

Montgomery Regional Tourism Development Council

Meeting Minutes

February 22, 2018

I. Call to Order

Tom Norman called to order the regular meeting of the **MTDC** at **9:05 a.m.** on **February 22, 2018** in Multipurpose Room 2 in the Montgomery County Government Center.

II. Present

Lisa Bleakley	Montgomery County Regional Tourism, Executive Director
Irene Kilmer	Montgomery County Regional Tourism, Visitor Relations Manager
Tom Norman (v)	Chair- Courtyard by Marriott, General Manager
Jason Dowdy (v)	Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, Milestone Development Partner
Sam Bishop (v)	Christiansburg Town Council- Primary
Randy Wingfield	Town of Christiansburg, Town Manager
Lea Wall (v)	Holiday Inn Christiansburg, Blacksburg, NRV Mall, Director of Sales
Lauren Colliver (v)	Blacksburg Town Council
Gabe Minnich (nv)	Virginia Tech, University Relations Visitor Center
Bryan Katz	Montgomery County Planning Commission Liaison
Rachel Lawmaster	Heathwood Market

Absent

Marc Verniel	Town of Blacksburg, Town Manager
Craig Meadows	Montgomery County, County Administrator
Melissa Powell	Town of Christiansburg, Public Relations Director
Connie Hale (v)	Vice Chair- Buffalo & More, Owner
Heather Browning	Town of Blacksburg, Community Relations Manager
Diane Akers	The Blacksburg Partnership, Director
April DeMotts (v)	Montgomery County Board of Supervisors
Ashish Malothra (v)	Blackstone Grill, General Manager
Tess Obiso (v)	Whitebarrel Wine and Tapas Bar, Owner
Jennifer Harris	Montgomery County, Public Information Director

III. Approval of Minutes of November 16, 2017

Jason Dowdy makes a motion to approve the minutes from the November 16, 2017 meeting. Motion is seconded by Sam Bishop. All said aye. Minutes approved.

IV. Discussion

- Lisa Bleakley brings up that this will be our organizational meeting to discuss the new Chair and Vice Chair for 2018. Sam Bishop suggests the advisory council waits until the meeting in May to vote for the new Chair & Vice Chair to allow time for voting members to think about if they would like to nominate themselves.
 - Sam Bishop makes a motion to let Chair & Vice Chair to continue position until the May 24, 2018 meeting. Motion is seconded by Lea Wall. All say Aye

- Sam Bishop makes a motion for the tourism office to receive nominations via email for Chair & Vice Chair positions. Motion is seconded by Lauren Colliver. All say aye.
- Lisa shows the Erik the Travel Guy social media video. This was one of the larger marketing projects that our office worked on in 2017. We had the film crew in the area and got around to a lot of different areas in Montgomery County. The digital overview was one of the products from the filming. We've gotten a lot of shares on social media and good feedback after distributing the video.
- Lisa mentions that along with the overview video, we will be a part of a PBS series this April titled 'Beyond Your Backyard.' We are one of 13 destinations that will be highlighted. We also have two 15 second ad spots that will air during the series. We should receive the B-Roll soon.
- Gabe - The VT brewing program
 - Clips on Instagram feed & Facebook feed →Clips to promote upcoming events – on all to get going
 - Things to reveal through social media – video or photo
- Lisa Bleakley goes over the 2018 marketing plan
 - Gut reaction to those things
 - Signed to do the hospitality area – during & past event
 - Hethwood – Virginia grown & popped corn
- Bike Virginia will be returning this June. Around 4,000 riders & family in June – hosted in Radford and Pulaski County.
 - Lea has a block at their hotel for the event
- Motor coach Associations
 - Jason thinks this is a great idea
 - Jason's group would chip in to help with expenses to attend the sales missions
 - Pitch that if not a destination, then certainly an overnight stop for existing trips planned
 - Involvement with invested partners is important
 - Displacement – keep in mind because it pushes it to Blacksburg/Christiansburg for strategy
 - Bryan – Away people coming in for Tech games
 - Look at some of those other sports to bus people in
- Jason & Lea – Indoor track closed – hurting the hotels.
- Seek out sports influences
 - Jason – campus at VT for sports
 - Perhaps a sports commission? Full focus on sports
 - Lauren – Is there a meeting at Tech with all sports coaches getting together that we could present to them?
 - Find some kind of central point of contact
 - Ice rink has the potential to be a driver in the winter
- Print:
 - Print is expensive and so we are looking to cut back and be strategic about what we do purchase.
 - Race Guide from Blue Ridge Outdoors

- VT Magazine → reach those alumni
 - What are we telling them?
 - They don't know about the new stuff that has emerged since they have left.
- Bryan → Some of the departments publish an annual newsletter to send out for a nominal fee – for donations to department.
 - Get a little space in the department newsletter – targeting the smaller email Bryan so he can email me the person who does theirs
 - Each college has a communication director – Gabe can help
 - Pitch to this as a resource for information. Not as an advertising avenue.
- Race organizer for Run About Sports – James DeMarco
 - Talk to them in the fall about getting on yearly sponsorship.
 - Get involved at the beginning of their season
- Reach out to local Hokie Club Chapters or Alumni to put info in their newsletter. Find contact for both chapters (all the local ones to reach out to).
- Jason → Are we getting help from VTC on Google Ad Words for help?
 - The matching grant
- AM Hodge Podge- Monthly broadcasts for calendar year 2018
- ROA – will forward proposal for carrousel board
 - Tech just got on the digital one that rotates
 - Gabe can find out if we like it
- They have asked us for out visitor guides for free
- FPIS → Marriot discourages it. Hilton encourages it.
 - Courtyard utilizes the go board
- Limited real-estate at the VT Visitor Center
- Forward CrowdRiff proposal to everyone
- Gabe – lots of people coming from high school spring break
- Lauren – Create a hashtag photo contest to drum up more engagement
 - Reach out to the VT Student Photographer Clubs
 - Photo contest → Name recognition – put it on our website, profile on website for a year

Adjournment

Tom Norman adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

Minutes submitted by: Lisa Bleakley

Minutes approved by: