

**Meeting Minutes
Island County 2% Joint Advisory Board
Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism
March 3, 2022
Zoom, due to COVID-19**

Quorum: x=members present

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|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Mayor Scott Chaplin | Com. Melanie Bacon | Jackie Henderson x |
| Alannah Johansen | Gregg Lanza | OH Lodging- Vacant |
| Dianne Binder | Max Lindsay-Thorsen x | Tom Felvey x |
| Janae Cameron/Christina Swan X | Jessica McCready | Chet Ross x |
| Vicki Graham x | Inge Morascini x | Sharon Sappington, EDC x |
| Lynda Eccles | Robyn Myers | Jim Woessner |
| | | |

In addition to the above members, guests also in attendance were:

Amy Bush, Camano Arts Association; Sherrye Wyatt, Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism PR & Marketing Manager and Film Liaison; Laura Hilton, Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism special projects, Jack Penland Whidbey and Camano Islands digital projects, Scott Rosenkranz Whidbey and Camano Island Tourism design projects, David Price, and Selene Muldowney, Island Transit.

Prior to the meeting a presentation about the Islander was made by RJ Benner, Publisher and Kimberly Winjum, Associate Publisher with Sound Publishing.

Meeting called to order at 11:36 am by Vice Chair Chet Ross.

1. **Adoption of Agenda** – Vicki motioned, and Inge seconded to accept the agenda. Approved with no objections.
2. **Approval of February 2022 Minutes** -Jackie motioned, Vicki seconded to approve the minutes. Approved with no objections.
3. **Treasurer's Report and Invoice review** - all invoices were approved at the management committee meeting. There were no objections to the invoices presented. No other treasurer's reports were presented.
4. **Old Business:**
 - a. **Trails Guide Update** – Scott Rosenkranz shared sample pages of the trails guide which should be ready by Memorial Day Weekend.
5. **New Business:**
 - a. **Management Committee Report**- everything discussed is on the agenda.
 - b. **Meeting in Person vs Virtual** – there was discussion about the option of starting to meet either monthly or quarterly in person, with the rest of the meetings held virtually. A few committee members expressed support for meeting quarterly in person (with the rest of the monthly meetings virtual) rather than having all monthly meetings be in person or all monthly meetings be virtual. Chet suggested he'd poll committee members not

present to help determine the best course of action for the remainder of 2022.

c. PR Media Report:

Sherrye reported that David Blandford the Executive Director of the newly-branded State of Washington tourism is available to present to our committee either at the April meeting virtually, or at the May meeting in person or virtually. She reported there will be new opportunities to work in partnership with the state including the TREAD Map App and Scenic Byways committee. She asked everyone to save the dates Oct 11-12 for state tourism summit planned in person at SEA TAC and Oct 12-13 for outdoors summit at Bell Harbor.

She reported Transformative Destinations Leadership Team meetings are planned March 17, April Date TBD and May 2-4 (2.5 days in person).

She deferred the remainder of her reporting time to Jack Penland. He discussed there are a number of new data reports he will be able to create as he learns the new platforms. After discussion it was determined that a virtual meeting of those committee members who may want/need to receive more data should be organized. At that time, more in depth conversation will take place, resulting in the most efficient use of everyone's time to pull the most needed reports. Amy Bush mentioned that the City of Stanwood has also purchased Datafy which may create some good information. The full monthly tourism report is presented here:

TOURISM REPORT

SHERRYE WYATT PR & WRITING

TREAD Map App virtual meeting is being scheduled for March 9 at 11 a.m. with State of Washington Tourism and app developers. Here is meeting [Zoom link](#), , The full tourism committee was sent the Doodle poll to complete. May be a good tie in with our new **Trails Guide**.

Washington Filmworks is supporting legislation moving rapidly through the House and Senate to increase the incentive fund from \$3.5 million to \$20 million. Legislation is still moving through the process. Coupeville and Whidbey Island is featured in a PSA which was filmed here to promote film in rural Washington and is being sent to legislators. There is a commercial still/video photo shoot taking place in Coupeville on March 9.

A **Leadership Team** meeting of the **Transformative Destinations** program is planned for March 17. An April virtual meeting for the group is also going to be set one of the mornings of April 13-15 with another doodle poll going out to the **Leadership Team** this week to choose the time and date. An in-person meeting is planned for May 2-4. The group size will be about 30 people total in order to provide more intimate setting We

expect it to be two full days Monday, May 2 and Tuesday May 3, and one ½ day Wednesday May 4. So please continue to hold these dates.

