

**Montgomery Regional Tourism Development Council**

**Meeting Minutes**

**July 24, 2014**

**I. Call to order**

Tom Norman called the regular meeting of the MTDC to order at 8:30 a.m. at the Montgomery County Government Center

**Present**

Tom Norman (v)	Vice Chair-Blacksburg Hotel Representative
Matt Gabriele (v)	Board of Supervisors Representative
Ray Alcorn (v)	Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce Representative
Barry Helms	Christiansburg Town Manager
Marc Verniel	Blacksburg Town Manager
Steve Huppert (v)	Christiansburg Town Council Representative
Joyce Beliveau (v)	Blacksburg Agritourism Representative
Lisa Bleakley	Executive Director, Tourism
Ruth Richey	Montgomery County Public Information Officer

**Absent**

Krishna Chachra (v)	Chair-Blacksburg town Council Representative
Melissa Richards (nv)	Virginia Tech Representative
Craig Meadows	Montgomery County Administrator
Marie March (v)	Christiansburg Restaurant Representative
Connie Hale (v)	County Restaurant Representative
Heather Browning	Town of Blacksburg Community Relations Manager
Diane Akers	Blacksburg Partnership
Trish Cook (v)	Christiansburg Hotel Representative
Becky Wilburn	Town of Christiansburg Public Information Officer

Guests: Becky Nave, Ernie Maddy, Jack Morgan, Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Foundation

**II. Motion carried for approval of meeting minutes from May 22, 2014.**

**III. Discussion**

- Lisa presented brief on brand development. A general overview on the findings from the team was presented. A few slides were shown from the agency's PowerPoint presentation to the operating board. Ready to enter the second phase. Marc shared his impressions with the group. We will have the challenge of identity/name. A good example of a locality with the similar challenge is Chapel Hill (Hillsborough, Carrboro, Orange County). We will need to keep the focus on how the visitor sees us and how they see themselves. How to appeal quickly and clearly to the visitor while leaving room for locality representation. Marc also shared that the project is going well and that the board is pleased with the performance of the agency. Lisa was directed to work with the agency to coordinate a date for the agency to present to the MTDC in-person. This presentation will not need to wait until the Sept. meeting.
- Lisa presented the draft of the Tear-off map. General feeling is that it is needed. Comments for improvement: Make it digital/interactive, 460 and other major arteries should be bolded/stand out. List the Children's Museum, High Schools (athletic facilities), Motor Mile Park (within the County), NRV Super Bowl, Lodging: The Oakes and Beliveau (add grapes).
- Lisa discussed Hospitality Training and options that could be available. Options should be researched, detailed and compared. It would be ideal to connect with someone at VT who could work with Tourism to pull in the necessary disciplines to produce the training. Lisa and Tom will pursue.
- Lisa mentioned that she and several Director of Sales (DOS) had conversed about starting a regular meeting for DOS's to share and learn and build networks. It was the general consensus that this would be endorsed by Hotel management.
- Tom mentioned that June (weekends and weekdays) was down (can't pinpoint exactly why), but that July came back with orientation and is going well. He shared that his DOS attended the Tourism Summit in Wytheville and said it was informative. Coalminers Rescue Week will be coming up in August.
- Ray added that it has typically been slower between graduations and orientations. VCOM moving to the same wknd as RU graduation hurt. It took away a wknd. A similar thing happened years ago with VT and RU. You'd think the lesson would be learned not to do that again.
- Marc mentioned that this time of year should become a focus (early summer).
- Upcoming weekend will bring big swimmer visitation (SEVA Age Group Competition) and Floyd Fest travelers).

- Joyce shared upcoming events: Dog Days of Summer (Aug. 17), Grape Stomping Festival (Aug. 21) SWVA Sipping Wine Trail multiple wkd. Event.
- Steve mentioned the upcoming Heritage Day Festival (Aug) and Wilderness Trail Festival (Third Weekend in Sept.) in Christiansburg.

*Adjournment at 10:30 a.m.*

Minutes submitted by: Lisa Bleakley

Minutes approved by: