

Meeting Minutes
Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism of Island County
August 4, 2022
Zoom

Guest: None

Quorum: x=members present

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

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

Sherrye Wyatt, Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism PR & Marketing Manager, Film Liaison

Jack Penland Whidbey and Camano Islands digital projects

Laura Hilton, Whidbey and Camano Islands special projects

Dianne Binder, Contract Treasurer

Meeting called to order at 11:03am by Secretary, Robyn Myers.

1. **Adoption of Agenda** – Jessica motioned, and Jackie seconded to accept the agenda. Approved with no objections.
2. **Approval of July 2022 Minutes** -Maggie motioned, Jackie seconded to approve the minutes. Approved with no objections.
3. **Treasurer's Report and Invoice review** – Dianne presented the latest revenue numbers and budget spend through July. All invoices were approved at the management committee meeting. There were no objections to the invoices presented.
4. **Old Business:**
 - a. **None**
5. **New Business:**
 - a. **Management Committee Report-** everything discussed is on the agenda.
 - b. **Chamber of Commerce Proposal:** Inge motioned & Jessica seconded: Whidbey/Camano Chambers of Commerce would like to partner with Whidbey & Camano Islands Tourism Committee to develop and produce a visitors guide which incorporates the new brand direction of “Regenerative Tourism,” with the intent of amplifying the new brand direction to visitors to the islands. Distribution will be through traditional and non-traditional lodging and through off-island distribution points. Funding for this guide will be shared through a grant from LTAC (applied for by 6 Chambers of Commerce) and funds from the Whidbey & Camano Islands Tourism

Committee budget. Budgets and spending caps will be reviewed by the committee as they become available. Approved unanimously.

- c. **PR Media Report:** Below is the team’s monthly report.

MONTHLY TOURISM REPORT

JULY 29, 2022

Transformational Travel Council Update

Steering committee members are interviewing stakeholders using the draft survey. Next step is to review results and revise it before going out to the wider community. The steering committee has at least 3 more virtual meetings in 2022, as well as a 2-day in person workshop in September on Camano Island. Press release about our participation was written and distributed internationally on or behalf by Osborne NW Public Relations. Please find updated talking points (note NEW NAME of the program is Regenerative Planet Program):

Transformational Travel Council’s Regenerative Planet Program Talking Points

- Tourism is the third largest industry in Island County, but there is a desire to change how this industry interacts with Whidbey and Camano Islands.
- Our desire is to improve the lives of residents, enrich the visitor experience, and benefit the natural environment of the islands.
- Whidbey & Camano Islands Tourism, key tourism stakeholders and community members are participating in the Transformational Travel Council's Regenerative Planet Program, as a big step towards transformational and regenerative travel within our islands.
- This is a move away from simply a “do no harm” concept, with a new focus on a style of tourism that would genuinely improve and benefit the community.
- We hope to empower destination stakeholders to transform our visitor economies and improve both resident and traveler well-being.
- The TTC will support participating early adopter destinations like Whidbey and Camano Islands to be recognized as global pioneers and leaders within the emergent transformational philosophy.
- We will promote the transition to a transformational economy at a destination level through the development and implementation of a framework to foster regenerative tourism in the form of co-creation of a Regenerative Action Plan.
- This process has been started in 2022 and will take one year.
- There will be opportunities for community input.
- Expected outcomes include more unification between stakeholders as well as the new three-year plan.

- Future advertising, messaging, branding and activities will reflect the results of this new plan.

OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS

Monthly Overview

The busy summer season is in full swing. The PR team was busy working with travel media researching and developing summer and fall stories. Additional highlights of our efforts included story and interview coordination for the successful publicity of the trail guide, in addition to a press release announcing Whidbey and Camano Island's Tourism's partnership as an early adopter of the Transformational Travel Council.

Coming up in August, we plan to host top tier writers researching stories related to fall travel and upcoming events, while participating in ongoing meetings with the TTC as the brand and mission of the organization evolves.

Project Management

- Secured and developed an itinerary for three upcoming media visits, including Seattle Magazine, Travel + Leisure and NW Travel (see details below).
- Continued to connect with key media regarding stories and ongoing awareness for the launch of Field Guide, 24 Trails off the Beaten Path; distributed to select media for consideration, arranged interviews and worked with photo editors to maximize coverage.
- Developed a fall story sheet highlighting upcoming events, happenings and story ideas that align with regenerative themes, support for small business and responsible travel themes.
- Developed a press release announcing Whidbey and Camano Island's Tourism's partnership as an early adopter of the Transformational Travel Council; shared with our key media contacts and placed on the international Globe Newswire for distribution and consideration with key media worldwide.
- Joined team calls for internal planning, as well as group meetings for the Transformational Travel Council.

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 2,324 on June 30 to 2369 on July 27; a growth rate of 1.94%.

Media Visits

- **Leslie Kelly, August 24-26** writer for Forbes is planning to visit to explore culinary news and developments.
- **Allen Cox**, editor for Northwest Travel Magazine is looking to head out to Whidbey Island to cover the Island Shakespeare Fest including activities to do in

Langley and positioned as a preview for the 2023 season. Dates in August pending.

- **Natalie Compagno, September 7-8** is a freelancer for Seattle Magazine and will be visiting to potentially cover Fort Casey Inn in an upcoming travel piece.
- **Sara Franklin, October 2022 (dates pending), freelance writer with *Travel + Leisure*** to cover the food and drinks, culinary culture of Whidbey Island.

Pending Press

- **Country Magazine, story pending** - Scenic Drives for the November issue by Leslie Forsberg (visited in July)
- **National Geographic**, writer Kristen Pope interviewed Chef Vincent Nattress on a piece regarding how to harvest and prepare kelp.
- **Washington Post**, covering Washington's islands in an upcoming travel story; per a visit with Washington State Tourism's hosted writer in April
- **West Coast Business Review** will be releasing two more radio segments with Whidbey Island Distillery
- **Food + Travel Magazine:** Whidbey feature story anticipated following visit from Megan Hill in May.
- **Travel Connections/Adventures of Empty Nesters:** Suzanne Stavert will continue to push coverage of her Camano Island studio tour weekend from her podcast (aired June 24), but content will continue to be shared on her social channels and mention on her future podcasts.
- **AAA Magazine** is featuring Whidbey as one of the great destinations to visit year-round in an upcoming fall story.
- **Whidbey Weekly** will cover the new Trail Guide in an upcoming article.
- **Northwest Travel Magazine** has an article coming out about army fort retreats with a highlight on Fort Casey, August/Sept/October issue.
- **Seattle Magazine** will potentially cover Fort Casey Inn and the Treehouse Whidbey in an upcoming travel piece, TBD.

Press Highlights include 19 pieces of coverage with an estimated 31.9 million impressions. To view the coverage in [full go here.](#)

6. Chamber Round Table:

- a. Clinton – Their chamber is growing, as well as their businesses. She mentioned the Thirsty Crab that is hoping to do more events and a new Knitting Store with craft cocktails after hours.
- b. Langley - Inge Morascini shared they have live music happening in town and are working on Harvest Festival September 30-October 2. They are looking for more vendors. They have many job openings and posted at the post office. Mayor Scott shared that past events recently which included the Blue Heron canoe family historical visit. They might be doing artwork on the Cascade Corridor that might feature native art. They had Mel Sheldon visit from the Snohomish Tribe to present a craft designed paddle in

appreciation for their honoring of the totem pole, which was on their property.

- c. Freeland - Many in Freeland are concerned about a local effort to purchase the Freeland Harbor Inn and continue to challenge the purchase.
- d. Oak Harbor – Jim reported NW Car Show will be August 20 and Hydro races will happen on August 20-21. Music Festival will take place Labor Day Weekend. www.ohwindmill.com is active and will be replacing the windmill at Windjammer Park.
- e. Coupeville – Arts & Crafts Festival will be happening August 13 & 14 as well as the Plein Air event August 20. Living history at Fort Casey State Park August 6 & 7. Outdoor Discovery Day at Fort Casey State park on August 20.
- f. Camano – Stanwood county fair and car show. Chili Chowder cook off for November 12. Shop local and win local in November. Membership is booming. The Stanwood Chamber closed their doors.
- g. Island County EDC: Sharon attended the Navy community leader forum last week. It was an impressive conversation in Commander Hanks proactive nature. They are willing to coordinate opportunities for sailors on the Navy Base.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:51 pm.

Next regular meeting is Thursday, September 1, location TBD.

Meeting minutes recorded by Robyn Myers and reviewed by Jessica McCready