Sherrye presented an update to the **Coupeville Chamber of Commerce, Town of Coupeville Council and Leadership Whidbey** this month, mainly about the **Transformative Destinations** project the tourism committee is undertaking. She is also meeting in March with representatives from **Ebey's Landing and Coupeville Historic Waterfront Association** as a result of these meetings. She presents to the **Camano Island Chamber of Commerce** in April.

Jet Set Travel TV also produced an abridged version of the episode filmed on Whidbey and Camano Islands in September 2022 in Spanish. You may view it here: <https://thejetset.com/uncategorized/visitando-las-islas-de-whidbey-and-camano-en-el-estado-de-washington/>

OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS

Monthly Overview

We dedicated our efforts this month to secure strategic short-lead media visits for Mystery Weekend February 25- 27. We also concentrated our efforts regarding the Transformational Travel program roll out in Island County slated for the first half of 2022 and maintained involvement in its development yet also stayed focused on maintaining a strategic focus on brand management and stayed within the conversation of Pacific Northwest getaways as it relates to responsible travel.

Project Management

- Developed communications strategy for launch of the Transformational Travel plan, as well as an interim PR planning for the first half of 2022
- Distributed media pitches for upcoming events as well as winter travel news
- Managed ongoing media relations to ensure placement in travel pieces for early 2022 as well as spring/summer placements
- Participated in team planning calls and communication regarding the new Trail Guide to understand the project timeline and develop a PR plan to match it
- Executed a successful Instagram-based giveaway in partnership with Visit Langley to share and promote Mystery Weekend that resulted in engagement from both locals and media

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 2,150 on January 27 to 2,186 on February 23; a growth rate of 1.67%.

Media Visits

- **Molly Amber, February 25-27;** contributor to Seattleite and influencer @MollyWandersandEats and @MollyWandersTheWorld; will visit for Mystery Weekend, plans to share event details in advance on her channels.
- **Kim Tate, February 25-27;** Seattle travel blogger and influencer at Stuffed Suitcase, is visiting for Mystery Weekend. She has shared some teasers on her Instagram page @stuffedsuitcase and will share content about her visit on her channels.
- **Suzanne Stavert, February 25-27 and April 23-25;** influencer at Adventures of Empty Nesters travel blog and @SuzanneStavert, is visiting for Mystery Weekend in February as well as a girls weekend in April; both are non-hosted trips, but we collaborate on visits and content to promote via her channels.
- **Megan Hill, May 15-16;** contributing writer for Eater Seattle and Food + Travel Magazine, is planning to visit Captain Whidbey Inn for future consideration in her outlets.
- **Michael Fagin,** freelance travel writer for Foodista, wants to visit to put together a story about dining, kayaking, and standup paddleboarding around Whidbey and Camano Islands. Visit date April/May TBD
- **Upcoming 2022;** the following 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.
 - **Sara Franklin, RESCHEDULED/Postponed for late 2022, freelance writer with *Travel + Leisure*** to cover the food and drinks, culinary culture of Whidbey Island.

Pending Press

- **Mary Rose Denton, writer for Welcome Snohomish County,** will include dining options in Langley and Coupeville in an upcoming issue slated for spring/summer of 2022
- **AAA** will be including events in their calendar listing for March/April 2022
- **Meetings News NW,** will include the islands in a roundup of destinations in an upcoming issue
- **Northwest Travel & Life Magazine** is planning to feature Langley in an upcoming article featuring coastal spa retreats, slated for March/April 2022
- **1889 Magazine,** will be featuring Blooms Winery's flowers and 5511 Bistro in an upcoming issue slated for April/May 2022

Press Highlights include 24 pieces of coverage with an estimated 430 million impressions. To view the coverage in [full go here.](#)

