

WILLIAMSBURG AREA DESTINATION MARKETING COMMITTEE

June 20, 2016

4:00 PM Greater Williamsburg Area Chamber & Tourism Alliance

Meeting Notes

- 1. PRESIDING: Walt Zaremba, CHAIR**
- 2. PRESENT: Doug Pons, A. J. Patel, Karen Riordan, David Cromwell, Kevin Onizuk, Ron Kirkland, Phil Emerson**

NOT PRESENT: Rita McClenny, Andrea Sardone

OTHERS PRESENT: Dave Potter, Corrina Ferguson, Jody Puckett, Julie O'Neil

- 3. Walt Zaremba** established a quorum was present, calling the WADMC meeting to order. First order of business was to ask if any guests would like to make a public comment. No one wished to speak.
- 4. Walt Zaremba** asked if everyone had reviewed the [April 18, 2016 Meeting Notes](#). Kevin Onizuk motioned for approval of the notes, second by Doug Pons, all members unanimously approved.
- 5. [May 16 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES](#)** were available for review and questions. There was a question regarding why the need for an attorney. Corrina explained she was being proactive regarding the Booking Engine RFP. This would need to be reviewed by an attorney once the process is in the contract stage. In the past, the municipalities have rotated this service as part of their contribution. Recently the municipalities have declined providing this service citing are no longer comfortable as could be considered a conflict of interest or the current work load. Walt Zaremba said York County could review and Doug Pons said City of Williamsburg as well could provide this support.
- 6. [FINANCE REPORT 2016](#)**
 - A. David Cromwell reviewed the Monthly Financial Summaries reporting TOT year to date revenues for the City of Williamsburg and York County continues to exceed budget. Some of the James City County previous revenue shortfalls are partially due to timing. Working expenses are over year end projected budget driven by an increase in paid search. This will be off set in the Support category with the elimination of the tourist research project.
 - B. David announced the annual audit will be done again by Gordon F. Chappell. An RFQ had been done in 2013 when Mr. Chappell was awarded the audit.

- C. Input was asked from members on what information they would like to see from the finance reports. David feels what appears to be most important is the performance of the budget relative to the year end projection, how we identify offsets for revenue gaps or expense variances and on going cash flow.

Members would like to continue to see the revenue per locality and how they are trending but were fine with topline expense categories. There was a desire to continue the detailed quarterly reporting with trending and forecasting.

7. **Corrina Ferguson gave the [DESTINATION MARKETING DIRECTOR'S REPORT.](#)**

A. Beginning with the Campaign Update;

- i. **Website** – performing well with a large shift to mobile device usage. This is attributed to ads directed at mobile users as well as in market activity.
The change to business listings who post a preview image will begin showing up first next week.
As part of the ongoing outreach to the tourism community, training area partners continues with the last quarterly session held June 2.
- ii. **Social Media** – Influencers continue to be strong with engagement about 300 - 400 posts for Visit Williamsburg. The top 3 Facebook posts are “10 Reasons to Visit Williamsburg”, “Second Sundays” and America Runs on Beer. The top performing posts to Instagram are 4th of July (link to web), America Runs on Beer, Jamestown Summer Concerts, Food with a View (2nd time, UGC), and Yorktown Battle Field Beauty Shot.
- iii. **Public Relations** – April & May Media, Influencers & Conversationalists feature Williamsburg in 16 media outlets including an 8 minute segment on an ABC Washington D.C. affiliate’s morning show featuring Silver Hand Meadery. To see this coverage and others, go to the Destination Marketing Report and click on the links.
- iv. **At the end of May, Corrina attended TBEX**, (travel bloggers conference) meeting with 50 travel writers/bloggers.
- v. **Media & Consumer Communiqués** – new fresh content is being developed to be used supporting the website, newsletters and promoting the destination.
- vi. **2016 Summer of Freedom 2.0 media campaign** – Each week Corina and the agencies review the digital performance in order to optimize the campaign by changing creative and media mix as necessary to increase results.

Corrina shared results from a new medium Buzz Feed featuring great images and a fun light hearted story on a recent visit to

Williamsburg. There were 12,000 views during the first 3 days posted.

B. Booking Engine RFP Update - Follow-up & Recommendation – Julie O’Neil Task Force Co-Chair along with task force member Jody Puckett are present.

Task force members are:

Julie O’Neil, Co-Chair	Busch Gardens
Kristi Olsen, Co-Chair	York County
Craig Farrin	Kingsmill Resort
Corrina Ferguson	WADMC
Bob Harris	Greater Williamsburg Chamber & Tourism Alliance
Joan Heikens	Jamestown Yorktown Foundation
Ron Kirkland	Williamsburg Hotel & Motel Association
Margret Lindblom	Doubletree Hotel
Hitesh Patel	HMP Properties
Dave Potter	WADMC
Paula Pritchard	Colonial Williamsburg
Jody Puckett	James City County
Rich Saunders	City of Williamsburg
Billy Scruggs	Fife & Drum Inn
Mike Wynne	Westgate Resort

The Booking Engine Task Force reviewed the proposals on Monday, May 9 to discuss their findings. At the end of the meeting the group determined one of the proposals did not meet the requirements included in the RFP, therefore, there was only one company to evaluate. With only one to evaluate, there is no chance to

compare and contrast benefits, amenities, cost, etc. to ensure we are recommending the best possible partner for the Greater Williamsburg destination.

The task force unanimously agreed a revised RFP should be issued. The following is what the committee identified the destination needs from a booking engine:

Planning vs Selling

A booking engine should be considered a planning tool that will educate guests with information throughout the shopping process

Tickets help highlight depth and diversity.

It's important to offer a variety of ticket options to help showcase product in the destination and encourage increased length of stay.

Dynamic Packaging

From specifically a lodging partner perspective, having destination booking engine software that can provide dynamic packaging* is of strongest value.

Consumer first

Any programs must be consumer centric.

Ease of use

The software needs to be easy for area partners to buy in and participate.

Cost effective

Finally, the proposed solution should be cost effective for all involved (must balance expense to the destination, benefits of revenue share options, expense to participating partners)

The WADMC members asked if timing of issuing the RFP in a compressed timeline during the summer months would be an issue. The Task Force didn't focus on this timing issue; feeling the community was owed a due diligence with a good comparison of providers based on the needs of the customer and destination. It was asked why Dynamic Packaging was important? The task force lodging properties preferred this capability over a static version to potentially increase length of stay.

Doug Pons motioned to follow the task force recommendation to reissue a streamlined version of the Booking Engine RFP based on the needs identified for the destination, second by David Cromwell, members unanimously agreed.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

Ron Kirkland distributed the May STR (Smith Travel Report) with comparative destinations. Everyone agreed disappointing May occupancy figures were a result of the historic rain fall and number of inclement weather days. He will distribute

copies of this report as they are available asking for the members to keep the document confidential.

Ron also handed out a Virginia Beach research tourism report distributed locally each month. Suggested we considered doing a similar report. Copy attached.

- 9. There being no further business, Walt called for adjournment announcing the next WADMC Meeting August 15, 4:00 PM, @ Greater Williamsburg Area Chamber & Tourism Alliance.**

Respectfully Submitted by,

David M. Potter

RESEARCH

[Home \(/about-us-dev/\)](#) > [Connect \(/about-us-dev/connect/\)](#)

Research Strategic Plans

Tourism is the one of the largest revenue generators for Virginia Beach, because the city thrives as a year-round tourism and meetings/convention destination. This success can be attributed to a variety of factors, including proactive targeted marketing efforts guided by a variety of research methodologies.

Research provides critical information that shapes the strategic direction and tactics of the Virginia Beach CVB's marketing efforts. No single piece of research provides the answer to solve today's ever-changing marketing challenges, which is why we gain insight from many sources, some new and some that we have relied upon for years.

STR Report

Virginia Beach	January			Year-to-date		
	2015	2016	% Change	2015	2016	% Change
Occupancy	32.5%	34.4%	5.7%	32.5%	34.4%	5.7%

ADR	\$72.44	\$73.35	1.3%	\$72.44	\$73.35	1.3%
RevPAR	\$23.57	\$25.22	7.0%	\$23.57	\$25.22	7.0%

Source: 2016 Smith Travel Research, Inc.

Fact Sheet

TRAVEL MATTERS
As one of the largest industries and economic drivers in the city, tourism plays a pivotal role in encouraging growth and funding initiatives that enhance Virginia Beach's valued community.

BRAND PLATFORM:
LIVE THE LIFE

THE BRAND PROMISE:
Fun-loving, welcoming and accessible, Virginia Beach allows visitors to remove the mask of daily life and become who they truly are, in a relaxed atmosphere of active living.

VISION:
Revealing the beauty and vibrancy of being in Virginia Beach.

MISSION:
The Virginia Beach Convention & Visitors Bureau develops and promotes Virginia Beach as a first-class, year-round destination that contributes to the city's quality of life and a diverse local economy.

2101 Park Avenue Suite 500 | Virginia Beach, Virginia
Tel: 1-800-705-7702 | VisitVirginiaBeach.com
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2014 ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TOURISM:

<p>On the United States:</p> <p>• Direct travel-related expenditures that average an additional \$1.25 billion in retail purchases and restaurant/dining</p> <p>• 75.2 million jobs</p>	<p>On the Commonwealth of Virginia:</p> <p>• Direct travel-related expenditures of \$1.3 billion in retail purchases and restaurant/dining</p> <p>• \$752 million in tax revenue</p>	<p>On the Coastal Virginia Region:</p> <p>• Direct travel-related expenditures of \$2.2 billion in retail purchases and restaurant/dining</p> <p>• \$537 million in tax revenue</p>	<p>On the City of Virginia Beach:</p> <p>• Direct travel-related expenditures of \$1.6 billion in retail purchases and restaurant/dining</p> <p>• \$115 million in tax revenue</p> <p>• 2748 jobs</p>	<p>Convention Center FY14-15</p> <p>• 327 events</p> <p>• 582,355 est. attendees</p> <p>• 93,095 est. room nights</p>
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2014 VISITOR STATISTICS

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2014
Repeat Visitation 76.0%
Shoulder Season Visitation (November through May) 64.5%
Hotel Room Demand (occupied room nights)



2014
Hotel Occupancy 92.5%
Hotel ADR (Average Daily Rate) \$120.25
Hotel RevPAR \$105.71
Revenue Per Available Room

2014
Revenue for all hotels \$315M
Avg. Annual Lodge Revenue Growth (09-14) 4.5%

2014
OVER 2.3 MILLION
Total Domestic Visitation

2014
Visitors from Western Europe accounted for 40% of the region's total visitors.

2014
China surpassed the United Kingdom as the largest overseas visitor country to the Capital Region in 2014.

2014
And in Virginia Beach, Canadian visitation accounts for more than 8% of summer visitation.

2014
Total Number of Visitors 13.2M



2014
Average Visitor Spending in Virginia Beach By Season



2014
2014 Annual Average Household Income (HHI) of visitors to Virginia Beach



2014
Average Length of Stay in Virginia Beach By Season



Download the Fact Sheet (/images/about-us/fact-sheet.pdf)

U.S. Travel Association Reports: