

Meeting Minutes
Island County 2% Joint Advisory Board
Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism
January 6, 2022
Zoom, due to COVID-19

Quorum: x=members present

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

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

Laura Wildeman, South Whidbey Lodging Manager; Max Thorsen, South Whidbey Lodging Owner; Selene Muldowney-Stratton, Island Transit Marketing and Comm. Officer; Amy Bush, Camano Arts Association; Melanie Serroels, Camano Arts Association; Alannah Johansen, Program Specialist 2, Washington State Parks, Camano Island; Christina Swan, Clinton Chamber of Commerce Secretary. Jack Penland, Computer Pix LLC; Sherrye Wyatt, Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism PR & Marketing Manager and Film Liaison; Scott Rosenkranz, Rosenkranz Productions; Laura Hilton, Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism special projects.

Meeting called to order at 11:02 am by Vice Chair Chet Ross.

1. **Adoption of Agenda** – Vicki motioned, and Jessica seconded to accept the agenda. Approved with no objections.
2. **Approval of December 2021 Minutes** -Inge 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.
4. **Old Business: None**
5. **New Business:**
 - a. **Management Committee Report-** everything discussed is on the agenda.
 - b. **Transformative Destinations Leadership Team Roster Approval:**
 Mayor Scott Chaplin and Jessica seconded to confirm the proposed leadership team. The motion included provision to add more members later as needed. No objection to the motion and was passed.
Proposed leadership team includes:
 - Sharon Sappington, Island County Economic Development Council
 - Jessica McCready, Camano Island Chamber of Commerce
 - Vicki Graham, Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce- plus an alternate TBD
 - Lynda Eccles, Coupeville Chamber of Commerce
 - Chet Ross, Freeland Chamber of Commerce
 - Inge Morascini, Langley Chamber of Commerce
 - Janae Cameron, Clinton Chamber of Commerce

- c. **Trail Guides Update:** Scott announced a goal to have in hand by the end of March. He is investigating environmentally friendly materials. Sherrye indicated this may go hand in hand with the new TREAD app being created with the WTA. Jack will be providing a digital supplemental piece to the guide on the Whidbey Camano Islands website. 10K trail guides are planned for the first printing with up to 20K with the second.
- d. **2022 Leadership elections** are postponed to February meeting. Melanie confirmed she will be the County Commissioner dedicated to JAB.
- e. **PR Media Report:**
The full monthly tourism report is presented here:

TOURISM REPORT

SHERRYE WYATT PR & WRITING

Transformative Destinations Program

- **Island County Destination Leadership Group:**
 - Sharon Sappington, Island County Economic Development Council
 - Jessica McCready, Camano Island Chamber of Commerce
 - Vicki Graham, Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce- plus an alternate TBD
 - Lynda Eccles, Coupeville Chamber of Commerce
 - Chet Ross, Freeland Chamber of Commerce
 - Inge Morascini, Langley Chamber of Commerce
 - Janae Cameron, Clinton Chamber of Commerce
- **Destination Liaison/Ambassador:** Sherrye Wyatt, Whidbey & Camano Islands Tourism
- **Regenerator Team** that will lead the destination through the entire process, including the development and implementation of the **Strategic Action Plan** and the **Train the Trainer Guidebook.**
 - Destination development practitioners (aka "Regenerators") should come from the following segments (names already confirmed are in parenthesis)
 - *Accommodations – (Robyn Myers, Camp Casey Conference Center)*
 - *Experience Designers: Tour Operators, Guides, & Attractions - TBD*
 - *Agriculture, Farms, and Cuisine: Farmers, Producers, Wineries, & Restaurants – (Judy Feldman, Organic Farm School)*
 - *Communities and Indigenous Peoples - TBD*
 - *Conservation and Wildlife – TBD*
 - *Arts & Culture - TBD*

OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS

Monthly Overview

This month, the PR team worked with key members of the media to develop stories and content for 2022, in addition to content creation for the new guide. We hosted a travel blogger for a winter weekend roundup resulting in photography and endorsements for “and island holiday getaway” while also working with identified content creators to bolster our image and video libraries to support the launch of the new trail guide. Social platforms and in earned media storytelling placed a focus on finding new places to explore as well as small businesses to support for the holidays, ranging from makers and artists to specialty food purveyors and chefs.

Project Management

- Managed ongoing media relations to ensure placement in winter travel roundups and travel pieces, highlighting holiday events for December and for early 2022.
- 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.
- Coordinated visits with key members of the media and local influencers to highlight strategic objectives:
 - **Suzi Pratt**, [@SuziPratt](#); a Seattle-based photographer specializing in food, nature and outdoors. She also has a significant travel following, a young baby who will appear in the family-focused trail content. Visit date, Dec. 3-5.
 - **Suzanne Stavert**, blogger at [Adventures of Empty Nesters](#) visited in early December and will publish a story to her blog, in addition to multiple posts and stories on her Instagram pages, [@SuzanneStavert](#) and [@AdventuresofEmptyNesters](#). She will also plan to cover her visit in her podcast series, *Travel Connections in March/Feb 2022*. Visit date, Dec. 3-5.
 - **Justin Oba**, photographer and food blogger; had been slated to visit Dec. 11-12 to capture holiday photography; rescheduled due to storm.

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 2,099 on November 22 to 2,115 on December 23; a growth rate of 0.7%.

Media Visits/Pending Press

- **Meetings News NW**, will include the islands in a roundup of destinations in an upcoming issue
- *Northwest Travel & Life Magazine* is planning to feature Whidbey Island in an upcoming article titled, “Pacific Northwest Cycling – Amtrak Style”. Publication date is pending
- **Mary Rose Denton**, writer for *Welcome Snohomish County* is planning to feature Ciao and the islands in an upcoming piece slated for spring/summer 2022.
- **Stephen Fennell**; managing editor for SunCruiser West Coast, coordinated information and updates for boaters and photos of Oak Harbor Marina for an upcoming destination boating piece in the annual guide (publishing in early 2022).

- **Spring 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 Spring 2022, freelance writer with *Travel + Leisure*** to cover the food and drinks, culinary culture of Whidbey Island.

Press Highlights include 13 pieces of coverage with an estimated 7.24 million impressions. To view the COVERAGE BOOK IN [here](#).



YEAR TO DATE PR SUMMARY FOR 2022 PLANNING

Overview

It has been a true pleasure to collaborate with the Island County community to support destination marketing efforts this year. Now more than ever in these unprecedented times, we are truly grateful to continue to collaborate with such talented people living in one of the world's most special places. Throughout the year, our team focused on strategic storytelling and positioning, along with targeted media and influencer outreach to share the right message at the right time in an ever-evolving market. Tactics changed frequently based on consumer behavior due to the pandemic, but our goal to support the Island county economy through creative and collaborative destination public relations campaign never wavered.

With carefully crafted strategies developed to support the community with key endorsements, messages and earned editorial, we brought key writers to the island producing ongoing publicity for hospitality businesses, artists and makers, along with general destination stories in publications like *Good Morning America's* "[How Washington State Is Reopening](#) , AAA Journey's [Best Scenic Drives In Washington](#) , *The Daily Beast's* roundup of "[Lighthouses to Fall in Love With](#)," *Yahoo News'* "[Dream Destinations: Instagram-Worthy Destinations to Add to Your Travel Bucket List](#)," to name just a few.

Collaborations with key influencers in 2021 allowed us to garner both content and coverage on impactful Instagram pages like [@HiTravelTales](#), [@SeattleMaven](#), [@SuziPratt](#),

@FeatherandSkull and others. We also bolstered our marketing photography library with rights to influencer photos.

Coming up, we are currently developing plans for 2022 with a focus on recovery and stewardship. Strategic stories and content along these themes will support targeted media relations. We anticipate a continued stream of both media visits and publicity, to generate tourism in the need seasons.

Media Events and Tours

One of the most impactful ways to secure meaningful coverage is to host writers and influencers on the islands. While 2021 did not allow for several of the FAM tours or in person visits we anticipated, the team got creative with virtual tours, webinars and shipments of local foods to keep the story alive until travel returned. For those able to visit, we created itineraries to match their needs, providing compelling angles for their audiences. A comprehensive list of visits and virtual connections includes:

Virtual Collaborations:

- Outside the Box Creations, virtual collaboration with @MarcieinMommyland
- @Sip Magazine, “Full Pour” event to feature producers and a road trip on social channels
- IFWTWA Webinar, “Virtual Travel” featuring Island partners like Chef Mark Laska, Kristoferson Farm ownership and the Captain Whidbey team in a showcase to select travel writers.
- Penn Cove Mussels + Captain Whidbey shipment to Food Fun and Faraway Places, @KaStilwell.

