

Meeting Minutes
Island County 2% Joint Advisory Board
Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism
August 5, 2021
Zoom, due to COVID-19

Quorum: x=members present

Town of Langley - Vacant	Com. Melanie Bacon x	Jackie Henderson x
Debra Bell	Gregg Lanza	OH Lodging- Vacant
Dianne Binder x	S. Whidbey lodging- Vacant	Tom Felvey x
Janae Cameron	Jessica McCready	Chet Ross x
Vicki Graham x	Inge Morascini x	Sharon Sappington, EDC x
Lynda Eccles x	Robyn Myers x	Jim Woessner x

In addition to the above members, guests also in attendance were: Selene Muldowney-Stratton, Marketing & Communications Officer Island Transit; Jack Penland, Computer Pix LLC, and Sherrye Wyatt, Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism PR & Marketing Manager and Film Liaison.

Meeting called to order at 11:02pm by Chet Ross.

1. **Adoption of the Agenda:** No changes were made to the agenda. Vickie Graham motioned, and Jackie Henderson seconded to approve the agenda as presented. Motion approved unanimously.
2. **Minutes** from the July 8, 2021 meeting were presented via email. No changes were made to the minutes. Inge Morascini motioned, and Vickie Graham seconded to approve the minutes from July 8, 2021 as presented. Motion approved unanimously.
3. **Treasurer's report** was presented by Dianne Binder. Discussion continued around the substantial increase for unincorporated Island County. Dianne then presented the monthly invoices, which were approved at the Management Committee meeting.
4. **Old Business:** There was no old business
5. **New Business:**
 - a. Management Committee Report: all things discussed were on the agenda.
 - b. Alternate Secretary: Jessica McCready was nominated by Chet Ross to be the alternate secretary and was seconded by Diane Binder. Motion passed unanimously.
 - c. PR Media Report:
The full monthly tourism report is presented here:

SHERRYE WYATT PUBLIC RELATIONS & WRITING

EDA American Rescue Plan Programs Funding

\$3 billion will be awarded across six different program areas. Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation is one of them, receiving \$750 million total. \$510 million in non-competitive aid awarded to the states (we are encouraging Washington's allocation of \$10.6 million be directed to the state's tourism office); and \$240 million in competitive grants will be applications reviewed by EDA. Sherrye is participating in state and national calls/webinars to learn where Island County's interests will fit in the Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation arena.

Of the \$240 million, the Western district is \$57 million (Alaska, Arizona, California, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Hawaii, Nevada, American Samoa, Rep. of Palua, Rep. of Marshall Islands, Guam, and Federated States of Micronesia). This will be hugely competitive. Must be very smart projects, ready to go, and ultra-collaborative to even be considered. Sherrye thinks they are seeking BIG ideas, transformational, generational projects that support paradigm shifts, that are innovative, that support smart ways to prepare tourism for the future, to effect change in a meaningful way. These are likely to be multi-state projects that speak to future resiliency, global thinking, creating new and unexpected partnerships. [EDA American Rescue Plan Programs | U.S. Economic Development Administration](#)

Field Guides Update

We have developed a proposal seeking to create and print 30,000 copies possibly in 2021. Sherrye and Scott are speaking with prospective partners in advance of seeking county funding. We may need volunteers help with "ground truthing" the final trail selection for any relevant concerns.

Destination Development - Strategic Planning

Sherrye pulled up the "**Roadmap to Recovery**" report created by Andy Dumaine in 2015-2016 (attached). He was the consultant and sustainable tourism expert who took our destination stakeholders through a series of workshops to talk through what we want tourism to look like and how to make that happen. We've completed most of his recommendations. Sadly, Andy has since passed away. It may be a great time to explore the idea of a countywide collaborative effort to take a look at the vital role tourism plays in shaping our future in a post-pandemic world. She is in communication with Jake Hauptert and Brian Mullis with the **Transformational Travel Council** <https://www.transformational.travel/>.

Other

Sherrye participated in a western WA press trip with **Port of Seattle** and regional partners to host media Nina Rehfeld (journalist) and Larry Lindahl (photographer) with Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung (Germany). Langley tourism committee representatives Inge and Tom are working with **Backroads Travel**, which is an

internationally-recognized tour operator that is now including Langley and Whidbey Island in a new package this year.

OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS

Monthly Overview

Early weeks of July celebrated a return to travel with national placement for Whidbey Island in a Reopening of Washington feature on [*Good Morning America*](#), in addition to a slew of positive feature stories in regional and national media this month. The tourism reopening we have been seeing across the past two months is being monitored with increased concern over the Delta variant. Due to new masking recommendations and with overall safety of travel is in question, we will no doubt see a dip in travel plans.

Our team is monitoring the trends, daily news alerts and keeping in close contact with writers planning trips for August and fall. To date, we've had one postponement. Our hope is to continue to safely welcome vaccinated travel writers and influencers interested in exploring and sharing stories for safe travel inspiration. Our upcoming visits are a mix of regional, in-state writers like Seattle Maven and her "Delicious Destinations" feature, as well as two writers flying in from out of market with national outlets like *National Geographic*, in addition to travel influencers.

Project Management

- Maintained communication with the team regarding COVID changes and news; shared updated news and stories for June visits which included:
 - **July 19-23, Therese Iknoian, HI Travel Tales**, visiting both Whidbey and Camano Islands to meet with chefs, food and beverage producers for profiles and destinations stories that will appear on this travel blog in addition to their Instagram page @HITravelTales
- Tracked and booked flights, car rentals and opportunities for upcoming out of state travel writers.

