

**Meeting Minutes
Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism of Island County
October 6, 2022
Oak Harbor Chamber of Commerce**

Quorum: x=members present

Mayor Scott Chaplin	Com. Melanie Bacon X	Jackie Henderson X
Alannah Johansen X	Gregg Lanza	OH Lodging- Vacant
Maggie Bailey X	Max Lindsay-Thorsen X	Tom Felvey X
Christina Swan X	Jessica McCready X	Chet Ross X
Magi Aguilar	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:

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

Scott Rosenkranz, Whidbey and Camano Island Tourism design projects

Marie Shimada, Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve

Lisa Bernhardt, Pacific Northwest Art School

Amy Bush, Camano Islands Arts Commission

Meeting called to order at 11:03am by Vice Chair, Chet Ross.

1. **Adoption of Agenda** – Lynda motioned, and Jessica seconded to accept the agenda. Approved with no objections.
2. **Approval of September 2022 Minutes** -Jessica motioned, Lynda seconded to approve the minutes. Approved with no objections.
3. **Treasurer's Report and Invoice review** – Chet presented the latest revenue numbers and budget spend through September. All invoices were approved at the management committee meeting. There was one error in the initial invoices, which showed Laura Hilton to be reimbursed \$1000 for expenses, but it should have been \$100, resulting in a new balance of \$33,035.65. Nicole Wheat at Island County is aware of the error and has corrected the invoice total. Further Sherrye reported there was a \$693.98 refund received from Cama Beach State Park for some cancelled lodging related to the Transformational Travel Workshop in September. There were no objections to the invoices presented.
4. **Old Business:**
 - a. **Regenerative Places Program (formerly Transformation Travel):**
Sherrye gave an update on progress of the Regenerative Places Program including the most recent in-person workshop. Several virtual meetings and a great deal of work are planned for the remainder of the year. She expects it will be sometime in 2023 before a final plan is prepared. Currently a survey to get community input is live online and is being widely marketed. Nearly 500 surveys have been completed so far. Jack shared a draft of the

video about our work with the Transformational Travel Council which is to be presented at the international Transcend conference in Slovenia this weekend.

- b. Bylaw Amendment & Interlocal Agreement Committee:** Chet reported there was a committee formed with Jackie, Sharon, Robyn, Linda, Magi, Inge, Jessica, Alannah and Chet. Our goal is to recreate or retain our current organization that provides the least amount of change and expenditure while putting us in alignment with other State DMO's. The next virtual meeting of the committee is Monday, October 10 at 3pm.

5. New Business:

- a. Management Committee Report- everything discussed is on the agenda**
- b. Simple View Digital Asset Management** – Jack updated the committee on the photo storage and organization system. It is up and running and a time saver for searching and sharing our curated images.
- c. Datafy Programmatic Advertising** -- Jack updated the committee. Jessica moved and Lynda seconded to approve the contract with Datafy for \$5.000 on an advertising campaign that is estimated to last 4-6 weeks. The start date is estimated to be October 15, 2022. Chet has reviewed the contract in detail and made some minor changes related to start date and payment dates. Motion passed unanimously without any dissent.
- d. PR Media Report:** Below is the team's monthly report.

MONTHLY TOURISM REPORT

SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

SHERRYE WYATT PUBLIC RELATIONS & WRITING

State of Washington Tourism Conference and Outdoors Recreation Summit: The entire creative team is participating and attending in Seattle on October 11-13.

Regenerative Places Program Flows into 2023

We are continuing to make progress with our work with the Transformational Travel Council and Steering Committee to complete the Regenerative Places Program and strategic planning process for tourism. Work will probably not to be complete until sometime in 2023. The recent two-day workshop on Camano Island generated a lot of good discussion and we made progress. But there is still much work left to do. Anyone interested in stepping up to be more involved as we role things out to the community next year should contact Sherrye or Laura.

We have six more virtual work sessions with the Steering Committee and TTC staff scheduled (Oct. 14, Nov. 2, Nov. 16, Dec. 7, Dec. 13, and Mar. 15, 2023. A community survey is live now until October 31, 2022 and you should take it and share with all

residents throughout Island County [Whidbey and Camano Islands Values Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](#).

OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS

Monthly Overview

It's been a dynamic month, working with several high profile writers planning trips this fall and planning ahead for 2023. We have developed six itineraries for media representing outlets like *Travel + Leisure*, *Bicycling*, *Seattle Magazine*, as well as travel influencers and content creators like [@BoboandChichi](#) (27k followers, 70k unique monthly views). We also rounded up a variety of events taking place now through early 2023 to reach long lead media planning winter stories, resulting in pending placements in outlets like Seattle Met and NW Military's The Ranger. Looking ahead, we're planning to navigate the heavy volume of fall visits while planning goals and strategies for 2023.

Project Management

- Developed a calendar alert of curated events taking place this fall through March 2023
- Worked with community businesses and media contacts to develop detailed itineraries for upcoming media visits.

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 2404 on August 24th to 2451 on September 27th, a growth rate of 1.96%.

Media Visits

- **Lisa Morales, September 3-6**, IFWTWA travel writer is visiting to research pet-friendly and food, wine focused travel ideas. Staying at Coupeville Inn for three nights.
- **Natalie Compagno, September 7-8** is a freelancer for Seattle Magazine and will be visiting to potentially cover Fort Casey Inn in upcoming travel pieces in Food, Wine and Travel Magazine and the NATJA national publication as well as a guest post on "Adventures of a Carry-On".

Coming up

- **Bob Cooper, Oct 4-6, freelance travel writer** has confirmed an assignment to do a story on "high-end" accommodations in Washington's island destinations for [WATERWAYS](#), a luxury lifestyle magazine in Greater Austin, TX with readership of 40,000. The story that will appear in spring 2023 issue will feature Bainbridge, San Juan and Whidbey Islands. (coordinated with Washington State Tourism)
- **Megan Indoe, October 5, @boboandchichi**, will be participating in the guided mushroom tour and having lunch at the Front Street Grill.

- **Geoff Nudelman, October 7-8, freelance writer** covering sustainable businesses and travel for outlets like Bicycling, Askmen.com and others.
- **Sara Franklin, October 30-November 2, freelance writer with *Travel + Leisure*** to cover the food and drinks, culinary culture of Whidbey Island. Lodging is confirmed at Captain Whidbey (10/30-9/1) and Inn at Langley (9/1- 9 /2).

Pending Press

- **Whidbey Weekly** – regenerative travel profile detailing the community survey and inviting residents to participate.
- **Country Magazine** - Scenic Drives for the November issue by Leslie Forsberg (visited in July)
- **NW Military/The Ranger** - writer Peggy Cleveland will be including some Halloween activities in an upcoming article.
- **Seattle Met** - deputy editor Allison Williams will be including the Haunted Fort at Fort Casey in an upcoming Halloween road trips roundup. Publishing date TBD.

Press Highlights include 17 pieces of coverage with an estimated 3.7 billion impressions. To view the coverage in full go [here](#).

COMPUTERPIX

Digital Asset Management System (DAM)

The way Whidbey and Camano Islands Tourism stores its digital assets has gotten a major upgrade with the addition of a Digital Asset Management System. Instead of individual members storing photos as best they can on their own computers or their personal online space, the images are now online in a system owned by tourism. I've spent many days this summer adding keywords, locations, and categories to more than 25,000 images.

Members of the creative team have access to the system and will be able to both download needed assets and upload assets they've created. Going forward, we will be able to give limited access to writers who quickly need access to images on deadline.

Survey Monkey

We now have an account with Survey Monkey, allowing us to better assess how our audience feels about visiting here. While the account was originally created for the Transformational Travel survey, the plan is large enough that we can have 15 – 20 such surveys in the coming months.

Analytics to Chambers

Along with reports to the board, we've supplied Data from Datafy to the chambers that have requested it. It might be useful to standardize the chamber reports so that everyone is working with the same information and getting it on a regular basis.

Website Traffic

Year-to-Date traffic to the Whidbey and Camano Islands website as measured by Google Analytics is down 12.7% from last year, but up 18% compared with 2019. Here's a recent year-by-year breakdown.

Year	January 1 – September 28	2022 vs previous
2022	251,153	-
2021	287,938	-12.78%
2020	219,032	+14.55%
2019	212,522	+18.18%
2018	190,420	+31.89%
2017	151,791	+65.46%

Keep in mind that, over that same period, more and more people have installed ad-blockers and other privacy software that hides them from Google Analytics.

We get another set of numbers from the company hosting our website, Cloudflare. The company doesn't store historic data like Google Analytics, but we can still get some insight.

Cloudflare recorded 28,970 visits in the last 21 days (September 7 – 28), compared with Google Analytics reporting 21,161 over the same time period. So, we can safely say Google is missing several thousand visitors each month.

