

DRAFT

COUNTY OF OSWEGO Tourism Advisory Council

10/24/2023

NYS DEC Salmon River Fish Hatchery, Altmar

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Hotchkiss, Chairman Linda Middleton, Kelly Morrissette, Mercedes Niess, (List is incomplete)	STAFF: Daniel Breitweg, Lisa Gray, Jen Longley, David Owens, Savannah Wyckoff
GUESTS: John Torrese, Rosemary Mahoney	
EXCUSED: Eva Corradino, Kelly Jordal, Josh Ludden, Kristi Eck, Robert Green	
MEDIA:	

Chairman Jim Hotchkiss called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

1. **Welcome and Introductions:**

2. **Host Presentation:** Betsy Ukeritis gave a brief history of the hatchery and some information about the programming and upcoming renovations.

3. **Approval of Minutes from Aug. 15, 2023**

Motion to approve minutes: Linda Middleton

Second: Kelly Morrissette

Vote: Unanimous, motion carried

4. **Old Business**

A. Super DIRTWeek Wrap Up – It was a rainy weekend which forced them to move events up on the schedule. They had to race on Monday because Sunday was a complete washout. Many campers stayed the additional day to watch the last races. Oswego Business Owner Joe Garafalo shared that they have accrued many new customers for that week from campers at the track. He also said that SDW reduced the payment from the vendors because they recognized that the weekend was not as profitable for vendors as it could have been. He was grateful. John Torrese, from Oswego Speedway, said the organizers did a great job of communicating delays and schedule changes with the ticket holders, which made the changes go much smoother. Next year's Super DIRTWeek dates are October 7-13, 2024.

B. Big East Power Sports Show – Linda Middleton reported that the show was not well attended this year. Due to the lack of snow the past few winters, many riders are either waiting to register their snowmobiles, or selling them. The poor winter weather has really impacted the entire industry. Linda will discuss it with the other snowmobile clubs and let us know if we should continue to participate in this show or if there might be one that would make better sense.

D. TAC meeting ideas, themes, hosts: Debbie Allen has been appointed the new County Historian. She will be hosting our next meeting at the new Records Center in Oswego on November 21, 2023. Please send any ideas for meeting topics to tourism@oswegocounty.com or discuss with one of the Tourism staff members.

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5. New Business

- A. 2022 Economic Impact** – Daniel Breitweg spoke about the 2022 Economic Impact Report produced by Empire State Development. The numbers were both regional and county specific. Oswego County’s tourism stats improved over the previous year. Travel spending increased from \$160 million in 2021 to \$212 million in 2022. Employment in the tourism sector improved from 2,420 in 2021 to 2,656 in 2022. The overall improvement was very encouraging.
- B. NOAA Annual Meeting** – Daniel also reported on the recent NOAA Conference that was held in Oswego in October. Superintendents from all 15 of the designated National Marine Sanctuaries, both of the designated Marine National Monuments, and members of the committees for the six sanctuaries currently in the designation process (including Lake Ontario). The Tourism staff created welcome packets for the guests, and they received top level hospitality at the Lake Ontario Conference Center. They had excellent weather and were able to visit Sandy Island Beach on their way to Sackett’s Harbor in Jefferson County.
- C. Autumn Regional Collaboration** – David Owens shared some photos from the recent regional photography project undertaken by Oswego, Jefferson, and St. Lawrence counties through the 1000 Islands/Seaway Region matching funds. Austin DeMott traveled around the Tug Hill area of the three counties shooting photos and videos for our use in future projects. Specific topics for the shoot included agritourism, Dr Mary Walker, North Shore of Oneida Lake, and Wright’s Landing in Oswego.
- D. Website update** – The new tourism website will launch just before Thanksgiving.
- E. Fishing Report** – Salmon season is winding down. There are still salmon in the tributaries, but there are also plenty of trout making their way in as well. Jim Hotchkiss said the salmon were so thick in the Black Creek by the Mexico HS that it appeared you could almost walk across them. Daniel pointed out that something like that would make an excellent blog post for our new website.

6. Member Communications

- A.** Shawn Doyle announced that the Pulaski Winterfest is scheduled for January 19-21, 2024. They may switch the day of the wing walk to Saturday. The Halfshire Historical Society is celebrating its 50th year. People come from all over the world to do their genealogy research. SAR & DAR will be hosting a dinner dance on 11/11/23. There will be a Folk Festival, supported by an arts grant. Light Up Pulaski is scheduled for 12/10/23 and 12/16/23 will be Christmas in Richland.
- B.** Mercedes Niess said there will be a lecture at the Maritime Museum on Wednesday, October 25th at 6:30 p.m. SUNY Oswego Planetarium Director Natalia Lewandowska will be discussing the impact of weather forecasts on navigation. Weather permitting, there may be some star gazing outside the museum included. Mers also has raffle tickets available for the Museum’s annual fundraising raffle. Tickets are \$10 each and the drawing will be November 8th. The annual Gingerbread Workshop and Christmas at Sea are coming up. The Army Corps of Engineers are laying huge boulders around the base of the Lighthouse to add a layer of protection from the elements. The Department of State toured the Museum while reviewing DRI projects in the city. The board and staff are hoping for a new building that will better suit the museum’s needs with display areas, educational programming space, and temperature-controlled storage for artifacts.
- C.** Jim Hotchkiss reported there will be a full moon cemetery walk on Friday, October 27 at 7 p.m. at the Mexico Village Cemetery on Academy St. It is not a ghost hunt, rather information about the citizens who are buried there like Civil War veterans. Bring a flashlight and dress for the weather.

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Christmas in Mexico will happen on December 2nd. There will be approximately 250 vendors located in the High School, Elementary School, and at the VFW.

- D. Leg. Mary Ellen Chesbro requested TAC members bring event flyers to be put on a table during committee meetings and legislature meetings for people to take with them.
- E. Kelly Miller said the Kasoag Trail Blazers are celebrating 50 years. It is the oldest snowmobile club in the county. They will be holding fundraisers every month to support a celebration next fall.
- F. Betsy had just finished a virtual meeting with the NYS leaders about the 2024 eclipse and she shared the information with us. The state is creating an action plan. They are building it similar to an emergency weather action plan. They are anticipating a huge turnout for the eclipse across NYS. The state has postponed state testing in the schools for two days but are leaving it up to the individual districts whether they will hold school, have a half-day, or close for the day. Leg. Chesbro requested the eclipse be listed under Old Business on the TAC agenda moving forward.
- G. Debbie Allen reported that the county will be forming a committee next month to plan the United States Semiquincentennial (250 years), which will occur in 2026. She believes there will be state and federal funding available for history and historical tourism projects.
- H. Dan Young said Tailwater is gearing up for holiday parties and events.
- I. Kelly Morrisette announced that Selkirk Shores State Park is closed to camping for the season. They are planning some new construction projects that will be started next fall. They will have one event scheduled each of the winter months, including a wreath making workshop on December 2nd. They will be participating in Pulaski's Winter Fest in January.

7. Public Comment

8. Adjournment- Chairman Jim Hotchkiss adjourned the meeting at 11:28 a.m. The next meeting will be held **Tuesday, November 21, 2023, 10 a.m. at the Oswego County Records Center, 384 E River Rd, Oswego – same entrance as the DMV.**