

**Minutes**  
**Island County 2% Committee**

Date: 10/3/19

Location: Camano Center, Camano Island

The meeting was called to order at 11:02 am by Vice Chairman Chet Ross.

**Quorum:**

Debra Bell X	Comm. Jill Johnson	Pat Powell
Dianne Binder X	Gregg Lanza X	Frank Rose
Stephanie Cook	Joanne Lechner X	Chet Ross X
OH Chamber Vacant	Jessica McCready X	Sharon Sappington X
Lynda Eccles	Inge Morascini	Erica Wasinger
Bruce Allen	Robyn Myers X	OH Vacant

In addition to the above members also in attendance this meeting were Sherrye Wyatt, Whidbey Camano Islands Tourism Coordinator, Jack Penland, ComputerPIX LLC, Scott Rosenkranz, Rosenkranz Productions.

**GUESTS:**

Gayle Picken, Day Trips in Washington  
Todd Morrow, Executive Director Island Transit  
Juliane Abbott, Administrative Manager, Camano Island Chamber  
Laurie Cook, Wheelhouse Marketing Group  
Kerry Rosencranz, Rosenkranz Production

No agenda was presented and due to no quorum, there was no agenda was adopted.

No minutes from September were presented and adopted due to no quorum.

Treasurer's report and invoices were presented by Dianne Binder.

<b>Island County Joint Tourism</b>					<b>Invoices on Sept 27, 2019</b>
<b><u>Vendor</u></b>		<b><u>Date</u></b>	<b><u>Invoice#</u></b>	<b><u>Amt.</u></b>	
5000204	Anchorage Inn	9-27-19	092719ICT	\$158.41	Overnight lodging for Albert Jennings with Port of Seattle - Germany Office
5007381	ComputerPIX LLC	9-26-19	19-18	\$3,544.37	Digital Marketing, Website
5007381	ComputerPIX LLC	9-26-19	19-19	\$527.70	Platforms, Web Expenses
5007383	Laura Hilton	9-26-19	919	\$2,000.00	Communications Staff Support
5007383	Laura Hilton	9-26-19	926	\$792.32	Expenses & Mileage
5008568	Osborne Northwest Public Relations	9-26-19	2167	\$2,800.00	Media Relations Consulting
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	9-30-19	2903	\$3,000.00	Map Refresh/ReDesign
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	9-30-19	2926	\$1,500.00	Design, Layout, Production Services
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	9-30-19	3000	\$6,248.11	Map Reprint
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	9-30-19	3001	\$674.00	IFWTWA Travel International Conference
5005663	Sherrye Wyatt PR & Writing	9-15-19	91519	\$7,500.00	Public Relations/Marketing Services
5005663	Sherrye Wyatt PR & Writing	9-27-19	92719	\$1,872.43	Mileage and Expenses
5003696	Visual Communications Development Corporation DBA Scenic WA	9-1-19	19-155	\$325.00	Registration for Laura Hilton for Seriously Social Workshop
	<b>Total</b>			<b>\$30,942.34</b>	

Joanne Lechner motioned and Deb Bell seconded the motion to approve the treasurer's report and that the invoices in the amount \$30,942.34 are authorized and submitted to Island County for payment. Motion carried by majority.

## **Old Business**

None

## **New Business**

Update from Camano Island Chamber Director Jessica McCready. Arrowhead Axe is a new, popular business, which encourages axe throwing with friends. Building on Camano is booming, yet they are having employee shortages. On this same vein, they see non-profits lacking volunteers. Fall festival is becoming a popular activity. Chili chowder cook off happens again in November, which was enormously successful last year and is now in year 24. Glass quest continues to grow and has found the new app from last year as a good tool to expand upon this year. They received a grant from Port of Seattle to advertise to Texas and California through digital campaigns.

Update from Deb Bell at Cama Beach. They have become "wedding central," with many weddings this year and few more yet this year. Harvest Festival is coming up with their partner organizations. There is a new entertainment series with free music. Winterfest in December will include gingerbread house building and additional weekly activities. Many more activities happen at Cama Beach, which include children's crafts, music, theatre, dinners and work on the trails.

## **Monthly PR media Report**

### **SHERRYE WYATT**

Sherrye drafted and submitted a multi-year grant request to the **City of Oak Harbor Lodging Tax Advisory Committee** for \$55,000 to support shoulder season marketing for three years. The committee reviewed the application on September 25 and awarded \$12,000 a year for 3 years.

Sherrye is participating in the **WSDMO** conference call on October 1. Whidbey and Camano Islands are members of the **Adventure Travel and Trade Association** – which has more than 100 DMO members globally who have been grappling with global tourism issues for several years. The organization has been collaborating with Daniel Byström, a colleague in Scandinavia, to pilot innovation programs for the future of tourism design and development. Byström, a destination design expert and co-founder of [DesignNation.se](http://DesignNation.se), recently released *Pre-Study Áfangastaðastofur*, a comprehensive study that includes perspectives and first-hand accounts from highly respected DMOs addressing the challenges of defining their future roles in tourism. It also offers guidance on how to establish destination management organizations.

Sherrye coordinated an itinerary with the **Port of Seattle Germany** office representative Albert Jennings. He is visiting Seattle and then heading to Whidbey Island, Bellingham and Walla Walla. Sherrye is working with Laura to represent Whidbey and Camano Islands at the **Port of Seattle** international buyer's event on October 1. They are also coordinating to attend the **Seattle Hotel Concierge Show** later in October and the **Port of Seattle Cruise Connections** summit in November. Sherrye is working with Scott and Kerry Rosenkranz who are representing Whidbey and Camano Islands at the **IFWTWA international conference** in November.

## OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS

### Project Management

- Managed the content partnership with the Tom Douglas Seattle Kitchen on KIRO Radio; resulting in buzz for Whidbey Island Grown Week throughout the month, including:
  - Five promotional spots on the show, read by Tom Douglas
  - Two 6-7 minute segments promoting the Whidbey Island Grown Week, including an interview with Tyler and Sara Hansen of Oystercatcher and a recap of the experience as shared by a producer who visited.
  - A Facebook post promoting the event on the highly engaged page, [@SeattleKitchen](#)
- Worked with Sagacity's assigned writer to highlight placement in the Washington State Tour Guide, 200. Story topics include: "Touring on Two Wheels," "Aquatic Adventures," "Island Style."
- Developed itineraries for travel writers this month.

### Media Visits

- Dan Shyrock, Sept. 6-7; contributor to Northwest Travel & Life Magazine and Cycle California! Magazine.
- Jean Chen, USA Today GO Magazine, Sept. 9-15, 2019, exploring south and north ends of the island with three nights in each area.
- Marcie Cheung, Marcie in Mommyland (influencer partnership), Sept. 13-15, 2019

**Press received** (*destination articles and broadcast stories that include Whidbey or Camano as a result of our collective island efforts. Reach is defined as circulation for print, view/internship for broadcast, follower count for earned social media endorsements and unique monthly views for digital media*).

Media Outlet	Summary	Published	Circulation/Unique Visitors per Month
<a href="#">Spokesman Review - Online</a>	An island fantasy: Renting a cabin (for cheap) on Whidbey	Sept. 1, 2019	883,801

<i>Spokesman Review - Print</i>	An island fantasy: Renting a cabin (for cheap) on Whidbey	Sept. 1, 2019	78,395
<a href="#"><u>Blend Radio and TV - Online</u></a>	The Many Flavors of Whidbey Island	Sept. 2, 2019	1,260
<a href="#"><u>Blend Radio and TV - YouTube</u></a>	The Many Flavors of Whidbey Island	Sept. 2, 2019	15
<a href="#"><u>Wanderboomer - Online</u></a>	Weekend Getaway to Whidbey Island	Sept. 5, 2019	2,130
<a href="#"><u>Wanderboomer - Online</u></a>	Escape to Camano Island, The Easy Island	Sept. 6, 2019	2,130
<i>Seattle Kitchen - Podcast</i>	Whidbey Island Grown Week	Sept. 14, 2019	PENDING
<i>Seattle Kitchen - Podcast</i>	Whidbey Island Grown Week	Sept. 21, 2019	PENDING
<i>Seattle Magazine - Print</i>	Fall Road Trips: Langley and Camano Island	October 2019	58,984
<i>Seattle Met - Print</i>	Big Time Fun in Small Towns: Coupeville	October 2019	65,606
<a href="#"><u>Seattle Refined - Online</u></a>	Grab That PSL and Head to One of These Pumpkin-Inspired Events	September 23, 2019	200,000
<i>KOMO News - Online</i>	Grab That PSL and Head to One of These Pumpkin-Inspired Events	September 23, 2019	1,947,978
<a href="#"><u>Everett Herald - Online</u></a>	Whidbey Island Grown Week is a celebration of season's bounty	September 23, 2019	542,000
<a href="#"><u>AAA Washington - E-Newsletter</u></a>	Things to Do This Weekend: Whidbey Island Grown Week	September 25, 2019	80,000
<a href="#"><u>AAA Washington - Online</u></a>	Don't Miss These Weekend Events: Whidbey Island Grown Week	September 25, 2019	5,607,990
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>10,054,200</b>

## **LAURA HILTON**

### **Seriously Social, Scenic WA**

#### **Podcasts**

Larj Media out of Seattle gave a wonderful presentation about podcasts. The medium has exploded in the last five years, following the outrageous success of Serial (more than 80 million people listened to the series). Podcasts are uniquely engaging, since people tend to listen to them while commuting, working out, cooking, etc. Activities where you can give your full listening attention to something, but can't watch or use your hands necessarily.

It's very difficult to get people to watch a video for even a minute or two, but 85% of listeners who start a podcast listen to all or most of it (on average that's 30 minutes or more!). More than half of Americans listen to at least one podcast, and the industry has gained 17 million new listeners in just the last year. 82% of listeners are under age 55, and it is a particularly strong tool for marketing to millennials. 68% of listeners have an annual household income of \$75,000 or more, and most look for more information online after listening, whatever the subject.

There was a lot of excitement within the group of attendees about the idea of podcasts for Washington DMOs. The general consensus was that it might be too time consuming or expensive to do individually, but there was a lot of enthusiasm for the idea of Scenic WA being the umbrella host to a podcast series that each DMO could buy into. Each destination would have control over their story and content, but would work together under one professional agency such as Larj, allowing for the cost to be shared and tying the content together into a high quality series. Scenic WA will be following up with all attendees about this idea.

#### **Short Term Vacation Rentals**

AirDNA are a data and analytics company that track metrics for every AirBnb and VRBO listing worldwide. Their Director of Business Development, Kellen Kruse, gave an informative presentation about the company's services, and trends they're seeing in the short term vacation rental industry. Some information is available for free on their website, and you can add more and more features or receive specific reports through various membership structures. They are able to provide information about the number of listings in an area, the average length of stay for guests, where the guests are visiting from, etc. Kellen also shared stories of DMOs and short term rental hosts working together, in order to present consistent branding and represent the area well to outside guests. The company is currently working on a partnership with Dean Runyon.

<https://www.airdna.co/>

#### **State Tourism Funding**

The final speaker was Mike Moe, the Managing Director of the Washington Tourism Alliance. His presentation was about plans for the organization now that legislature has at last approved funding for a state-wide tourism marketing effort. Currently the WTA has only two employees and no office space, so they are really building from the ground up. The WTA are currently reviewing proposals for a branding campaign and developing their budget. Plans are in place to host the first annual State Tourism Conference in Fall of 2020 (most likely October). An out-of-state visitor survey showed that while people are enthusiastic about the idea of visiting Seattle, the vast majority have little to no

knowledge about other Washington destinations. Only 42% had much knowledge or awareness of the islands in our state. A thorough marketing plan was developed in 2018, which is available at the following link:

[http://watourismalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/WCTED14379\\_MarketingPlan\\_m11.pdf](http://watourismalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/WCTED14379_MarketingPlan_m11.pdf)

## JACK PENLAND

### Photographs

- Oak Harbor Music Festival
- Mussels at Rustica and their chef James Philipsen in the kitchen for use by Australian Author Jocelyn Pride
- Deception Pass at dusk
- General street shots of Langley for use by Jocelyn Pride
- Lady Washington and Djangofest musicians at Useless Bay Coffee
- Supplied images to AAA magazine for Whidbey Island Grown
- Supplied additional images to Jocelyn Pride for an upcoming story.

### Email

The next newsletter will be sent sometime after this report is submitted.

### Contest

The latest quarterly contest is over. There were 3807 entries. Here's how they found the contest.

Our winner is Lourdes Pascucci of Vaughn, Washington. She and her husband will be here November 8 & 9.

As part of the entry form, we ask how they heard about the contest. Here is how their answers broke down.

Referring Channel	Number
Tourism Website	1724
Tourism Email	1216
Facebook	284
A Friend	225
ScenicWA Website	133
Other	111
Cascade Loop Email	100
Twitter	9
Instagram	5

### Website Content

- The home page has new photos reflecting the recent photo shoot and new imaging that Scott is introducing in our advertising.
- One thing Scott and I did was to break that new map into pages so that someone can print it on their home printer. It comes out as four pages.

<https://whidbeycamanoislands.com/how-to-get-to-whidbey-island/map-of-whidbey-island-and-map-of-camano-island/>

- Whidbey Island Grown Week has been continuously updated as new events are added.  
<https://whidbeycamanoislands.com/event/whidbey-island-grown-week-2019/>
- The Haunting of Coupeville has been updated for 2019. New events will be added as I learn about them.  
<https://whidbeycamanoislands.com/the-haunting-of-coupeville/>

## Meetings

- Cascade Loop Annual Meeting – 9/19  
I attended the Loop’s 2019 meeting in Mukilteo. Several speakers offered interesting updates.
  - Annique Bennett - Snohomish County  
She explained their new marketing term “Seattle North Country” branding builds on the growing popularity of Seattle and they get to define the term “Seattle North Country.” She described their idea visitor as an “Enlightened Explorer.” They now describe their website as more of a magazine rather than a phone book.
  - Arif Ghouse – Paine Field Airport Director  
500,000 passengers had used the new commercial airline service since service began. That is about what they expected. He also explained that the car rental companies pick people up and take them into Everett to rent cars. They hope to improve that situation eventually. Permanent signs will go up soon, maybe October.
  - Annette Pitts – Cascade Loop
    - Will continue aggressively marketing to foreign travelers who typically stay for longer periods of time
    - Will continue to market the diversity of views, landscapes, activities and people
    - With the resumption of the National Scenic Byways Program (<http://www.scenic.org/blog/294-president-signs-national-scenic-byways-bill-into-law>) the Loop will resume pursuing funding through that program, but will first update their corridor management plan.
  - Ron Williams – Washington Tourism Alliance/Visit Walla Walla
    - Described the main elements of the state’s new tourism marketing effort
      - Focus on rural tourism-dependent areas
      - Focus on natural wonders and outdoor recreation
      - Attract international tourists
      - Assistance for tourism areas adversely affected by natural disasters
      - Have to supply twice the state money to get it. (Put in \$2, the state adds \$1.)
- City of Oak Harbor Lodging Tax Advisory Committee



- The committee approved \$12,000 a year for three years. I was able to answer a few of their questions.

### Alternatives to Drive

At the September 5<sup>th</sup> meeting the question of using the word “drive” came up with regard to our marketing. I said I’d do some research and see how popular the word “drive” was when compared with other options, such as “escape”

I’m glad I did, because I learned something. Let me explain.

Google keeps score as to what people are searching. Enter “Whidbey Island” into the Google search box and Google notes, “That’s one for ‘Whidbey Island.’” They share that information on a website called Google Trends (<https://trends.google.com>). Not only can you see trends, you can compare trends.

For example, here’s searches for Taylor Swift (blue) versus Kim Kardashian (red) and how they’ve changed over the past seven days.

Just a technical note about the graph. The vertical axis is not measuring actual numbers. It just shows relative popularity. In other words, the most searches on this chart was at 8 pm on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Google assigned it the top value of 100. Everything else is relative to that. We don’t know if that “100” represents 60 searches or 6000 searches. We just know that’s the peak search period.

How did this work for “drive” versus “escape” and “getaway”?

Over the past 15 years “drive” is far and away the winner. Case closed, right? Not so fast.

You see, we don’t know for sure that people are talking about recreation when they search the word “drive.” Drive is used in lots of situations, so I added the term “weekend” to each of our three words. As you see, “Weekend Getaway” is well above the others. “Weekend Drive” still beats Weekend Escape,” but “Weekend Getaway,” a term I added mostly on a whim, is the clear winner.

I continued to try out some other phrases, with nothing particularly new happening until I tried “Things to do this weekend.”

We have a new winner, maybe.

Another way to measure the popularity of a term is seeing if it’s being used as a social media hashtag.

There are not as many social posts as there are searches, but there are still a lot of posts and there are tools online that tracks this stuff.

Influencermarketinghub.com is one such site.

I ran the terms through their tool and here’s what I found:

#Hashtag	Number of posts with this tag
#ThingsToDoThisWeekend	8,022
#ThingsToDo	198,432
#WeekendDrives	8,525
#WeekendDrive	36,234
#WeekendEscape	226,544
#WeekendEscapes	17,871
#WeekendGetaway	4 million
#WeekendGetaways	128,758

As you can see, the most popular hashtag is #WeekendGetaway. Our Google winner of “ThingsToDoThisWeekend” or even the shorter “ThingsToDo” were far below #WeekendGetaway.

So, effective immediately, one of our regular hashtags is “#WeekendGetaway.”

But, there are more questions to research. How are these trending over time? Is there a seasonal change? Are other terms more popular?

There are other tools, as well. Most of them require some sort of sign up and newsletter agreement, so I’m still considering which of those tools I might want to use.

So, there is some hard data about “drive” and friends. I’ve made one change and how that impacts (or doesn’t) other facets of our message is subject to further research and testing.

Gayle Picken was invited to share during Sherry’s report about her business Day Trips in Washington. Laurie Cook is newly relocated to Camano Island and represents Wheelhouse Marketing and brand work with festivals and events.

## Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1:02 PM.

Next regular meeting is Thursday, November 7, Coupeville Public Library Meeting Room, 11am-1pm.

Meeting recorded by Robyn Myers and reviewed for submission by Joanne Lechner, Alternate Secretary