

**WILLIAMSBURG TOURISM COUNCIL MEETING  
STRYKER CENTER, WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA**

April 16, 2019  
Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Williamsburg Tourism Council convened on April 16, 2019, at 2:30 p.m., at the Stryker Center in Williamsburg, Virginia. A quorum was present with the following attendees:

**Tourism Council Members:**

Honorable Jeffrey D. Wassmer, Honorable Ruth Larson, Kevin Crossett,	District 4 Supervisor, York County Board of Supervisors Chair, James City County Board of Supervisors Vice President of Strategic Communications, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
Honorable Doug Pons, Neal Chalkley, Kevin Lembke, Mickey Chohany,	Vice Mayor, City of Williamsburg President, Williamsburg Hotel & Motel Association President, Busch Gardens Williamsburg Williamsburg Area Restaurant Association/Second Street Restaurant
Philip G. Emerson, Kym Hall, Rita McClenny, Honorable Jeanne Zeidler,	Executive Director, Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation Superintendent, Colonial National Historical Park President & CEO, Virginia Tourism Corporation Chair, Board of Directors, Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance

**Tourism Council Staff:**

Vicki Cimino, Jody Puckett, Dave Potter, Joanna Skrabala,	CEO Administrator Director, Marketing Communications Associate Director of Digital Marketing
--	---

**I. Call to Order**

Jeff Wassmer called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m.

**II. Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**III. Minutes**

March meeting minutes were approved without correction.

#### **IV. Executive Director Introduction**

Mr. Wassmer introduced the new Tourism Council CEO, Vicki Cimino. Ms. Cimino said that she was excited to get started.

#### **V. Treasurer's Report**

Ruth Larson reported YTD revenue and expense actuals, explained all was on track and cash projections were above expectations. She also reported that transient taxes showed a slight upward movement.

Ms. Larson shared the report on the SB 942 tax, which is two months behind, noting a small [and expected] decline in January. Ms. Larson said that she meets monthly with staff to review financials.

#### **VI. Marketing/PR Update**

Marketing Director Dave Potter reported the following:

- Digital media (display and social) was increased across all seasons
- TV display, on air and streaming, was extended through June
- A satellite media tour will take place on May 10, from Busch Gardens
- The marketing mix study will be complete on or before May 31
- Destination Next study has been paused until further notice

Media Relations Manager Jill Pongonis reported the following:

- Nine media placements resulting in ten million impressions
- Future media tours include girlfriend getaways and family adventure, planned for spring and summer
- Williamsburg is a finalist for *USA Today's* 10 Best Readers' Choice for Best Historic Town
- Recent social media influencer visits include Lady & the Blog and Getting Stamped
- The Tourism Forum will take place on May 2, 4 – 6 p.m., at Busch Gardens

#### **VII. Administrator Update**

Administrator Jody Puckett reported the following:

- A research steering committee meeting will take place on April 17
  - SIR will present a summary of the Discovery Study
  - Luckie will attend

## **VIII. Staff Presentations**

Sales & Publications Coordinator Jodie Lumley, presented a conference sales overview – speaking to 2018 accomplishments, including development of a Meeting Planner Guide, quarterly e-newsletters, increased leads, and client luncheons; 2019 priorities include an ambassador and grant program.

Ms. Lumley also reported on publication development, state welcome center marketing efforts, and wedding and family reunion planning.

Associate Director of Group Tour & Consumer Sales Vivian Bunting presented a consumer sales and marketing overview that highlighted AAA and consumer shows, familiarization tours, and tradeshow.

## **IX. Chair Report**

Per last month's presentation, Mr. Wassmer distributed a proposed resolution relative to Newport News/Williamsburg International Airport (PHF) route development. He said that the Airport, with the help and guidance of a local commission, hopes to provide grants to entice new flights into PHF. It is the Airport's hope that the Tourism Council can participate in airline cooperative marketing partnerships.

Doug Pons asked if they needed to provide riders and Mr. Wassmer said no - stating this would simply be a promotional opportunity. Ms. Cimino stated this is a fairly typical tactic, that the New Hampshire Division of Travel and Tourism had co-oped with Delta Airlines to promote the LGA->MHT route.

Kevin Crossett asked if there was a cap for the total funds the Council would provide. Mr. Wassmer suggested \$200,000.

Kevin Lembke asked how the group would know that more air traffic would specifically benefit the Williamsburg area.

Mickey Chohany questioned the difference between this proposal and just placing an ad in an airline magazine. He also questioned how to measure the success. Ms. Cimino suggested a digital campaign rather than advertising in an airline publication.

Mr. Wassmer said that Ms. Cimino would soon meet with the Airport Director and could provide further context during May's Council meeting.

Phil Emerson expressed concerns about creating these funds, noting the group was reacting to a request for money versus incorporating this type of effort into the overall marketing plan.

Kym Hall agreed that the group should be thoughtful in the way money is spent; however, she also felt that it was fairly low risk and a small amount of money.

Mr. Wassmer said the group would do more research before teeing it up for a vote at the next meeting.

At this time, Mr. Wassmer reported on the question of whether the Tourism Council was a public or private body. He said that as the legislation stands, if the Council is under the umbrella of the Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance, the Council is considered to be private; however, it has been operating as a public entity to be transparent. Mr. Wassmer reported that the group has since requested the opinion of the Attorney General for further clarification.

**X. Old Business**

There was no old business.

**XI. New Business**

Ms. Larson asked if outdated materials should be reproduced if there continues to be interest/requests for the information.

Neal Chalkley requested that Ms. Cimino identify metrics to hold contracted agencies accountable. Mr. Lembke requested a monthly report of data to review.

**XII. Adjournment**

The next meeting will be May 21, at 1 p.m., at the Stryker Building.