

Minutes  
 Island County 2% Committee  
 November 5, 2020  
 Zoom, due to COVID-19

**Quorum:** x=members present

Tim Callison	Com. Jill Johnson	Pat Powell
Debra Bell x	Gregg Lanza x	Mitch Richards
Dianne Binder x	Joanne Lechner x	Tom Felvey x
Janae Cameron x	Jessica McCready x	Chet Ross x
Vicki Graham x	Inge Morascini x	Sharon Sappington, EDC x
Lynda Eccles x	Robyn Myers x	Erica Wasinger

In addition to the above members also in attendance this meeting were: Sherrye Wyatt, Whidbey Camano Islands Tourism Coordinator, Jack Penland, Computer PIX LLC, Scott Rosenkranz, Rosenkranz Productions Laura Hilton, Is Co. Tourism Contractor.

Guests: None

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

Adoption of the Agenda: No changes were made to the agenda. Lynda Eccles motioned, and Tom Felvey seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion approved unanimously via voice.

Minutes from the October 1, 2020 meeting were presented via email. Joanne Lechner motioned, and Jessica McCready seconded to approve the minutes from October 1, 2020 as presented. Motion approved unanimously via voice.

Treasurer’s report was presented by Dianne Binder. A second round of invoices dated for October 31 were presented in the sum \$7,620.55. Joanne Lechner motioned, and Lynda Eccles seconded to approve the invoices in the sum of \$7,620.55. as presented. Motion approved unanimously via voice. The first round of invoices were approved at the management committee on October 26, 2020.

	<b>Island County Joint Tourism</b>				<b>Invoices on October 31, 2020</b>
<b>Vendor</b>		<b>Date</b>	<b>Invoice#</b>	<b>Amt.</b>	
NEW	Light Thief Productions	10-29-20	202010.2	\$875.00	Videography and photography for cover shoot, and retouch photos for use in editorial (we now own all the images) as part of COVID-19 economy
NEW	Light Thief Productions	10-29-20	202010.3	\$691.12	Props and expendables for photo shoot of holiday guide as part of COVID-19 economic recovery
NEW	Lynden Tribune and Print	10-30-20	142584	\$609.50	COVID-19 economic recovery holiday shopping guide for printing of overages for additional distribution
5004220	Rosenkranz Productions	10-30-20	3062	\$1,500.00	COVID-19 economic recovery banners and posters for shop local stay safe campaign
5005663	Sherrye Wyatt Public Relations & Writing	10-31-20	103120E	\$1,147.43	Purchase of items for mailed gift boxes for Instagram Influencers campaign and advertising in the Crab Cracker on Camano Island to promote shop local as part of COVID-19 economic recovery
5003241	Sound Publishing	10-29-20		\$2,000.00	COVID-19 economic recovery advertising to promote shop local stay safe campaign
5007252	Whidbey Weekly	10-30-20	12152	\$797.50	Advertising campaign for stay safe, shop local as part of COVID-19 economic recovery
	<b>Total</b>			<b>\$7,620.55</b>	

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

1. Management Committee Report – None
2. PR & Media Report

**SHERRYE WYATT PUBLIC RELATIONS & WRITING**

We were awarded \$136,000 in CARES funding from Island County to complete the

stay safe, shop local campaign including an online and printed holiday shopping guide, videos, ads and earned media.

The most urgent focus this month was getting products rounded up and photographed for the guide, plus Sherrye was busy writing content and photos for the body of the guide as well as proofing. Sherrye also gathered products for the Instagram Influencer campaign and placed advertising to promote the campaign in the **Crab Cracker**, the **Best of Whidbey guide**, the **Whidbey Weekly**, **Crosswinds** and **Whidbey News-Times**.

Sherrye continues to participate in weekly calls with the **Island County Economic Recovery**. She is working up the reports and invoices to be submitted next week to Island County for reimbursement of the grant funds. A proposal we submitted was approved by **Island County EDC** executive committee for funds to do a similar campaign in spring. It is still in the discussion stage but this proposal supports stay safe shop local and builds upon this holiday campaign

**Washington Tourism Alliance** state branding conversation is taking place in the next week and a few members of our committee have volunteered to contribute to the conversation. The call is 1 p.m. on Friday and a comprehensive survey is also being sent.

Sherrye is working with the **International Food Wine and Travel Writers** to do a radio interview (November) and to put together a special virtual session for travel writers to promote both Whidbey and Camano Islands (April 2021).

Sherrye is also working with **RealFoodTraveler.com** to market the holiday online shopping with stories online and social media posts on their channels.

## **OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS**

### **Overview**

This month, we continued to focus on earned media strategies that promote safe travel to the islands, inspire drive market getaways and inspiration for 2021 trip planning. We also began to generate media plans and content to promote shop local and support for the retail guide coming in November.