Google, in fact, knows this and in 2023 will be switching the method for measuring websites. We will have to take steps to meet this new method.

Book Direct

Attached is the Book Direct report for July. The number of bookings is down, year-over-year. But it still represents an estimated Return-on-Investment of 18.5 or 1850%. In a down economy, this is still an amazing value on behalf of our lodging.

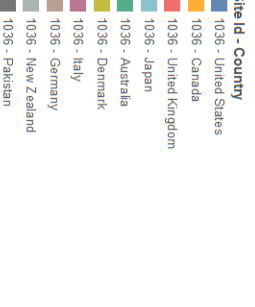
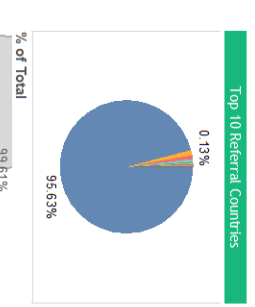
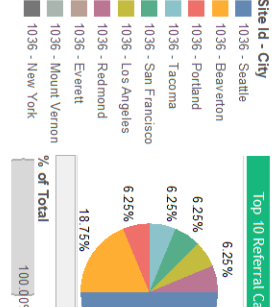
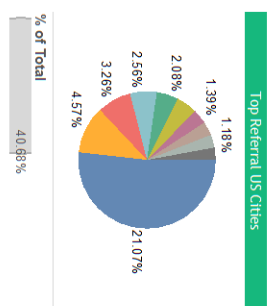
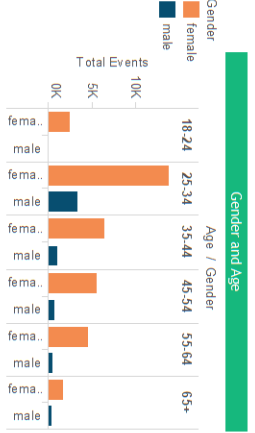
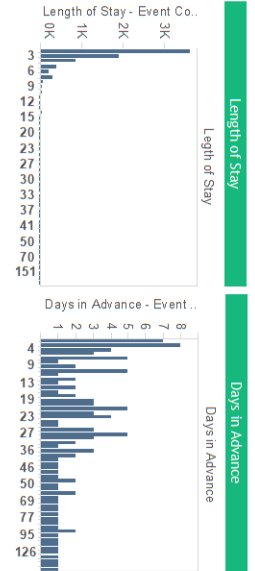
Performance Summary

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



Start Date: 7/1/2022 **End Date:** 7/31/2022 **Site:** www.holidaycanadian.com **Lodging Categories:** All

Avg. Cost Per Referral	\$0.61
Avg. Referrals Per Booking	45.78
Referral to Booking CVR	2.18%
Est. Avg Cost Per Booking	\$28.01
Est. Avg Booking Amount	\$549.62
Cost Per Reservation	5.1%
Searches	998
Search to Referral Ratio	106.41%
Total Referrals	1,062
Est. Bookings	23
Est. Total Spend	\$650
Est. Booking Revenue	\$12,641.19
Est. ROI	18.5
Searches	52.17
Referrals	27.72
Avg. Advance Stay in Days	3.15
Avg. Length of Stay in Days	2.94
Avg. Daily Rate	\$233.06
	\$187.19



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

6. Chamber Round Table:

- a. Langley is working on some upcoming advertising campaigns for the holidays. She hopes to capture the spirit of the season in historic Langley and Coupeville on Whidbey Island. Wander historic decorated streets, lined with shops offering gifts made by local artisans and restaurants serving fare grown and caught locally.
- b. Coupeville Chamber is busy with the Haunting of Coupeville.
- c. Sharon with Economic Development Council for Island County reported on a grant they applied, which would benefit all local chambers and Whidbey & Camano Island Tourism
- d. Oak Harbor, no one was present during the round table to report.
- e. Camano Island – Jessica- add your notes here. ☺ Cama Beach is also going to participate in Glass Quest which will include participation with their onsite naturalists. Camano Island Art Association has hired a new PR firm to assist with growth of their program and to coordinate a shared physical space on Camano Island.
- f. Freeland was not able to host the blueberry festival this year due to timeline permitting challenges with the county.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:51 pm.

Next regular meeting is Thursday, November 2, 2022, location Zoom.

Meeting minutes recorded by Robyn Myers and reviewed by Jessica McCready