



## **Tourism Advisory Board**

**August 10, 2023 9:30 am**

**City Council Chambers, First Floor, City Hall**

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

**9:35 am July 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

July 11, 2023 9:30 am

## Members/City Staff Present:

Greg Beam – SDDA  
Stephanie Cabacoy – American Shakespeare Center  
Sandi Carraro – Book Dragon  
Steve Claffey, Mayor – City Council Liaison  
Michelle Davis – Hotel 24 South  
Liz Fravel - Mary Baldwin University  
Paige Hildebrand – Frontier Culture Museum  
Sarah Lynch – Baja Bean  
Robin von Seldeneck – Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library  
Sheryl Wagner – Staunton Tourism  
Jessica Williams – Staunton Tourism

## Members/City Staff Absent:

Andrew Greene - Heifetz Institute  
Robert Higgs – Barren Ridge Vineyards, Accordia  
Jeff Ramsey – Gibson’s Warehouse, Byers Street Bistro  
Ross Williams – Frederick House

## Others Present:

Sean Bracken - SDDA  
Florin Breeden – SCVB Intern from MBU  
Gabe Glassmann - MBU  
Kevin Hettinger – Society for Victorian Arts and Culture  
Justin McBride – Brisket Taco  
Julia Sabin – Staunton Books  
Annette Spencer – Tru By Hilton  
Juliette Swenson – CoArt Gallery  
Pamela Wagner – Arcadia Project  
Nikki West – Ciders From Mars

## Call To Order and Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order. A motion was made by Paige Hildebrand and seconded by Robin von Seldeneck to approve the previous meeting minutes. Minutes were approved.

## June 2023 Tourism Review – Sheryl Wagner

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

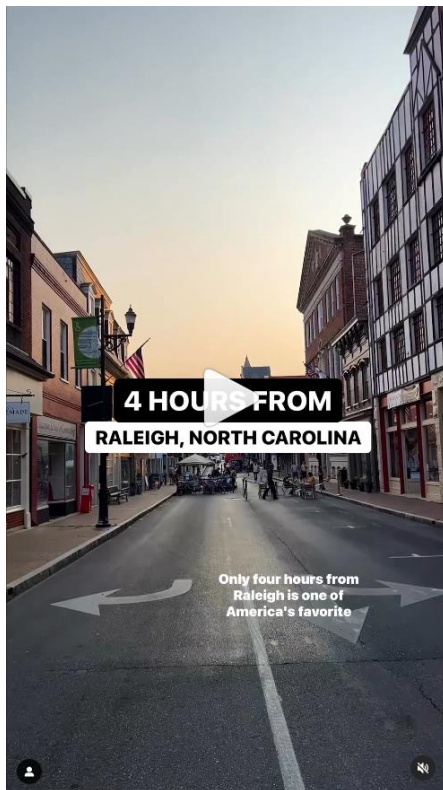
- June promotions included, Summer Music Festivals in Staunton, Celebrating Juneteenth, Bike Virginia in Staunton, "Saving History" Blackburn Inn Package, Celebrate Great Outdoors Month in Staunton, Show Dad Some Love On Father's Day, Light Bites - Staunton’s Taste of Summer, Red Wings Roots Music Festival, and weekly special events.
- Attended the ribbon cutting at Batten Green Venue & Lodging on June 8.
- Hosted a familiarization tour for Virginia Tourism Corporation employees on June 9.
- Attended a Blue Ridge Rising meeting at Barren Ridge Vineyard on June 13.

- Sheryl Wagner attended a Virginia Women’s Municipal Leadership Institute class on June 15.
- Jessica Williams attended the Shenandoah Valley Travel Association summer meeting at CrossKeys Vineyard on June 15.
- Hosted a social media influencer [@MagnoliaMegan](#) June 15-17. Click [here](#) to view the Instagram reel.
- Attended The Blackburn Inn’s 5<sup>th</sup> year anniversary celebration on June 17.
- Attended a Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership (SVTP) meeting, an SVTP Marketing Committee meeting, a Shenandoah Beerwerks Trail meeting, a Queen City Mischief & Magic 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
June 8	<a href="#">There’s A New Way To See Virginia’s Shenandoah By Rail</a>	MSN.com	168,879,495
June 4	<a href="#">15 Most Charming Small Towns To Visit</a>	MSN.com	156,890,226
June 24	<a href="#">Students Uncover History At Woodrow Wilson Home</a>	Washington Post	53,176,328
June 5	<a href="#">7 Ideal Destinations For A 3-Day Weekend In The Mid-Atlantic</a>	World Atlas	4,020,299
June 5	<a href="#">9 Oldest Founded Towns To Visit In Virginia</a>	World Atlas	4,020,299
June 1	<a href="#">13 Towns In The Mid-Atlantic That Have The Best Main Streets</a>	World Atlas	4,020,299
June 27	<a href="#">9 Most Charming Towns In Virginia</a>	World Atlas	3,719,024
June 14	<a href="#">9 Towns In Virginia Have The Best Main Streets</a>	World Atlas	3,719,024



magnoliamegan and visitstaunton  
Staunton, Virginia

magnoliamegan • Staunton - A Virginia Gem 📍 Here is a deeper dive into our stay at @visitstaunton! This town was perfect for a getaway, and they have everything you need including amazing places to eat, fun things to do and things that are unique to Staunton - and only 4 hours from Raleigh! 🍷 here's what we did during our stay!

I blew my own glass decoration at @sunspsstudios and I LOVE the way it turned out! It is a beautiful glass pumpkin that glows in the dark, and I was able to choose my own colors and everything! 🍷 We stayed at the incredible @theblackburninn and WOW! This historic renovated building has so much character and there is an original spiral staircase leading to the roof from the 1620's!

We had delicious gelato from @thesplitbananaco and stopped at a few local restaurants like Wright's Dairy Rite, @blupointseafoodco, and @zynodoa where they use locally sourced ingredients! 🍷

We were looking for a cool photo spot and stumbled across Landes Park, a unique park under a railroad bridge! One of our favorite parks of the trip was our stop at the @frontierculturemuseum! We love history and learning about the past, and there truly is nothing like this place around! They have acres of land dedicated to replicating buildings and scenery to its historic past. Our favorite part was stopping in the Irish Blacksmith building that they imported, and they were making nails while we were there! The building even had a thatched roof 🍷

One of the main attractions of the town is the @americanshakespearecenter! This is the worlds only replicated Shakespeare theater and you can find them doing reenactments of Shakespeare's work! 🍷

Like by crucible.coffee and 1,171 others

JUNE 29

Add a comment...

Date	Headline	Source	Reach
June 30	<u>Statler Brothers Exhibit In 'The Space' In Downtown Staunton</u>	WHSV-TV	458,908
June 29	<u>A Sustainable Art Center Is Opening Up In Staunton</u>	WHSV-TV	458,908
June 19	<u>Gypsy Hill Park Hosts Concert For Juneteenth Celebration</u>	WHSV-TV	458,908
June 16	<u>Staunton Bakery Staying Busy, Having Fun</u>	WHSV-TV	458,908
June 15	<u>Frontier Culture Museum Makes A Flag In A Day For Flag Day</u>	WHSV-TV	458,908
June 9	<u>Arcadia Project Looking To Revitalize Former Dixie Theater In Staunton</u>	WHSV-TV	458,908
June 21	<u>Statler Brothers Memorabilia Will Help Fans Take A Stroll Down Memory Lane In Downtown Staunton</u>	News Leader	92,878
June 20	<u>New Breakfast And Lunch Restaurant With An International Flair Coming To Downtown Staunton</u>	News Leader	92,878
June 23	<u>10 Truly Underrated Towns In Virginia That Deserve To Be Explored</u>	The Travel	2,491,563
June 29	<u>Bike Virginia Brings Cyclists</u>	Daily News Record	69,708
June 2	<u>South Main Street Summer</u>	Daily News Record	63,013
June 23	<u>More Cheese, Please</u>	Richmond Magazine	43,878
June 28	<u>Hotel 24 South: Preserving City Spirit In Staunton</u>	Hotel Scoop	4,380
June 22	<u>The Great Lobster Roll Battle Pits Maine vs. Connecticut: Which Is Better?</u>	MSN.com	168,879,495
June 14	<u>32-Year Old Spent \$2,000 Setting Up An Airbnb In Her Neighbor's Barn – Now Her Rentals Bring In \$2.88 Million A Year</u>	CNBC	47,014,803
June 17	<u>The Story Behind Staunton's Spider-Man Sightings</u>	News Leader	92,878
June 7	<u>Arcadia Project Sells Adjacent Staunton Property In Effort To Match \$1.5 Million Grant</u>	News Leader	92,879
			<b>620,136,794</b>

