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COUNTY OF OSWEGO Tourism Advisory Council

03/21/2023

Oswego County Office Building, Conference room E, 46 E. Bridge St., Oswego

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Hotchkiss, Chairman Thomas Brown, Hon. Mary Ellen Chesbro, Eva Corradino, Barbara Dix, Stacy Furgal, Dan Harrington, Paul Lear, Jim Lynch, Linda Middleton, Mercedes Niess, Chuck Parker, Jennifer Torrese.	STAFF: Daniel Breitweg, Dave Turner, Kelly Jordal, David Owens, Jen Longley, Raven Ahart, Savannah Wyckoff.
GUESTS: David Granoff, Kelly Miller, Caroline Lamie, Jennifer Senf, Mary Kay Stone	
EXCUSED: George & Karen DeRousie	Lisa Gray
MEDIA:	

Chairman Jim Hotchkiss called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

1. **Welcome and Introductions:** Jim Hotchkiss, Chairman welcomed members. Dave T. also welcomed members back for the 2023 year. He expressed the importance of the Tourism Advisory Council (TAC) by stating TAC is the official advisory committee to the legislature on tourism activities for Oswego County. He thanked members for their contributions throughout the years. Dave T. announced the committee will be seeing less of him, and deputy Daniel B. will be present as he is now directly overseeing the tourism department. Dave T. said during the COVID-19 period there was a downfall in closing businesses but since then the County has had two better years. He also stated that bed tax is up for tourism.
2. **Approval of Minutes from December 20, 2022**
Motion to approve minutes: Hon. Mary Ellen Chesbro
Second: Barbara Dix
Vote: Unanimous, motion carried
3. **Old Business**
 - A. **Show Schedule and Recaps:** Daniel B. mentioned that the tourism team will report on the shows they have recently attended. Kelly J. attended the Adirondak Sport Show in Saratoga Springs, NY. She said it was a very busy/successful show. She stated attendance was at an all-time high on Saturday while Sunday was a tad slower. Daniel B. attended the Springfield show in MA. It was also a very successful show that was centrally located between CT and VT. He noted that the fishing and hunting guides were very popular at this show. Seven cases were given distributed. David O. attended the LOSPC Niagara, NY show. He said this isn't a show we normally attend but he enjoyed being west of the lake. He said this show is very fishing specific and hits our target audience. Overall, he said the show was pretty well attended. Jim H. said he attended the New York Sportsman's Expo in Syracuse, NY. He was very surprised how busy the show was early on a Sunday. Raven A. agreed with Jim Sunday afternoon was very busy. She said the Sunday shift was steady until at least 4 p.m. Chuck P. mentioned that he attends the Syracuse show as a visitor. He noticed that the vendors are mostly safari hunters or "book your excursion" and the excursion is usually directing people out of the state. Jim H. asked if he thinks more local exhibitors should have a booth. Chuck P. said no, he wishes the show had more hands on fishing educational instruction. Jim H. asked if Saratoga had a lot of Canadian booths. Kelly said no it was an outdoors sports show so there were a lot of 5K organizations etc.
 - B. **Visitor Guide Update & Distribution Plan:** David O. showed the current visitor guide while stating the guide went to print last in 2019. Changes were made in the new design of the guide. He explained the biggest change was taking out most of the listings. Chuck asked which listings were removed. David O.

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said camping and restaurants listings were removed because most visitors use the internet to search the logistics of these places. Kelly J. mentioned because the restaurants are changing constantly it makes it hard to keep the guide up to date. But what we can do is direct readers to our website where we will have more up-to-date listings. David O. said 35,000 to 50,000 copies will be printed and distributed in two years. David G. asked if there will be an online version of the new guide on our website. Yes, it will be posted with our other brochures on our website. David G. also asked if the online version will be in E-book form instead of a PDF. He said 60% of our website traffic is mobile access. Linda M. asked what type of proofing will be done in the Visitor Guide? She mentioned there have been some snowmobiling mistakes and she would like to offer her help in proofing. Kelly J. said she would connect with Linda after the meeting. Mary Ellen C. asked if the guide could be directly uploaded to our website and David O. could make live changes to the document. Yes. He said this year the tourism staff have been making more phone calls to confirm information for the new guide. Jim asked if members have corrections/changes to bring them to the tourism staff. Kelly said yes, please let us know if anyone has noticed incorrect information. Mercedes said she doesn't know how the attractions were mentioned in the new guide but, H. Lee White Maritime Museum is only open five days a week. She requested more visitor/fishing and hunting brochures while reminding the staff that attractions around Oswego County are very important for the new guide. Raven said she would get her more guides for the Museum.

- C. **History Brochure:** Jen L. talked about small changes/ updates she has been working on for the history guide. She said the guides will be delivered to the tourism office within the week. Jim asked if this was the guide with the fold out map? Yes. Jim said the history guide is the best guide he has ever seen. Chuck asked if the printer was local. Yes, Syracuse. Mary Ellen C. asked where the history guide will be distributed. Jen said, all historical places, they will be taken to shows, etc. Dan B. said the guides will be taken to colleges, hotels and more. Jim requested copies be brought to the next TAC meeting. Mary Ellen requested a few copies be left in the admin/legislative office. Jim asked if any other brochures are coming out/being redone. Jen said not that she is aware of. Kelly said we are currently redoing the county map. David G. asked if this brochure will be online as well. Yes, all our brochures are on our website.