In Person Tours:

1. Travel Awaits, Peggy Cleveland (February, Camano)
2. Travel Awaits, Peggy Cleveland (March, Whidbey Island)
3. Influencer @HelloTerumi, 18.8k (April)
4. Sip Magazine, Kristin Bacon (May)
5. Joy of the Journey (May)
6. Influencer @MarcieinMommyland, 10.5k June 2 (June),
7. Go Nomad and Rovology, Sharon Kurtz (June)
8. HI Travel Tales @HITravelTales, Therese Iknoian, (July)
9. Seattle Maven, “Delicious Discoveries,” Ann Peavey (August)
10. Freelance for National Geographic, Smithsonian, Fodor’s, Kristen Pope (September)
11. Travel + Leisure, Sara Franklin (RESCHEDULED Spring 2022, due to Delta variant)
12. Story Ready (September)
13. Jean Chen Smith, USA Today GO Magazine, (October)
14. Noel Bores Walker, @FeatherandSkull, (November)
15. Suzi Pratt, @SuziPratt (December)
16. Suzanne Stavert, blogger at Adventures of Empty Nesters @SuzanneStavert and @AdventuresofEmptyNesters (December)

17. Justin Oba, @ObaliciousPNW (rescheduled due to Dec. 11 storm)

Results

To date, our PR efforts have generated more than 4.52 billion impressions in key media outlets. FULL COVERAGE OF PRESS [at this link.](#)

COMPUTERPIX

New Detailed Data from Air DNA

We've purchased access to additional data from Air DNA that gives us a clearer idea of how many short-term rentals are in Island County. 1162 different properties were identified in 2021 (through 12/18/21) as being listed on AirBNB or VRBO. Of these, 1009 were identified as renting an entire home or apartment, 144 were private rooms, 8 were hotel rooms, and 1 was a shared room. Many of these home property types are not something we would normally think of as houses, including tents, camp sites, campers, boats, treehouses, and yurts. See the list below.

Property Type	Number		
Apartment	7	Lodge	1
Bed & breakfast	5	Loft	2
Bed and breakfast	23	Place	7
Boat	1	Private room	2
Bungalow	9	Rental unit	38
Cabin	74	Residential home	422
Camper/RV	15	Room in bed and breakfast	8
Campsite	10	Room in boutique hotel	12
Chalet	3	Room in hotel	12
Condominium	1	Studio	5
Condominium (condo)	10	Tent	7
Cottage	94	Tiny house	20
Farm stay	19	Townhome	1
Farmhouse	1	Townhouse	2
guest house/pension	1	Treehouse	4
Guest suite	55	Villa	9
Guesthouse	64	Yurt	3
Hotel	3		
Hotel suite	4		
Property Type	Number		
House	205		
Island	3		

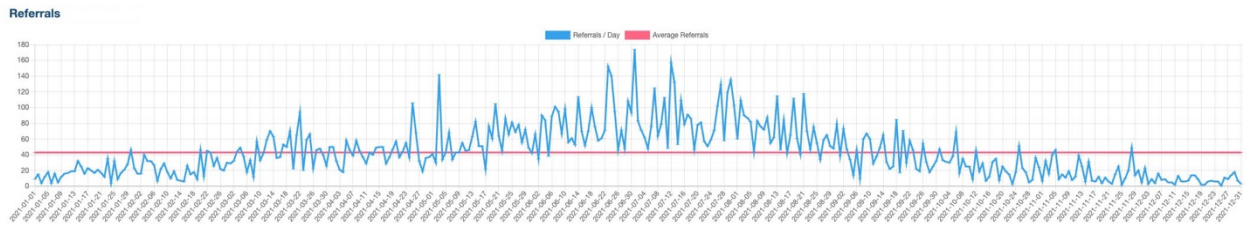
It's evident that owners were allowed to create their own property types as there are several very similar types (House vs. Residential home or Cottage vs. Cabin) and the "island" property type is confusing at best.

Breaking the listings down by Zip Code we find the following:

Zip Code	Region	Number
98282	Camano Island	200
98239	Coupeville	190
98260	Langley	190
98253	Greenbank	66
98277	Oak Harbor	189
98236	Clinton	169
98249	Freeland	158

Book Direct

2021 numbers from Book Direct show that the tourism website made 15,785 referrals to lodgings in Island County, or about 13-hundred referrals each month and an average of 43 referrals every day.



The detailed November report is attached. It shows 520 referrals which equates to an estimated 16 bookings and a return on investment of 1120%. Their database shows there were 250 referrals in December 2021, much lower than the 408 referrals in December of 2020.

Revised Home Page

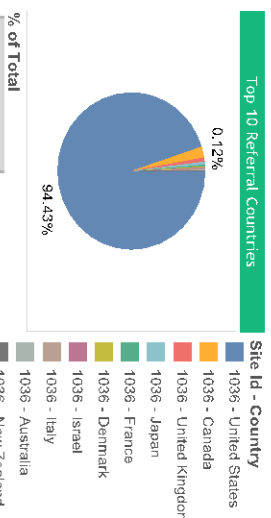
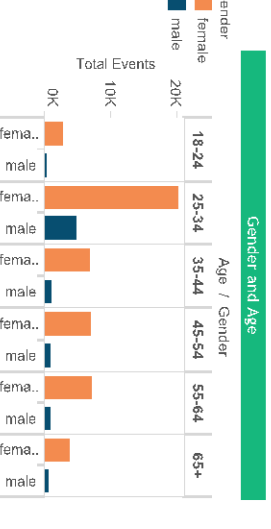
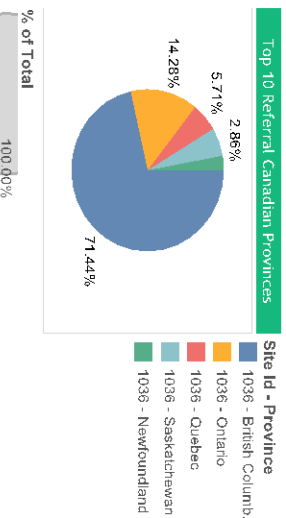
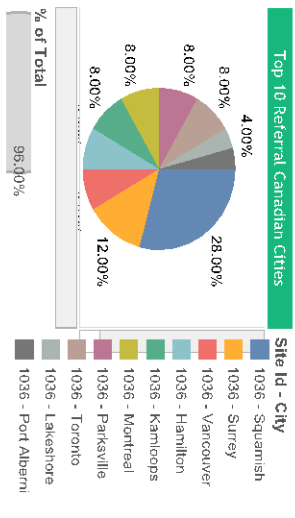
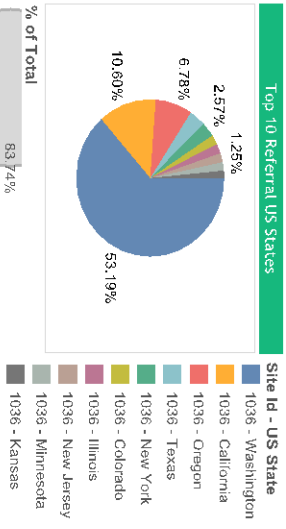
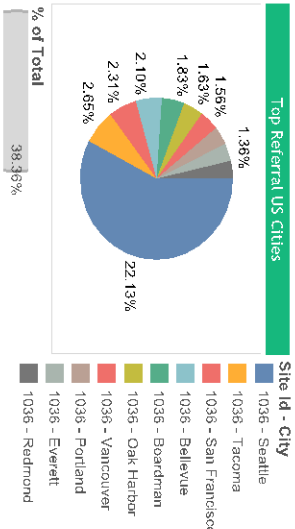
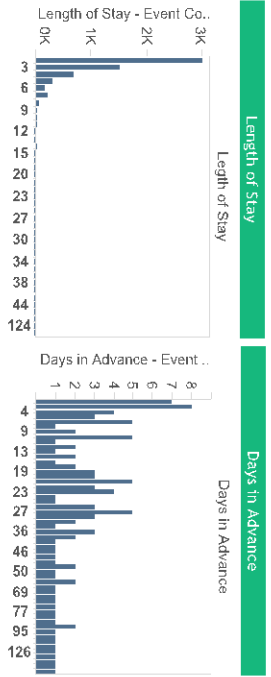
Now that the holidays are over, the "Home for the Holidays" theme for the home page has been replaced. With the Omicron variant of the COVID virus looming over many vacation plans, we've returned to the "Escape It All" theme. That theme was originally used during the early months of the COVID pandemic as a way of keeping Island County "top of mind" without directly encouraging visitation. The home page now lists the six individual chambers, as well.

Performance Summary

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

Start Date: 11/1/2021 | End Date: 11/30/2021 | Site: whideycanadian.com | Lodging Categories: All

Avg. Cost Per Referral	\$1.21
Avg. Referrals Per Booking	32.69
Referral to Booking CVR	3.03%
Est Avg Cost Per Booking	\$39.52
Est Avg Booking Amount	\$481.39
Cost Per Reservation	8.2%
Searches	461
Search to Referral Ratio	112.80%
Total Referrals	520
Est Bookings	16
Est Total Spend	\$629
Est Booking Revenue	\$7,702.26
Est ROI	11.2%
Avg Advance Stay in Days	Searches: 86.85 Referrals: 26.83
Avg. Length of Stay in Days	3.19
Avg. Daily Rate	\$271.08 \$184.53



6. Chamber Round Table: and many activities are happening at each chamber with hopes for modified events in 2022 in person.

7. **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 12:19 pm.

Next regular meeting is to be communicated via email. Meeting minutes recorded by Robyn Myers and reviewed for submission by Jessica McCready.