

Minutes  
 Island County 2% Committee  
 March 4, 2021  
 Zoom, due to COVID-19

**Quorum:** x=members present

Tim Callison x	Com. Melanie Bacon x	Jackie Henderson x
Debra Bell x	Gregg Lanza	OH Lodging- Vacant
Dianne Binder x	Joanne Lechner x	Tom Felvey x
Janae Cameron x	Jessica McCready	Chet Ross x
Vicki Graham x	Inge Morascini x	Sharon Sappington, EDC x
Lynda Eccles x	Robyn Myers x	Jim Woessner

In addition to the above members also in attendance this meeting were: Rita Comfort, owner of Comforts of Whidbey; Selene Muldowney- Stratton, Marketing & Communications Officer, Island Transit; Todd Morrow, Executive Director Island Transit; Sherrye Wyatt, Whidbey Camano Islands Tourism Coordinator, Jack Penland, Computer PIX LLC, Scott Rosenkranz, Rosenkranz Productions; Laura Hilton, Is Co. Tourism Contractor, Erin Osborne; Osborne Northwest Public Relations.

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

Adoption of the Agenda: No changes were made to the agenda. Debra Bell motioned, and Vicki Graham seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion approved unanimously.

Minutes from the January 7, 2021 meeting were presented via email. Gregg Lanza motioned, and Deb Bell seconded to approve the minutes from January 7, 2021 as presented. Robyn mentioned need to correct Jim’s name from Joe to Jim in the February minutes, which she will do. Motion approved unanimously with mentioned changes.

Treasurer’s report was presented by Dianne Binder. Mayor Tim and Council Member Jackie will investigate Langley and Coupeville lodging funds that are not showing yet on the 2020 tourism treasurer’s report. Additionally, the Langley reported accommodation tax number appears low. Mayor Tim requested this also be researched for accuracy. The February invoices were approved at the management committee on February 4, 2021.

**Old Business**

None

**New Business**

1. Ferry Sponsorship- great opportunity for us at a good price. We beat out BECU and Geico, thank you for your responses and we are now a major sponsor.
2. Spring Campaign
  - i. Discussion around cover photo with a mask/no mask. Consensus was to have no mask on the single person in a vehicle, with window down.
  - ii. The rest of the campaign is on schedule moving forward.
3. PR & Media Report see below

## SHERRYE WYATT PUBLIC RELATIONS & WRITING

### Spring Support Local – Discover Your Islands

This project continues to be the primary focus of energy for the creative team. The “Island Discoveries” social media campaign, where locals contribute their hidden treasures for possible inclusion in the guide, wrapped up March 1. However, it has been extended to encourage more people to participate in the lead up to the guide’s arrival. The print piece is really coming together beautifully and is in the final proofing phase. It will be distributed within Island County the week of April 5. Local advertising and potentially a decal free to locals will begin distribution in early April. Partners are Island County, the Economic Development Council of Island County and Island Transit. The buses will have copies of the guide and a new decal on the outside. Gail has been updated as well.



### Washington State Ferries (WSF)

This project is already underway. We’re working with Trans4media. We’re underwriting the ADA way finding signage for visitors at the train station and within the

terminal so they can make their way easily and safely to the ferry. In exchange for our support, Whidbey and Camano Islands will have a plaque at each sign with our logo, tagline and possibly website address and/or QR code indefinitely, we may update if our logo changes. In exchange, WSF will feature our destination in a social media campaign including their e-newsletter. Plus our package includes 12 months on 55 video screens, 12 months of a banner at Clinton along railing (may rotate as much as we want), and 12 months of Table Top events at Mukilteo terminal or aboard the ferry on this route. Also we have one month website campaign on landing page/schedule pages in October 2021. The one year begins when we feel the time is right.



## **Project with San Juan Islands, Washington Inns, Port of Seattle and The Jet Set Travel**

The **San Juan Islands** was awarded their Port of Seattle tourism grant request which we've partnered with (our contribution is \$2,500). The hosting inns will be members of the **Washington Independent Inns Network** (that organization is selecting their own member inns to participate). The main focus of the project is filming and airing of an episode about the San Juan Islands, with a side trip to Whidbey and/or Camano Islands. The show is **The Jet Set Travel**. The two segments (one in Español and one in English) will be filmed in September 2021 and is to air in October 2021. The Jet Set (English) airs 1180 times for one week in all 210 US TV markets on broadcast, cable and satellite. This includes airings in 11 Caribbean countries, Canada and US Virgin Islands, Guam and Puerto Rico on The CW International. The Jet Set Español airs 147 times. They have offered a scheduled rerun for the episode in December, January or April for both shows. All episodes are viewable on their website for free. The episodes are also available on demand via free Roku channel and Amazon Prime. Based on their distribution this has a media value equates to a minimum of \$10 million.

## **Upcoming Meetings and Advertising**

Film productions companies and location scouts are beginning to contact us as the weather improves. Everyone is adhering to the safety precautions put in place by **Washington Filmworks** with the Governor.

Destination advertising that will be focused on the Spring Campaign include the new April e-newsletter of the **Cascade Loop** (which is now a **National Scenic Highway**), e-newsletter of **Scenic WA** and the **AAA Journey** website and social media.