4. New Business

- A. **Canal to Shore Challenge:** Mercedes Niess talked about an educational activity the museum is doing called Sailor Sam. The interactive book is available for sale at the H. Lee White Maritime Museum. Mercedes explained how the activity works, kids will go to different attractions and take selfies at spots around the county and post it to social media. She said it directs them to over 20 sites for photo opportunities and once it is completed kids can earn a custom Sailor Sam patch. Mercedes requested members to take flyers and spread the word.
- B. **NYSTIA Conference Information:** Jen explained the 2023 NYSTIA Conference will be held at the Lake Ontario Event and Conference Center in Oswego on April 19-21. The conference will provide educational programming, policies, and help cover all the assets in New York regarding tourism. She said if TAC members are interested in attending, please get ahold of Lisa G. and she can have your registration fees waved. Kelly M. said there are 19 rooms left available for the conference. Jen explained the topics of speakers during the conference, ex. the marine sanctuary. David G said some speakers of the conference include speakers from The Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary in Alpena, Michigan, and a new sanctuary in Wisconsin called the Shipwreck Sanctuary. Jim asked how many people it would draw to Oswego. David G. said 250 is the average number of participants from all over New York State. On the 4/18 there will be a shuttle run taking the guests to our historical attractions and the new water park. Kelly M. said there will be an early reception on Tuesday, 4/18. Jim H. mentioned that there is work being done on the underground railroad bus tour. Mary Ellen asked if welcome bags will be given to registrants. Yes. Daniel B. said Jen has been working on a city walking map for the bags with a list of restaurants. Daniel B. also said he has been working on having local businesses set up a table showcasing what Oswego County has to offer. For example, cheeses, wines, breads, honey, onions and more. Daniel B. is requesting members send him contacts for anyone that might be interested in helping show case what we offer in the area.
- C. **2023 TAC Meeting Schedule:** Jim asked if we have copies of the 2023 TAC schedules. Not currently. Kelly asked if any members would like to host a meeting, let us know. Kelly M. requested the month of May so she can give TAC members a preview of the new water park before the opening. Paul volunteered

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to host an evening meeting at Fort Ontario in June. Daniel said he has heard the request for a few evening meetings this coming summer. He is hoping we can do something outside and later in the evening for those who can't regularly attend.

- D. New Visitor Website:** Jim asked about the new visitor website. Daniel explained the selection process and the company chosen was Zimmerman Agency. David O. said if members have questions about the features, he would be happy to answer them. He also directed members to get a copy of the RFP from our purchasing department if they would like more information. The tourism staff will be working directly with Zimmerman staff members. Jim asked when the websites will switch from what we have now to the new site. The production will take 6-9 months. David O. explained we are still under contract until the end of 2023 with our current host.

5. Member and Guest Communications:

1. Mercedes handed out a survey for the Oswego Public Library. She explained the library is going through a strategic planning process to use funding. They are looking for the community's input about the library. Mercedes explained this survey has not been done in 20 years. She also reported the H. Lee White Maritime Museum will be hosting the Waterfront Festival on May 20, 2023.
2. Paul talked about the Fort Ontario History Conference, Saturday & Sunday, 3/25-3/26 at The Lake Ontario Conference Center. Saturday focuses on the refugee shelter and Sunday focuses on archeology at Fort Ontario. He said they have been working on renovations throughout the historic site. He mentioned two events, the Montcalm Park cleanup, 8/12, and the Women's program in June. Danielle will have more information on the upcoming women's event. Paul spoke about a barrier with a state mandate of not being able to fire guns on state land. He explained this includes during reenactments and ceremonial funerals. The gun law applies to all public land and all guns are required to be locked in a case and must have gun locks for transport. Jim suggested sending a letter to the state legislature to change the law. Chuck will work with Mary Ellen to create a resolution and send a letter to the governor explaining the impact of this law.
3. Eva said PTAB members are working on a restaurant guide and events rack card. Raven requested copies once completed.
4. Mary Kay said the Richardson-Bates House Museum will be opening to the public on 5/1. She explained the renovations that have been done, such as UV protection on all windows, clear plastic on carpets and new LED lighting. Mary Kay also spoke about the Not-So-Silent Auction that will happen on 4/14 Tickets are \$20.
5. Chuck said there are bills special for ATVs and snowmobilers that have been stuck in the state committee for over 20 years. One piece of legislation proposes raising the age young adults can take the ATV safety course. Many kids skip the course and ride anyway.
6. Jim requested that a Resolution for NYS gun law be placed on the April TAC agenda.
7. Dan H. introduced himself as the new Harborfest director. He said Harborfest this year will be July 27-30. A rack card will be coming around in a month. He is also looking for volunteers.
8. Kelly J. talked about the Oswego Music Hall event, Deeper Than the Skin Experience: Stories and Lives of Diversity. She said this is a community event on March 25 that opens at 6:30 p.m.
9. David G. mentioned a save the date for 4/8/2024, the total Solar Eclipse will happen in Oswego County for a total of 3 minutes and 30 seconds.
10. Jim suggested the tourism staff change the agenda from member & public communication to Comments/Communication/Suggestions.

6. Adjournment:

Chairman Jim Hotchkiss adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

Next meeting will be held Tuesday, April 18, 2023, 9 a.m. Conference Room E, Legislative Office Building, 46 E. Bridge St., Oswego.