Instagram Engagement

- Reposted influencer and local business 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 1,818 on June 25 to 1,892 on July 29, an increase of 2.13%;

Media Visits/Pending Press

- **August 17-20, Ann Peavey, 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)
- **Kristen Pope, Sept. 14-17, freelance writer contributing to *National Geographic, Discover, Smithsonian, Audubon, Fodor's* and others; we hope to bring her to the islands in Fall 2021 to research story ideas.**

- **Sara Franklin, Sept. 20-24, freelance writer with *Travel + Leisure*** to cover the food and drinks, culinary culture of Whidbey Island.
- **Fall TBD;** the following spring 2020 media visits are in the process of rescheduling, with additional anticipated:
 - **Kelly Stilwell, influencer and travel blogger at [Food, Fun and Faraway Places](#)**, is planning a visit to cover Washington’s islands for her blog and social channels.
 - **Oct. 15-18; Camano Island FAM Tour, TBEX attendees (TBD)**

Press Highlights include 14 pieces of coverage with an estimated 32 million impressions. To view the coverage in full [go here](#) .

COMPUTERPIX

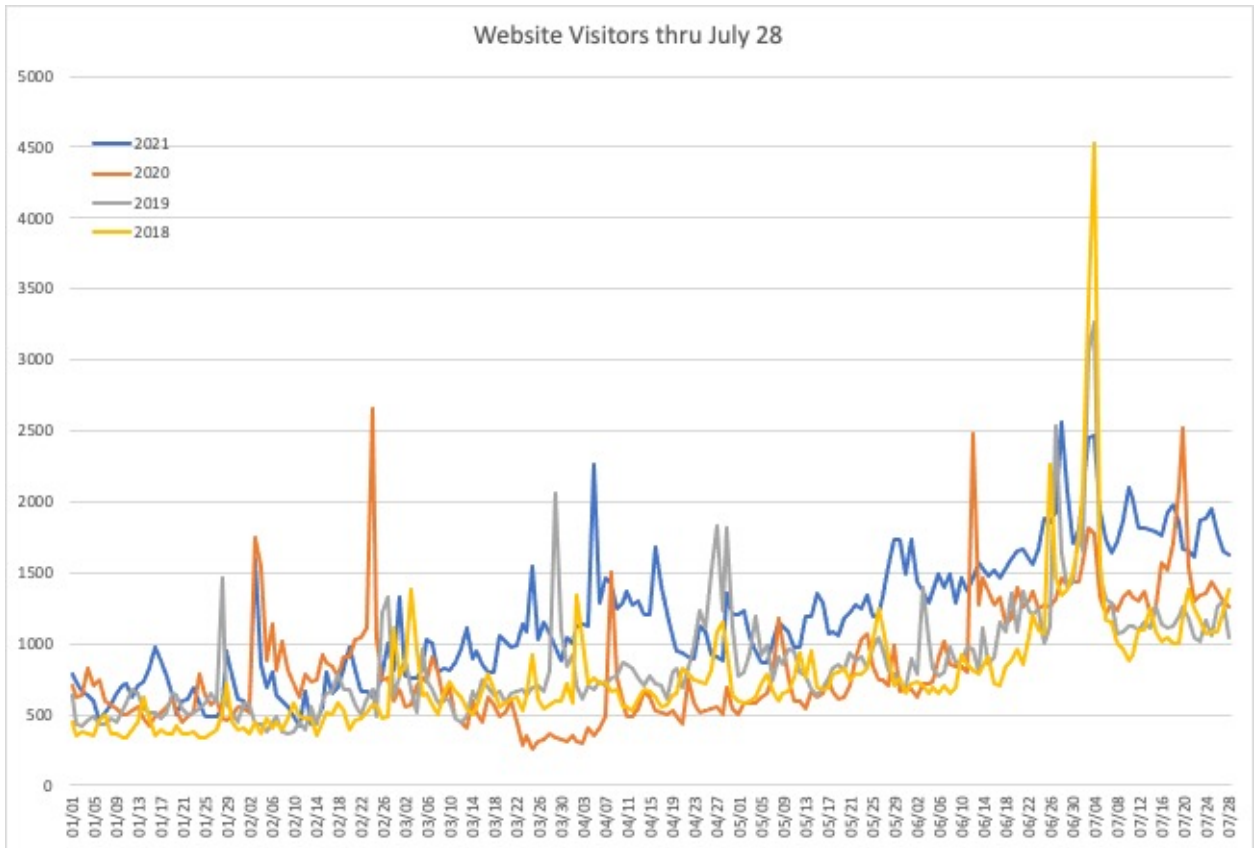
Website Visitors Year-to-Date

Jack decided to use Google Analytics to look at Year to Date visitation like that of our year-to-date financial information. The chart on the next page shows the number of visitors to the site each day from January 1 to July 28 for the years 2018 through 2021.

Looking at the blue line, you see that 2021 has, for the most part the most popular year ever.

Total visitors so far (July 28) in the last 4 years are:

2021	2020	2019	2018
246,100	177,579	183,642	162,938



Newsletters

Here are links to the last two newsletters just in case they didn't make it to your email inbox.

August

<https://us12.campaign-archive.com/?u=11380ced8373e34392577e79b&id=e5c66e14f0>

July

<https://us12.campaign-archive.com/?u=11380ced8373e34392577e79b&id=664844e5e3>

The July newsletter had 7514 opens and the links were clicked on 1505 times. After the contest, the most clicked-on link were the Price Sculpture Forest and the Cascade Loop.

The August newsletter was sent on 7/30 and, as of this writing, there wasn't enough data to create a report.

6. Chamber/Member Round Tables

Those committee members present on the call briefed the committee with current events and concerns in their communities.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:52 pm.

Next regular meeting is September 2, 2021, via Zoom, from 11 am-1 pm. Meeting minutes recorded by Robyn Myers and reviewed for submission by Sherrye Wyatt.