



Tourism Advisory Board

May 9, 2023 9:30 am

Caucus Room, City Hall

9:30 am Call to order, approval of past meeting minutes

9:35 am April 2023 Tourism Review

9:45 am Sector Reports

- **Lodging**
- **Restaurants**
- **Retail**
- **Attractions/Arts**

10:15 am Old Business

10:25 am New Business

10:30 am Adjourn

Tourism Advisory Board Meeting

April 11, 2023 9:30 am

Members/City Staff Present:

Greg Beam – SDDA
Stephanie Cabacoy – American Shakespeare Center
Sandi Carraro – Book Dragon
Liz Fravel - Mary Baldwin University
Robert Higgs – Barren Ridge Vineyards, Accordia
Paige Hildebrand – Frontier Culture Museum
Sarah Lynch – Baja Bean
Robin von Seldeneck – Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library
Sheryl Wagner – Staunton Tourism
Jessica Williams – Staunton Tourism
Ross Williams – Frederick House

Members/City Staff Absent:

Steve Claffey, Mayor – City Council Liaison
Brian Gearhart – Heritage Hospitality
Andrew Greene - Heifetz Institute
Jeff Ramsey – Gibson’s Warehouse, Byers Street Bistro
Anna Schoenduby – Latitudes

Others Present:

Terah Cox – Words Matter

Kim Davidson - Reunion

Pamela Wagner – Arcadia Project

Michelle Waitier – SDDA

Tara Wall - WWPL

Nikki West – Ciders from Mars

June - Heifetz

Gabe - MBU

Call To Order and Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order. A motion was made by Ross Williams and seconded by Sandi Carraro to approve the previous meeting minutes. Minutes were approved.

March 2023 Tourism Review

Activities

The Tourism Department staff took part in the following promotional, networking, or administrative activities:

- March promotions included Queen City Women’s Day, Family-Friendly Spring Break, Your Ultimate Relaxation Guide While Visiting Staunton, Shenandoah Beerwerks Ticket Giveaway to Red Wing Roots Music Festival, Journey Back in Time to Staunton's Scots-Irish History, Explore Staunton’s Hidden Spots For Peace & Quiet, CoArt Gallery Anniversary Celebration, March Music Events, St. Patrick’s Day Events, and weekly special events.
- Participated in a Virginia Welcome Center Blitz for the month of March at the Clearbook Welcome Center.

- Met with members of the Virginia Society of Association Executive Meeting Planners Summit to develop a downtown scavenger hunt for their conference attendees in Staunton.
- Presented the VA250 Staunton committee structure to City Council on March 9.
- Attended the VA250 kick-off event in Williamsburg, VA March 10-12.
- Presented a tourism update to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee on March 21.
- Toured the space for the Frontier Culture Museum’s planned outdoor music venue.
- Travel Counselors Karen Bergman and Nancy Artley from the Downtown Staunton Visitor Center attended the Virginia Tourism Corporation Visitor Center Seminar in Suffolk, VA March 20-22.
- Jessica Williams attended the Virginia Society of Association Executives Meeting Planners Summit at Hotel 24 South March 22-24.
- Sheryl Wagner attended the first session of the Virginia Women’s Municipal Leadership Institute in Roanoke, VA March 22-23.
- Managed social media and blog posts for Visit Staunton, the Shenandoah Beerwerks Trail, and the Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership (SVTP.)
- Produced weekly and monthly e-newsletters and *Staunton on Tap* weekly listing of events.
- Attended a Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership (SVTP) meeting, an SVTP Marketing Committee meeting, a Shenandoah Beerwerks Trail meeting, a Happy Birthday America meeting, a Shop & Dine Out Downtown meeting, a Queen City Mischief & Magic meeting, a Virginia Association of Destination Marketing Organizations (VADMO) Board meeting, and a meeting with our marketing agency.