COMPUTERPIX

Our E-Newsletter went to our mailing list on February 28

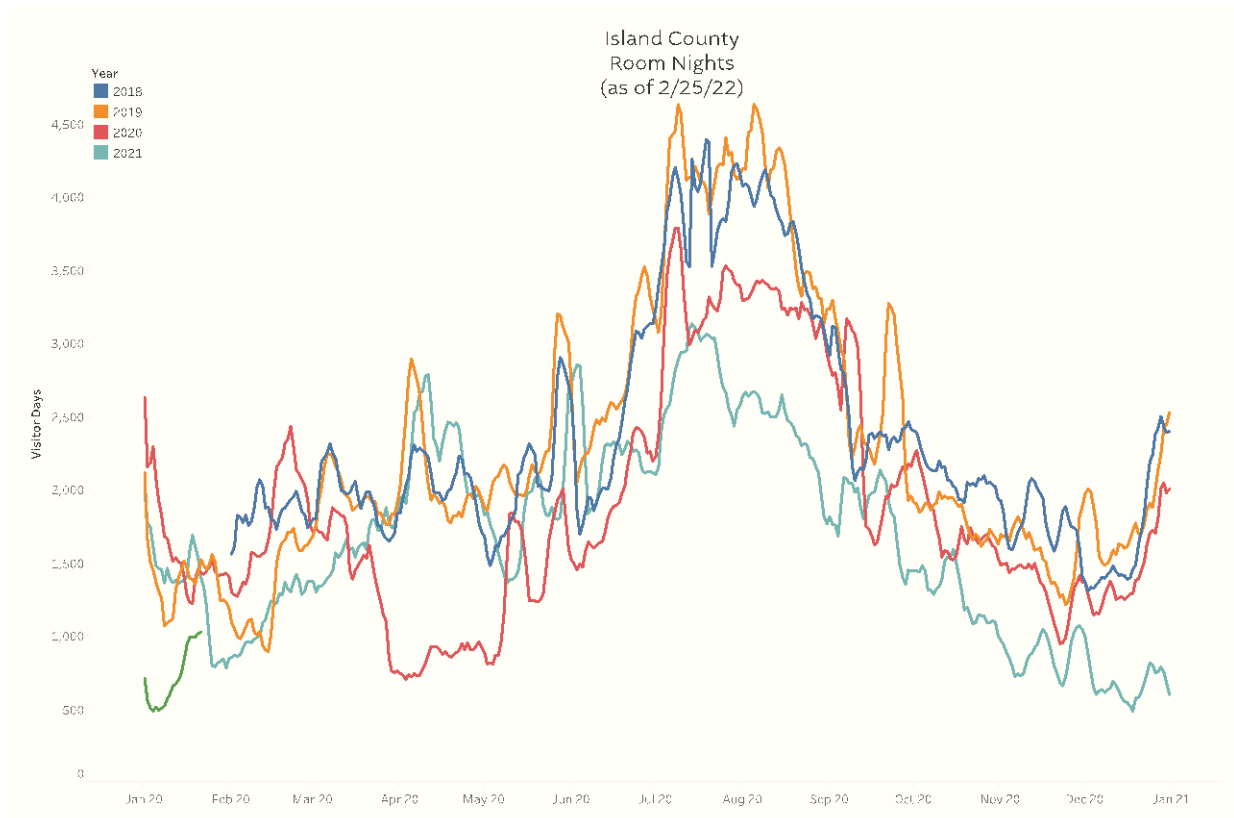
<https://mailchi.mp/whidbeycamanoislands/a-treehouse-vacation-giveaway-one-of-many-fun-clinton-escapes?e=5aa724165c>

Visitation and Lodging Overview

The overview below shows, among other things, that year-to-date visitation for all of Island County is well behind all prior measured years, but the visitor trend line shows that February visitation is along the lines of prior years.



The next chart, also from Datafy compares the number of room nights booked each day. It also shows a poor start in early January but improvement in latter half of the month. This chart covers the major lodgings only, and not individual AirBNB-type rentals.



The next two spreadsheets from AirDNA give us a better idea of how the county’s short-term rentals fared in January. Comparing January 2022 to January 2021, there was an increase in available listings of 20.9%, with the largest increases on Camano Island (38.8%) and Oak Harbor (31.7%).

But revenue per available rental was down. Rentals of an entire place was down 2.3% and for private rooms (this includes some regular B&B’s) was down 20.9%.

The second spreadsheet shows revenue over the last 12 months as of the end of January 2022. It shows a year-over-year increase of 27.5% for rentals of an entire place and an increase of 29.6% for room rentals.