### **Project Management – Safe Travel, Destination News**

- Developed targeted pitch to support the opening of Price Sculpture Forest, confirmed and secured interest with key outlets including **Seattle Times** (December run date), **KING 5 Evening** (November TBD), **Everett Herald**, **Seattleite** and other key regional outlets.
- Pitched stories surrounding outdoor and distanced travel, and ways island businesses are adapting to hospitality during COVID-19.
- Participated in the Society of American Travel Writers Convention; conducting 12 live media meetings to pitch stories for 2021. The following writers are very interested in remaining connected for future stories:

- Carolyn Heller, a Vancouver BC-based freelancer for Forbes Travel Guide, Lonely Planet and Canadian Traveller; is very interested in a visit when the border opens.
- Jennifer Weatherhead, Toronto-based Travel Expert and founder of TravelandStyle.ca; her syndicated segments also appear on Fox News, ABC, NBC affiliates throughout Canada and the US; she's interested in story ideas for virtual travel and possible trip coverage for 2021/22.
- [Michael Hodgson, @HiTravelTales \(10k followers\); interested in a 2020 spring or fall travel story for his travel site, international audience of](#)
- [Samantha Brown's Places to Love, PBS travel show is considering a Seattle episode for 2022 \(tapes in 2021\); successfully pitched consideration of an Island getaway component for the episode.](#)
- Arranged itineraries and secured visits from the following travel and lifestyle influencers:
  - [Obsessed by Portia](#), (76.3k followers), North Puget Sound area lifestyle and travel blogger visited to showcase a fall getaway, Oct. 23-24
  - [Honest Chatter](#) (1.7k followers), North Puget Sound area lifestyle and travel blogger visited to showcase a fall getaway, Oct. 23-24
  - [Rachel Teodoro](#), South Sound based blogger and travel influencer with 2.1 million followers on Pinterest, in addition to 17.2k followers on Instagram and 9.3 thousand unique monthly visits to the blog.
  - [Stuffed Suitcase](#) and Seattle Likes, Kimberly Tate is a North Puget Sound-based blogger, podcaster and travel expert we are working with on a late November getaway with her family for content consideration on all her outlets.

## Project Management - COVID Support, Holiday Retail

- Established PR strategy for @GoWhidbeyCamano on Instagram. Reviewed Instagram protocols and content; developed timeline and plan for increased engagement with influencers to maximize awareness for our PR content via earned media and shared content.
- Integrated a PR timeline to the holiday guide to ensure key opportunities are met; this includes media mailings, social and press release content.
- Developed list of regional and local influencers for press release distribution and targeted story pitches; tabulated this list by top 10 to receive a box of goods to maximize coverage. This includes a range of local and Seattle-based publications reaching the greater Pacific NW area.
- Confirmed interest and availability in receiving media previews of the goods to be featured in the guide from the following outlets:

425 Magazine
An Emerald City Life, @HelloTerumi (17k followers)
Eat in Seattle @CharlesKoh (53.9k followers)
Hello Rigby Blog + @HelloRigby (24k followers)

Honest ChatterBlog + @HonestChatter (1.7k followers)
KING 5 New Day Northwest
KOMO 4's Seattle Refined
Obsessed by Portia Blog + Obsessed by Portia (76k followers)
Seattleite
Stuffed Suitcase, Seattle Likes

### Media Visits/Pending Press

- **KING 5 Evening;** Nov/Dec.TBD. Discussed story plans for coverage of the new Price Sculpture Forest.
- **Seattle Magazine;** confirmed print and digital coverage for Whidbey Island’s shop local products in the Nov/Dec issue of the magazine.

**Press Highlights** include 36 pieces of coverage with an estimated 247 million impressions. To view the coverage in full [go here](#) or reference the pdf document that accompanies this report.

## COMPUTERPIX

### Website Visitation

**Even though I’ve noted that Google Analytics misses a great number of visitors due to ad blockers, it’s still gratifying to know that in 2020 Google continues to report more visitors to the website. October, 2020 was 38% above October, 2019. There were 28,037 visitors this October compared with 20,247 in 2019. It should be noted that in 2019 we had a lot of traffic regarding the Haunted Fort, so our increase was despite our losing an increasingly popular event.**

The number of visitors so far this year is up 6% over 2019 and up 19% over 2018.

### Top Pages

Looking at the number of visitors to our site can give us a general sense of our relative progress, it doesn’t give us much insight into why people are using the site. You can take a step towards learning this by looking at the top pages. This table shows the top pages in October.

The magic continues in Coupeville as the most visited page is about “Practical Magic.” It’s very rare for an inside page to outrank the home page. There’s clearly a public interest for more “Practical Magic.” Who will be the first innkeeper to offer a “Practical Magic” room or rooms?

The “jets” page is also among the most viewed pages and the Average Time on Page shows that people are reading the content. Happily, our lodging page is also doing well.

	Page	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews	Time on Page
1	/coupeville-the-home-to-practical-magic/	9947	9176	389.40

2	home	5447	4574	87.44
3	/jets-on-whidbey/	3344	3039	519.34
4	/things-to-do/	2979	2297	72.87
5	/lodging/	1247	904	88.76
6	/3-deception-pass-hikes-that-are-pure-magic/	1141	1055	972.89
7	/coupeville-whidbey-islands-historic-town/	1128	1013	207.73
8	/how-to-get-to-whidbey-island/	1095	1004	320.23
9	/activities/parks-and-scenery/	900	645	79.27
10	/deception-pass-state-park/	773	710	265.87
11	/things-to-do/fishing-clamming-crabbing/	693	655	397.85
12	/activities/food-wine/	635	434	86.62
13	/how-to-get-to-whidbey-island/insiders-hints-taking-the-ferry-to-whidbey-island/	627	567	413.18
14	/lodging/cama-beach-state-park-cabins/	569	502	333.16
15	/restaurants/	568	468	76.89

## Landing Pages

Another way we can tell what content is working is to examine landing pages. Not all visitors start with the home page and work their way to the content they're seeking. Through search engines and the use of web browser bookmarks and autofill, users often start elsewhere in the site. Here's how it looked in October.

Lodgings is the #3 landing page, a good sign that people are using the site specifically for visit planning. Not shown in the graph, but the number of people landing on lodging in October 2020 is up 72% from October 2019. Coming in at #7 is specifically lodging for Cama Beach State park. It's up 151% from 2019. Will the pandemic changing travel habits enough to mark a wide return of this kind of vacation experience?

Again, the jets schedule and the "Practical Magic" page are among the pages people started. Also, there are a number of pages that highlight the outdoor nature of Whidbey and Camano Islands.

	Landing Page	Users	New Users	Sessions
1	Home	504	495	558
2	/jets-on-whidbey/	384	321	896
3	/lodgings	325	321	359
4	/coupeville-the-home-to-practical-magic/	257	255	296
5	/things-to-do/scenic-places-to-photograph/	81	81	81
6	/a-fun-island-wide-driving-savenger-hunt/	79	78	105
7	/lodging/cama-beach-state-park-cabins/	73	73	88
8	/3-deception-pass-hikes-that-are-pure-magic/	49	48	56
9	/activities/parks-and-scenery/	48	45	53

10	/how-to-get-to-whidbey-island/insiders-hints-taking-the-ferry-to-whidbey-island/	44	44	44
11	/things-to-do/hiking/	41	40	44
12	/deception-pass-state-park/	40	38	47
13	/coupeville-whidbey-islands-historic-town/	39	35	44
14	(not set)	38	2	33
15	/how-to-get-to-whidbey-island/	38	33	45

## Behind the Scenes

There were some behind-the-scenes technical stuff going on with the website, as well. The software for our calendar and our hotel, restaurant, and business listings were both updated in October. WordPress, the software that runs the site, was also updated. There was also an update in how the website is delivered over the Internet that should speed our site up, especially for people outside the Western Washington region. All of this was done with 100% uptime for the site. Thanks to Michael Bourne for his hard work and pushing to keep things moving at state-of-the-art speed.

### Contests

The winner of our most recent contest was James Tuthill of Laramie, Wyoming. He won two nights at the Anchorage Inn along with a bunch of other goodies. His name was chosen from 5890 entries. The next contest, offering \$1000 towards the Inn at Langley, is underway and wraps at the end of December.

### Email

The October 2020 newsletter featured the Garry Oaks of Oak Harbor as its main story along with links to the “Practical Magic” and history of Deception Pass Page. In case you missed it, here’s the link.

[https://mailchi.mp/whidbeycamanoislands/where-are-the-oak-trees-of-oak-harbor-we-find-them-for-you?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/whidbeycamanoislands/where-are-the-oak-trees-of-oak-harbor-we-find-them-for-you?e=[UNIQID])

The email was opened 5,777 times which is an open rate of 27%, somewhat above the industry average. The most popular thing in the newsletter was the Garry Oaks story. The November newsletter is due out this week.

**IF YOU AREN’T RECEIVING THE MONTHLY EMAIL NEWSLETTER,  
PLEASE LET ME KNOW!**

## 3. Chamber Roundtable

### Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:26 pm

Next regular meeting is December 3, 2020, via Zoom, from 11am-1pm.

Meeting recorded by Robyn Myers and reviewed for submission by Sherrye Wyatt.