Public Relations

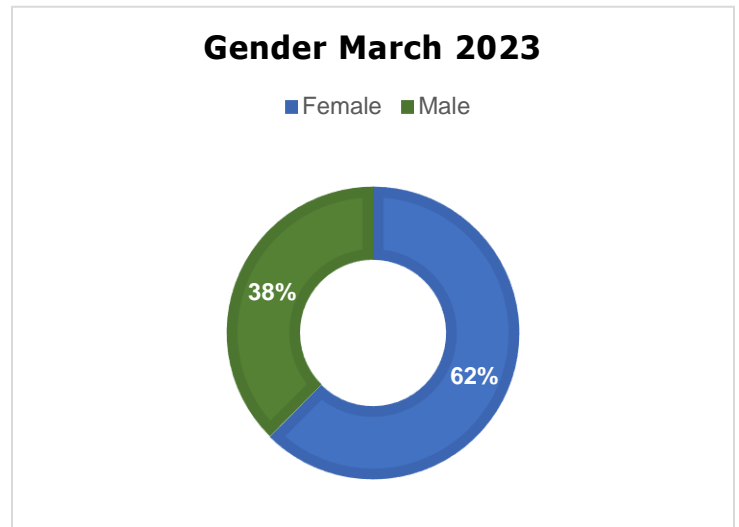
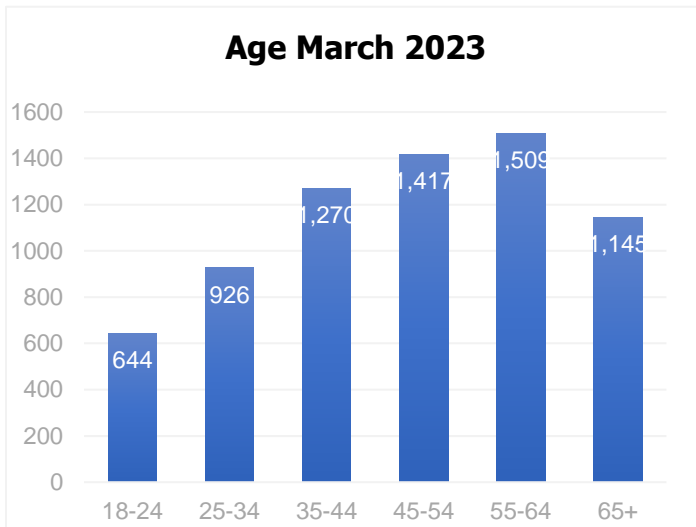
The following is a list of newspapers, websites, magazines, and television stations that published articles about Staunton:

Date	Headline	Source	Reach
Mar 03	<u>The 10 Most Popular Places For People In Richmond To Look For New Houses</u>	MSN.com	215,787,654
Mar 12	<u>These Are America’s Most Historic and Beautiful Streets</u>	MSN.com	185,235,630
Mar 22	<u>An Expert Picks The Best Public Golf Courses In Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley</u>	MSN.com	185,235,630
Mar 28	<u>4 Great Weekend Train Trips From DC</u>	Washingtonian Magazine	952,045
Mar 13	<u>Upcoming Productions At The American Shakespeare Center</u>	WHSV TV	426,204
Mar 05	<u>ShenanArts Cast Ready To Emulate History For ‘The Sound Of Music Production</u>	WHSV TV	426,204
Mar 22	<u>ASC Presents The Madcap Comedy The Complete Works Of William Shakespeare</u>	News & Record	325,988
Mar 16	<u>American Shakespeare Center Celebrates 35th Season With Two Classic Plays</u>	The Roanoke Times	242,828
Mar 21	<u>Staunton Farmers’ Market Starts 31st Season This April</u>	WVIR TV	145,353
Mar 28	<u>Opening Day Saturday At The Staunton Farmers’ Market</u>	News Leader	84,353
Mar 03	<u>Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library Announces Upcoming Program</u>	Daily News Record	73,043
Mar 22	<u>Virginia Hotel Revenues In February Up 14.9% From 2019</u>	Virginia Business	44,506
Mar 06	<u>Music and Laughter – Don Reid</u>	Virginia Living	35,864
Mar 15	<u>American Shakespeare Center Celebrates 35th Season With Two Classic Plays</u>	News Virginian	20,693
TOTAL REACH			589,036,287

Website Visitation

Website Traffic		
March 2022	March 2023	% Change
10,410 visitors	39,227 visitors	+276.8%
30,373 page views	106,933 page views	+252.1%
198 visitor's guide requests	174 visitor's guide requests	-12.1%

Website Demographics



Top 10 States		Top 10 Metro Areas	
March 2022	March 2023	March 2022	March 2023
Virginia	Virginia	Washington, DC	Washington, DC
Maryland	North Carolina	Harrisonburg	Harrisonburg
District of Columbia	Maryland	Roanoke-Lynchburg	Roanoke-Lynchburg
North Carolina	Pennsylvania	Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News	New York
Pennsylvania	New York	Richmond-Petersburg	Philadelphia
New York	Ohio	Charlottesville	Baltimore
Florida	Georgia	Baltimore	Norfolk-Portsmouth-Newport News
Massachusetts	Florida	New York	Richmond-Petersburg
Ohio	Michigan	Philadelphia	Raleigh-Durham
New Jersey	Indiana	Boston MA-Manchester NH	Atlanta

