

Richmond Region Tourism
Foundation Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2021
8:00 a.m.

I. ADMINISTRATON:

- A. Dan Schmitt, Chairman of the Foundation, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. and welcomed staff guests, J.C. Poma and Tamera Harris as they will update the Foundation on various projects that are Foundation related. It was noted that the meeting was held electronically via Zoom video conference and that a quorum was present.
- B. Approval of Minutes: The July 7, 2020 Annual Foundation meeting minutes were reviewed. Mr. Jim Holland made a motion to adopt the minutes, seconded by Mr. Neil Amin. The vote passed.
- C. Foundation Update: Ms. Katherine O'Donnell gave a brief Foundation update since the last meeting in July. The Foundation typically meets once per year, but due to the expanded mission to include diversity, equity, and inclusion as well as sports tourism, staff has been busy with new initiatives, so an update is needed.

II. NEW BUSINESS:

- A. Sports Tourism Grant Program: Mr. J.C. Poma, Director of Sports Relations, reported that a new sports tourism grant program has been established. Sports tourism grants are awarded to help incubate new events or expand promotion of existing events to increase potential visitors from outside of the Richmond Region. Organizations can apply for up to \$2,500. The program is different from typical incentive dollars that may be used on groups. This grant will help create new events for our region. Chairman Schmitt inquired about a budget figure for year one. Mr. Poma reported that \$25,000 have been allocated for the first year of grants. The timeline for the grant process is to be released at the end of January and the review committee will meet on March 4th. Applications will be awarded around March 15th. Mr. Holland inquired about marketing and the intended audience for this program. Mr. Poma stated that so many organizations are already coming to us and asking for help to grow their event, so most marketing is word-of-mouth. A sponsor for the program is also being sought out for future years.
- B. Sports Awards Gala: Mr. Poma announced that an annual sports award gala will be created for 2022. February 5, 2022 is the anticipated date, and the event will be held at the Greater Richmond Convention Center. A media partner, CBS 6, will assist with marketing, a video, etc. This event will be crucial in fundraising for the sports tourism grant program and foundation overall. Mr. Poma also discussed overall sponsorships being developed to help overall with the foundation projects.
- C. Sponsorship Strategy: Ms. Tamera Harris, Manager of Events & Sponsorship, reported that a five-year strategic plan is being developed with goals and tactics to raise funds for the Foundation and the programming of the Foundation. TowneBank donated to the Foundation in 2020 for the I Am Tourism and staff has applied again for funding from them to continue efforts started last year. BLK RVA and the I Am Tourism Ambassador program both are projects of the Foundation and other local sponsorships are being sought. The I Am Tourism Ambassador training is now virtual and the next class is Thursday, January 14th. The Academy will also be virtual. The Academy is for graduates of the program that want a deeper dive into history. The Academy is taught by the Valentine Museum and the classes are held on Sunday's. The Annual National Travel & Tourism Week celebration is being planned for May and the annual golf tournament on September 24th. BLK RVA is going strong and Altria gave us a grant for \$25,000 for marketing initiatives. Other initiatives with Richmond Black Restaurant Experience are to provide sponsorships to Restaurants through an impact grant.

D. Other New Business:

There being no further business to bring before the Foundation, the meeting adjourned at 8:23 a.m.

Attendees: 12

Dan Schmitt, Chairman
Jim Holland, 1st Vice Chairman
Ellen Robertson, 2nd Vice Chairman
Dennis Bickmeier, Treasurer
Lisa Sims, Secretary
Neil Amin, Immed. Past Chairman
Jack Berry, Richmond Region Tourism
Katherine O'Donnell, Richmond Region Tourism
Michelle Lovatt, Richmond Region Tourism
Jennifer Hendren, Richmond Region Tourism
Dasha Runyan, Richmond Region Tourism
Matt Robinette, Richmond Region Tourism

Absent: 1

Angela Kelly-Wiecek, Chair-Elect