### Website Visitation

Website Traffic		
June 2022	June 2023	% Change
32,576 visitors	36,465 visitors	+11.9%
80,819 page views	102,958 page views	+27.4%
311 visitor's guide requests	135 visitor's guide requests	-56.6%

### Top 10 Origin Markets with Economic Impact



**Smith Travel Research (STR) Hotel Occupancy Report**

Occupancy (%)	Year To Date					2021	2022	2023
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May			
This Year	40.6	45.9	54.1	60.9	65.8	39.6	52.5	53.6
Last Year	39.6	42.9	51.3	63.8	64.4	29.8	39.6	52.5
% Change	2.5	7.2	5.3	-4.5	2.2	33.0	32.7	2.0

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**Sector Reports  
Lodging**

Michelle: Up 12% in June, but short on budget.

Annette: May was strong, June was quiet, July a little slow. End of September, October and November looking busy.

**Sector Reports  
Restaurants**

Sarah: Early June was quiet, but post-Covid regular. Still closed Wednesdays.

Justin: open Sa-M 9:00 a – 3:00 p and will be adding additional days.

## Sector Reports

### Retail

Sandi: Up in June and July, having a lot of campers in and some spend the whole day in Staunton. Have had at least 3 families from Florida. Also having visitors looking to move to Virginia, as Virginia is touted as one of the best states to retire to. Have had 75 people pick up sheets for "Where's Waldo". July 4<sup>th</sup> was good, and have had some ask why the 4<sup>th</sup> parade is not held downtown. Heifetz reports the festival continues through July 29<sup>th</sup>, and on August 5<sup>th</sup> there will be a cellist from the Ukraine that will give a small concert in the music shop. Retailers overall happy.

Greg: New SDDA guides will be out soon and Sean will distribute. Working on new website as well as fall and winter planning. The Design Committee did a walkthrough of downtown and as a result, Public Works is painting the lampposts.

## Sector Reports

### Attractions

Paige: Onboard with a new marketing company, using geofencing to target ads. Had 200+ at FCM on July 4<sup>th</sup>. Sarah asked about the FCM holding the naturalization ceremonies as before, and Paige said it was up to a federal judge.

Liz: MBU billboards are up. Welcoming the new MBU President Dr. Jeff Stein and wife Chrissie from NC. There will be a meet and greet on August 4<sup>th</sup> on Cannon Hill. PEG students arrive Aug. 8, then WWII and athletes and other students.

Robin: June up 18% over last June, but not pre-Covid goal. Up 14% for the year. Have had visitors from all 50 states and 48 countries. There are suffrage themed events upcoming in August. So many reached out for info with the archeological field school, and all info is now in the lab and being analyzed. We would love input on our exhibit design previews.

Stephanie: Complete Works of Shakespeare was a big hit! Now showing Taming of the Shrew, with Much Ado and Measure for Measure upcoming. Have also hired a content creator. Matinees begin Sept. 18.

## Old Business

Sheryl: Would like to go back to 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursdays for TAB meetings. Paige said it would be easier for her, and Robin said she could make it work. There was no opposition. The next TAB meeting will be Thursday, August 10 at 9:30 am.

## New Business

Justin: Open now at our brick-and-mortar location on State St. Sa-Mo 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Have delivery available. Will add Fridays in on July 28, and other days in August. Will be open 7 days/week by QCMM. Participating in Art in the Park and building an events team too.

Kevin: Very positive reviews on touring the Spotts-Coffman house. Will be partnering with Ghosts of Staunton on August 12. Some have said they sense spirits in the home.

Gabe: Will conduct the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Downtown Business Bracket, connecting MBU to the downtown. Please reach out to be a featured business. There are 350 incoming freshmen.

Sarah: QCMM has nailed down the money, trolleys, trains and toilets. Waiting on details of what everyone else is doing to participate. Will start sending out paperwork for participating. Not printing a map this year, just posters. QCMM ends at 6:00 pm Sunday evening. Working with 2 coaches for quidditch.

Greg: Some complained about the Farmers' Market draping their banner across the Statler exhibit in the Wharf. Greg said it was meant to be used as a stage, but perhaps it could be displayed in another way.

<b>Adjourn</b>
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With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.

Meeting minutes submitted by Kim Cormier