Town Council Representative
Kathleen Carr	Beliveau Representative
Kelli Smith	Policy Analyst for Friends of Southwest Virginia
Brian Katz	Montgomery County Planning Commission Liaison
Irene Kilmer	Montgomery County Tourism Office

### **Absent**

Connie Hale (v)	Vice Chair- County Restaurant Representative
Marie March (v)	Christiansburg Restaurant Representative
Krishna Chachra (v)	Blacksburg Town Council Representative
Heather Browning	Town of Blacksburg Community Relations Mgr.
Joyce Beliveau (v)	Blacksburg Agritourism Representative
April DeMotts (v)	Board of Supervisors Representative
BJ Norris (nv)	Virginia Tech Representative
Diane Akers	Blacksburg Partnership

### **III. Approval of minutes of February 25, 2016**

Tom Norman makes a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting on February 25, 2015. Jason Dowdy seconds the motion.

#### IV. Discussion

- Lisa Bleakley goes over the background process of the website.
- Irene Kilmer gives a demonstration of the website and interactive map.
  - Craig Meadows notes how the font on the mobile version is easy to read
  - Barry Helms also comments how that the site looks very clean and easy to read
  - Harry Collins asked about the pricing of each “lodging” and “attraction” icons in the map. Lisa Bleakley explains that the public businesses including lodging will not have to pay to have their information expanded.
  - Several edits were suggested and noted by Lisa Bleakley.
- Lisa Bleakley shares information on the upcoming Mountains of Music Homecoming Festival on June 10-18, 2016.
- Kelli Smith presents on Southwest Virginia economic growth. Copies of the report were available hard-copy. The PowerPoint will be sent to Lisa Bleakley to share with everyone.
- Lisa Bleakley shares highlights of the Mountains of Music Homecoming Festival concerts and cultural experiences. The tourism office will also have booths at the concert in Christiansburg, Steppin’ Out, and the Wilderness Trail Festival this summer.
- Lisa Bleakley opens up the room for everyone to share.
- Tom Shaver talked about the Virology conference (CPE) bringing 800 delegates into Blacksburg on June 18<sup>th</sup> through June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The conference meetings will be held in the Moss Arts Center. The Inn completes graduation reservation bookings in January for the following year.
- Sam Bishop talked about the Mountains of Music festival in Downtown Christiansburg.
- Lea Wall promoted Kem’s Restaurant inside of the Holiday Inn. A new menu will be sampled at Up on the Roof the evening of May 26<sup>th</sup>.
- Becky Gabris announced she is now the Regional Manager for Milestone Development. Homewood Suites will host the After Hours event on July 21, 2016. The Fairfield is under renovation with a target date of completion by August 1, 2016.
- Marc Verniel shared that the Town of Blacksburg has a new website. They will be working in partnership with Virginia Tech as the university grows to the projected

addition of 5,000 students by 2022. Virginia Tech is updating its master plan and Blacksburg will be updating their long-range plan. The students are gone, roads are under construction at various spots.

- Barry Helms announces the new Town Manager and shared many events including, Cruise-In, Food Truck Rodeos, Gospel Singing, Two World Series, and the Huckleberry Trail extension from Cambria to Christiansburg High School. Next stop, Downtown Christiansburg, after trying to figure out how to get over the railroad tracks. “Smile”
- Tom Norman said their renovation is nearing completion. They have experienced good growth. They will start taking reservations for 2017 graduation this weekend.
- Jason Dowdy said their hotels will start taking reservations for 2017 graduation on June 1<sup>st</sup>. He is excited about all three properties. The Homewood is going well. We are undergoing an extreme renovation of the Fairfield. The Holiday Inn Express continues to be a great contributor for the portfolio.
- Harry Collins states Barry Helms’ last day of June 30, 2016. He acknowledged his outstanding service to the citizens of Christiansburg through his position as Town Manager.
- Kathleen Carr exclaimed that Beliveau’s season is in full swing with their largest event, the Lavender Festival, on June 26<sup>th</sup>. The nature trail is also open.
- Craig Meadows closed out the sharing session by presenting Barry Helms with a certificate of appreciation and a go to town swag bag for his service to the MTDC and tourism board.

## V. Adjournment

Tom Norman adjourned the meeting at 10:10 a.m.

Minutes submitted by: Lisa Bleakley

Minutes approved by: