



**Cumberland Area Economic Development Corporation
Tourism Committee Meeting**

MEETING MINUTES for August 25, 2026: 9:00 – 10:00 AM

Committee was held at 230 S Sporting Hill Road, Suite 100, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

Attendance: Lutricia Eberly, Mark Bodenhorn, Dustin LeBlanc, Amy Brickner, Sara Wise, Allen Dieterich-Ward, Katie Perowski

CAEDC Staff Present: Laura Delaney, Ashley Kurtz, Patrick Bourque, Aaron Jumper, Stacy Tussey, and Janet Anderson

Absent: Jon Cox, Kelly Neiderer

CALL TO ORDER:

Lutricia Eberly called the meeting to order at 9:01 AM.

MINUTES

On a motion by Mark Bodenhorn, seconded by Sara Wise, the committee approved the meeting minutes from July 29, 2026. The minutes of July were approved and motion passed.

UPDATES

Grant Timeline- Ashley Kurtz

Ashley reported the first application received for the current grant round, with more expected ahead of the September 4 deadline. Next year's program cycles will be finalized once the annual budget is approved (typically around January). She noted the program has shifted from continuous/monthly acceptance to a deadline-driven model, currently running three cycles this year due to funding limits; deadline-based cycles have proven to generate more applications than continuous acceptance.

World Downhill Skateboarding Championship-Patrick Bourque

Patrick reported the event team was presenting to the Silver Spring Township supervisors that evening to seek approval to move forward, since the Township controls the roads involved. Laura will present on behalf of the Visitors Bureau with organizer Chris McBride joining remotely. The Township has engaged a third-party event planner, Make It Happen Events, to lead logistics and outreach. The event is proposed for the 14th–17th of May 2027 in the Millers Gap Road/Wartsville Road area of Silver Spring Township.

Outdoor Sub-Committee-Allen Dieterich-Ward

Allen reported the subcommittee has held two meetings, one focused on Shippensburg and one on Newville. The group is researching outdoor-town and trail-town models from other states and regions, including a meeting with Silas Chamberlin of the York County Economic Development Corporation (Trail Towns Initiative) and an upcoming meeting with David Kahley of the Progress Fund regarding the Great Allegheny Passage trail-town model and potential funding partnerships.



Destination Sales Sub-Committee-Katei Perkowski

Katie reported the subcommittee's first meeting is scheduled for August 27th at 9 AM. The group will focus on "PACE" Partnerships, Ambassadors, Connections, and Engagement, building relationships with tourism-affiliated businesses and sites, and will explore Washington County's destination ambassador program as a potential model for Cumberland County.

Marketing Video

Staff shared a marketing video, illustrating CVVB's marketing funnel and current advertising strategy for the benefit of stakeholders, since the Bureau does not advertise locally within the region.

DISCUSSION TOPIC-Lutricia Eberly

Tourism Committee Themes

Lutricia led a discussion on three proposed committee directives developed from prior months' input: (1) Storytelling as Strategy, (2) Market Positioning and Product Strategy, and (3) Community Pride, Resident Engagement, and Downtown Vitality. Discussion covered which directive will be hardest to execute, what success would look like for each, how to measure it, and the risks of getting the narrative wrong.

Difficulty of execution: Members were split between Community Pride (a relationship-building effort seen as a heavier, longer-term lift) and Storytelling (challenging because audiences receive and value different messages differently).

Measuring success: Storytelling was seen as the most measurable via campaign and social media engagement metrics. Market Positioning success was tied to growth in hotel stays and broader visitor revenue. Community Pride was viewed as the hardest to quantify; members discussed using resident sentiment surveys and social-listening tools to track shifts in local perception over time.

Risk of getting the narrative wrong: Members agreed that a poorly defined story risks setting incorrect visitor expectations, reducing repeat visitation and revenue, and generating negative word-of-mouth/social media feedback.

Process and checkpoints: The group favored an iterative approach, testing and adjusting messaging along the way rather than waiting for a final measure of success with periodic checkpoints involving both the committee and the community (e.g., surveys, focus groups) to validate direction.

Community relationships to leverage: The committee also discussed their role in advising on strategies, grants, programs, partnerships, downtown vitality, and resident engagement, with members sharing their various community connections that could help inform this work.

The next Tourism Committee meeting will be held on September 30, 2026, from 9:00-9:30 AM. (grant recommendations consent agenda only)

ADJOURNMENT

The Meeting was adjourned at 9:56 AM, motioned by Sara Wise and seconded by Mark Bodenhorn.