Smith Travel Research (STR) Hotel Occupancy Report

Occupancy (%)	Year To Date				
	Jan	Feb	2021	2022	2023
This Year	40.6	45.9	27.7	41.2	43.1

Last Year	39.6	42.9	33.6	27.7	41.2
% Change	2.5	7.2	-17.6	48.8	4.7

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Sector Reports

Lodging

Ross: Up 30% in revenue and 10% in occupancy. Looks to be a good year! Hired a new innkeeper. Received a little pushback on rates for farther out bookings.

Sector Reports

Restaurants

Sarah: March not as great as previous Marches, but we were closed on Wednesdays to finish the renovations. The VSAE group was great! There is a business going into the former Vic's. Ross said Slyde 23 was great!

Sector Reports

Retail

Sandi: Most businesses said their numbers were up. Reminded them they are welcome at TAB as guests, and sent them to QCMM to participate. Book Dragon is up 25%. This is the 10th anniversary for Independent Book Store Days. The Book Dragon was chosen to do a "Where's Waldo" event and an audiobook event. Have referred businesses to Kim for link to submit your own events on VisitStaunton.com. Have had visitors from Russia and London.

Greg: Updating the Shopping and Dining guide. Flowers will be in hanging baskets by Mother's Day weekend. Attended the National Main Street Conference in Boston, and Staunton has recognition there since winning the 2002 Main Street Award. Will revamp the signs in the Wharf. Staunton is a leader among Main Street communities.

Sector Reports

Attractions

Robin: Visitation up 15%, and next week hosting an event "Untold Power" about Edith Wilson. Book signing after with Rebecca Roberts. Archaeology dig coming up at WWPL where 17 JMU students study in a 6 wk. field school, and welcome visitor participation. Historic Garden Tours this weekend with homes in Augusta County. Robin echoed what Greg said, Staunton had recognition in Charleston SC where they were for a conference.

Stephanie: *Eurydice* and *As You Like It* closes May 13-14. April 22-23 will host Shakespeare Anniversary and birthday party with a block-party style event. Thanks to community partners. *The Complete Works Of William Shakespeare* is coming towards the end of May.

Robert: Barren Ridge has excellent winemaking, high quality wine, events and music. Recently chosen for the Governor's Case. Mojo Parker performing on Mondays. Open mic nights and Watercolor and Wine w/ Juliette. Also holding reserve wine tastings.

Paige: March was a little slow in the beginning, but last to days had over 1800 for Homeschool Days. Fiber Fest had 650 people with 50 mph wind and gusts. There were sheepdog demos, hand shearing, electric shearing and spinning taking place.

Liz: Two more acceptance visits in April, with deposits due May 1. Have Capstone Festival with nominations by faculty. Commencement May 20-21 and Aug 23 is move-in day.

Old Business

Sheryl: Had the first meeting of the Virginia 250 committee in Williamsburg. Our events have to be about the American Revolution, but you can tie-in something else outside of history. There is plenty of history in Staunton. Robin added to be aware of a celebration vs. a commemoration, and of where we have been vs. where we are headed. There are grants available. There will be traveling exhibits centered around 2026 but we can still celebrate what we are headed towards.

New Business

June: Heifetz has live music in the shop on Mondays and Wednesdays at 12:00. Concert held last weekend included 2 faculty and 3 heirloom students. Holding open mic night 3rd Wednesday of each month.

Kim: Reunion will start sending updates to Sarah for inclusion in the meeting. Very busy, doing more outreach and adding new items to the menu. Have a lot of North and South travelers that stop in. Still open F, Sa and Su – all takeout.

Terah: Concerned about the possibility of using the Hardy Lot for the J&D court building. There was concern from others as well that no one was informed and no one asked for input from the businesses it would most affect. Several people have started petitions and plan to send to City Council in advance of the meeting where it will be discussed. Concerns included: elderly/handicapped parking there for easy access, concerns from attendees of the synagogue, possibility of sinkholes with jack-hammering, etc. There was concern about several grants that had been applied for that included ample parking for WWPL and the Arcadia project, which could be in danger if a court building was there. Greg believes more will come to light after the City Council meeting, and several stated they planned on attending and speaking.

Adjourn

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Meeting minutes submitted by Kim Cormier