



**Skagit County Tourism Promotion Area  
Advisory Board Meeting  
October 15th, 1:30 p.m.  
Zoom Meeting**

Meeting called to order at 1:32pm

Present at meeting:

Approval of April Minutes

Monique Bringham, Jennifer Berner, John Sternlicht, Andy Mayer, Lennart Benston, Blake Van Roekel, Kevin McEntee, Mark Hulst, Steph Rees, Valerie Stafford, Kristen Keltz

New 2026 Board President was elected – Blake Van Roekel

Tourism Advisory Board annual renewals – Monique Bringham reviewed all the positions and those proposed to fill the positions. See recommendations below:

- Kevin McIntee-Renew for additional term
- Dawn Maher-Replace Russ Olivier whose term is expiring
- Sandy Kish-Renew for additional term
- Kati Klerekoper-City of Burlington to replace Steph Rees
- Andy Mayer-Mount City of Mount Vernon (renewal)
- Jennifer Berner-City of Mount Vernon (renewal)
- Lennert Bensten-Legislative Authority: Skagit County (renewal)
- Blake Vanfield-At Large Seat (renewal)
- Monique Bringham-City of Sedro-Woolley (renewal)
- Mark Hulst-City of LaConner (renewal)

Motion made by Jon Sternlicht and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Andy Mayer to appoint positions as listed.

These positions will be appointed when recommendations are available

- Calle Swartz-Renew for additional term – awaiting to hear back from Calle
- Vacant Seat-SVLA needs to recommend
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Kristen Keltz provided an update on the Skagit Tourism Bureau

- Kristen introduced her team
- 2026 Workplan/budget was presented and approved - Motion by Lennart Benston and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jon Sternlicht
- Marketing & Advertising update was provided
  - Successful website launch - Website is doing well

- Printed Materials – I Love Skagit, Birding Brochure, Seasonal Brochure, QR Code Campaign, Always Here Campaign
- Pausing any paid marketing to Canada – Always Here Campaign maintain awareness, encourage repeat visitation, reinforce cross-border connections
- Attended travel shows and conferences in 2025 to help boost awareness of Skagit
- Film – hosting 10 location scouts in Nov. 2025 in conjunction with Washington Filmworks
- FIFA website up and teams will be announced Dec. 5
- Brought social media in-house – Facebook Followers are up
- Purchased weekly STR report – up 19% over last year
- Sports Commission
  - Formally launched in Jan 2025 – focused on enhancing regions capacity to host sports tournaments.
  - Highlights include FiFA Community Wide Planning Committee, Tournaments RFP's, Formed Sports Commission, Fields and Facilities database complete
- Grant Programs
  - State of Washington, Rural Tourism Grants
    - Rural Tourism Marketing & Production Grant 2025 - \$25K – Video Library
    - Rural Tourism Data & Research 2025 \$20k Sports Economic Impact
    - Rural Tourism Support Program – 4 Workshops will be held with different focuses – Visioning, Outdoor, Sports and Cultural Tourism
- Data update-LTAC rubric/Reporting template
  - Presented LTAC rubric to mayors – some on board for this year, others will incorporate next year.
  - State of Washington RTS program update and awards

#### 2026 Work Plan

- Marketing and Advertising
- Social Media & PR
- Travel Trade & Film
- Sports Commission
- Workforce
- Operations & Metrics

Thank you' s and appreciation for Kristen's hard work was recognized by Board Members.

**Next Meeting January 21, 2026, 1:30pm via Zoom**