Sherrye is presenting to the **Coupeville Chamber of Commerce** (Mar 16), **Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce** (Mar 18), and **Camano Island Chamber of Commerce** (Apr 15). She is also presenting with other local experts on the topic Economic Development for Leadership Whidbey (Mar 26). Sherrye and Erin will be presenting a virtual tour and program of Whidbey and Camano Islands to the **International Food, Wine and Travel Writers Assn** (date in March TBD).

Sherrye continues in 2021 to participate in bi-weekly Zoom calls with the **Island County Economic Recovery Task Force** (Mon), weekly with **Island County Tourism Creative Team** (Mon), bi-weekly with **Northwest PR Council** (Thurs), weekly with **Washington State Destination Marketing Organization** (Fri) and bi-monthly with **Washington Filmworks** for executive board and board meetings.

## **OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Erin delivered her report in person this month. In addition, she walked the committee through navigating the monthly coverage book.

## **Monthly Overview**

The month of February flew by! We wrapped up January with a whirlwind collection of 24 media appointments at International Media Marketplace, so the first part of the month included follow up and future story development to maintain national awareness when travel returns. As case counts begin to drop and temperatures begin to rise, regional travel writers are beginning to seek “safe” daytrips and short weekend getaway ideas.

We connected with a trusted writer to execute our first media visit since fall 2020. These destination marketing strategies are working in tandem with the “shop local” and small business support tactics, pitching and sharing small businesses that offer mail order deliveries (national audience) or more local stories for regional and island county audiences.

As spring inches closer, we are looking forward to welcoming regional media to explore distanced itineraries to promote safe travel, while also launching the “shop local” guide to encourage the island county community to support small business.

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

- Developed story pitches and corresponded with key media directly to garner coverage that promotes visitation and trip inspiration.
  - Sent Penn Cove Mussels to national travel influencer Food, Fun and Faraway Places for a story to inspire future travel yet encourage mail order purchases for a taste of the islands in the meantime.
  - Secured a story segment with KING 5 Evening for Lesedi Farms, showcasing scenic island landscape and a small business to support by mail or at regional farmers markets.
- Coordinated distanced, safe travel itinerary for two upcoming feature stories on “Travel Awaits,” a national website reaching 1.5 million unique viewers.
- Developed a press release draft top position Island Discoveries as a leading resource for island county to shop and find local treasures and support the community.

## **Instagram Engagement**

- Continued media relations and story pitching on Instagram; shared local business news, reposted influencer content and managed the community with likes, comments and interaction on the @GoWhidbeyCamano Instagram page. Maintained goal of 2-3 posts per week, with stories posting on an ongoing basis.
- Follower count grew from 1,468 followers on January 28 to 1550 on February 24, an increase of 5.58%.

## **Media Visits/Pending Press**

- **Food, Fun and Faraway Places;** shared Penn Cove Mussels by mail with leading national travel influencer Kelly Stilwell. She is working on a destination story featuring Whidbey Island, encouraging viewers to order a taste of the island for now, and inspire a future visit for later.
- **KING 5 Evening;** shoot at Lesedi Farm is scheduled for March 2; the segment featuring the farm and products will air later in the month.
- **Travel Awaits;** two stories, entitled “A Perfect Day on Camano Island” and “A Perfect Day on Whidbey Island” are anticipated following a media daytrips to Camano Island (February 27) and Whidbey Island (March 6).
- **Seattle Maven;** Whidbey Island is slated to be included in a “Delicious Discoveries” column of this leading PNW travel blog following a summer visits, mid-August (dates pending)

**Press Highlights** include 9 pieces of coverage with an estimated 28.9 million impressions. To view the coverage in full [go here](#).

## **COMPUTERPIX**

### **February Digital Report**

#### **New Section and New Businesses**

Much of the month has been spent building the new portion of the website that will go live as part of the catalog launch. The new pages will be almost a website inside a website. It will be slightly different from the rest of the site, yet still fit within the site’s overall design. In fact, this special section will have its own web address: DiscoverYourIslands.com. Of course, it will also be very visible and accessible as part of the tourism website.

Several dozen businesses mentioned in the catalog, along with other similar businesses, are also being added to the website.

The restaurants are also being updated now that they can again be open.

#### **The Big Chill**

There was a rare dip in visitors to the website in February. The 30 days ending February 27 showed a 22% drop when compared with the same period last year. The biggest drop came during the snow days around February 13, when there was a 41% decline. Those same days saw a 50% decline among those viewing our website from Seattle, a 56% decline from Redmond and even large declines from people viewing the site from Whidbey Island. Camano island was up, however. We can likely thank Glass Quest for that.

## **The Dream Season**

It's worth remembering that, just like the flow of visitors to the county, there is a cycle to visitors to the website—down in the winter and up in the summer. What makes things so interesting is that the upward trend starts right around the new year. While the visitors aren't here, yet, they're exploring their options. That's why I call the first four or so months of a year, the Dream Season.

However, as we see from February's numbers, this dreaming is weather dependent. Many people can't visualize warm sunny summers when there's snow on the ground and/or an unusual chill in the air.

## **Searching**

74.9% of the traffic came to us via unpaid, or organic search. As usual, that's far and away the largest source of traffic. Next came direct (typing it in the browser or via a bookmark), email, and social.

4. Chamber Roundtable- all chambers were represented and reported updates. Island Transit also gave an update on ridership returning.

## **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm

Next regular meeting is April 1, 2021, via Zoom, from 11am-1pm.

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