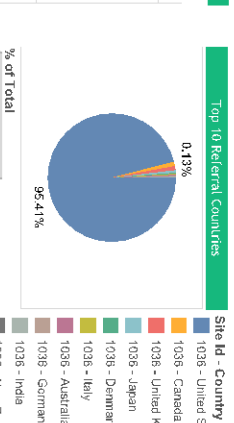
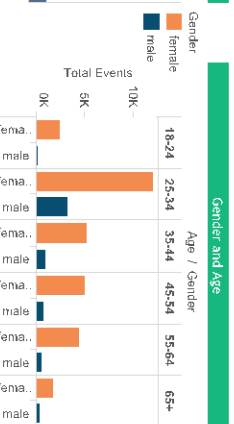
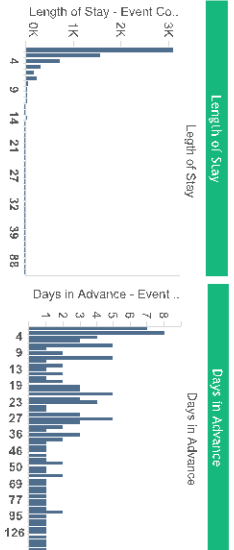
On the last 2 pages are the January report from Book Direct. The first of those pages shows 658 referrals in January from our website to Island County lodgings, which is our best January ever.

Performance Summary

A breakdown of search, referral and conversion data for the given timeframe.



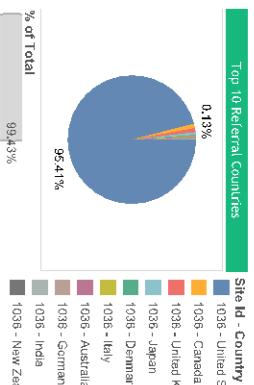
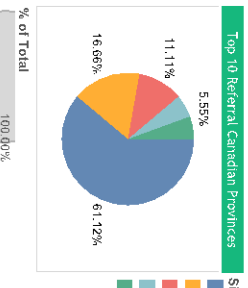
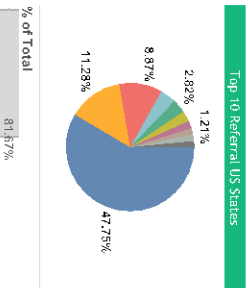
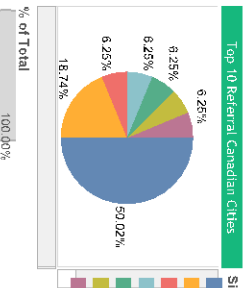
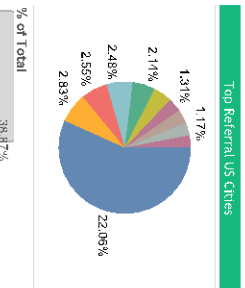
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|-----------------------------|------------|
| Avg. Cost Per Referral | \$0.99 |
| Avg. Referrals Per Booking | 36.82 |
| Referral to Booking CVR | 2.73% |
| Est. Avg. Cost Per Booking | \$35.37 |
| Est. Avg. Booking Amount | \$390.00 |
| Cost Per Reservation | 9.5% |
| Searches | 647 |
| Search to Referral Ratio | 101.70% |
| Total Referrals | 658 |
| Est. Bookings | 18 |
| Est. Total Spend | \$650 |
| Est. Booking Revenue | \$6,840.00 |
| Est. ROI | 9.5% |
| Searches | 104.90 |
| Referrals | 101.7 |
| Avg. Advance Stay in Days | 3.73 |
| Avg. Length of Stay in Days | 2.78 |
| Avg. Daily Rate | \$211.19 |



Of the 119 properties that are listed have the rates and availability. 2 of the total properties listed have conversion tracking and 117 properties with live rates and availability have conversion tracking.

Start Date: 1/1/2022
End Date: 1/31/2022

Site: whidbey.com
Lodging Categories: All



6. Chamber Round Table:

- a. Clinton – Christina Swan reported Easter Egg Hunt is generating a great deal of excitement and will be April 16.
- b. Langley - Inge Morascini reported Mystery Weekend was successful but the long ferry line wait times did negatively impact attendance even from pre-sold ticket holders.
- c. Freeland - Chet Ross reported July 3 fireworks will not be held this year.
- d. Oak Harbor – Vicki Graham reported St. Patrick’s Parade and Holland Happening are both going to be held this spring with planning underway.
- e. Coupeville – Jackie Henderson reported Mussel fest is this coming weekend.
- f. Camano – Jessica was not present but it was noted Great Northwest Glass Quest was big success. Amy Bush requested clarification of where the unincorporated areas of Island County are on Whidbey Island.
- g. EDC – Sharon Sappington reported that Leadership Whidbey was going well and that Sherrye, Robyn, Vicki and Inge had participated last week. She also reported on prospective funding.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:41 pm

Next regular meeting is to be communicated via email and may be in person. Meeting minutes recorded by Sherrye Wyatt.