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COUNTY OF OSWEGO Tourism Advisory Council

06/21/2022
Legislative Chambers
County Office Building, 46 E Bridge St, Oswego

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Hotchkiss, Chairman Thomas Brown, Eva Corradino, George DeRousie, Karen DeRousie, Robert Green, Linda Middleton, Kelly Morrisette, Peter Myles, Mercedes Niess, Justin White,	STAFF: Lisa Gray, Raven Hobson, Kelly Jordal, Jen Longley, David Owens, Dave Turner
GUESTS: Sarah Conley, Mary kay Stone, Paul Baxter, David Granoff	
EXCUSED: Hon. Mary Ellen Chesbro, Paul Lear	
MEDIA:	

Chairman Jim Hotchkiss called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

2. **Approval of Minutes from December 21, 2021**

Motion to approve minutes: Linda Middleton

Second: George DeRousie

Vote: Unanimous, motion carried

3. **Old Business**

- A. Spring Show Updates:** Lisa reviewed previous spring shows, mentioning The New York State Sportsman’s Expo in, January 2022, was a success. There were large crowds and people were ready to gather information along with new volunteers. In February, Matthew Reitz had attended the “Great Eastern Whiteout”. Kelly Jordal, along with her mother, attended a show in Springfield Massachusetts in May. Brochures were sent to a Toronto show through NYSTIA because the Ottawa show was canceled. Upcoming shows are the Oswego County Fair, the NYS Fair, and Fishing and Hunting Day at the Salmon River Fish Hatchery. Linda Middleton and her group has agreed to work the Power Sports Show in Syracuse for us in the fall.
- B. Tug Hill Guide Waterfall Edition:** Lisa said the Tug Hill guides have been updated to reflect the new photos of the waterfalls in the region. David Owens got a lot of photos from Oswego County in the new guide on the front and back cover, and the table of contents. We do not have the new guides currently. Lisa asks the council if they are interested in the new guide please contact the office.
- C. Brochure Distribution:** Raven Hobson provided data on the visitor guide (VG), and fishing & hunting (F&H) guide distributions from 01/01/2022 to 06/21/2022. Email and phone requests for VG during this period 132. F&H guide requests 158, a total of 290. VG’s that have been sent by the case 25, and F&H guides 24 with a total of 49. For reference there are 56 copies of VG per case and 50 copies of F&H guides per case. We have sent brochures by the pallet across New York State, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Canada. Individualizing each brochure both VG and F&H we have sent out 17,566 guides.
- D. NYSTIA Award:** David Owens announced our Fishing and Hunting guide has received an award through NYSTIA, “an association that advances economic growth and job creation and community revitalization followed by realizing the potential of New York State tourism industry and facilitating the success of its members.” A lot of time and effort went into this guide. David mentioned that this guide has done well at the shows. David highlighted sections from the guide including a guide chart of when to visit/fish in Oswego

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County. David referenced an article on page 56 that talks about salmon river and its history. He stated it's a very humbling article and encouraged the council to read it. Lastly, David mentions if you need copies of the guide please contact Raven Via email raven.hobson@oswegocounty.com. David Granoff asked, is there an online version of the guide that he could post? The guide is on our website, www.visitoswegocounty.com.

4. New Business

- A. **Paper Kite:** David Owens talked about contracting with Paperkite, a digital marketing service. He gave background on the project, stating that Jan had started this project in 2020 with an RFP that included requests for digital marketing and search engine marketing. The RFP was created so the tourism office can be more efficient with funds and reporting data. This will help us gain a better understanding about our target market and demographics in Oswego County. David said there were multiple RFP submissions and Paperkite rose to the top with their interview and marketing plan/ deliverables. As of April, 2022, we have now launched a digital campaign with them. At the end of the campaign David Owens would like to share the data with the council.
- B. **Tourism Tuesdays:** Jennifer Longley explained the creation of Tourism Tuesdays on social media platforms, giving potential visitors a short video on local Oswego County attractions to plan for a weekend visit. The idea is for her to visit different places throughout the county and shoot a 30-40 second teaser video. David Turner asked the council their thoughts on the concept, understanding the positives of gaining subscribers. David Turner further explained this idea will allow visitors to tune in and focus on their specific interests within the county. He also mentioned that the goal is to generate year round visitors as opposed to seasonal visitors.
- C. **Oswego State Connection:** Jennifer Longley mentioned SUNY Oswego reached out and requested to work together to promote Oswego County tourism to students. Both Lisa and Jen met with Alex Dukut, who oversees the social media for the college, and planned to have students send us videos/information on what they are looking for recreationally. The plan is to work on one page brochures to take to an open house Jen will be attending on July 23rd, noting that targeting students and their parents is key. Hopefully with this effort the SUNY Oswego & Oswego County tourism partnership will grow. David Turner mentioned that there is a market that can be expanded on when it comes to parents. He encountered a situation where he spoke with parents who had no idea what Oswego County has to offer, even within walking distance of their hotels. Dave also said this is a great opportunity to get the parents more educated about Oswego County. Jim Hotchkiss said SUNY Oswego students came out to Mexico to film a documentary about the underground railroad. He mentioned that they filmed in multiple places throughout the county, for example the Tin Shop and the Oswego Library. Jim said the Tin Shop was able to use their video for tourism promotion. Mercedes Niess agreed about parents and students being an untapped market. She said historically students were “a tough nut to crack” and the parents are really the key. Mercedes posed the question how we gain access to the students and parents. Dave Turner said developing the connection with SUNY Oswego and working on the relationship. Hopefully the contact Jen has could help us open some doors and conversation.
- D. **Great Family Adventure:** The great family adventure is a TV show that airs on PBS nationwide. Janet had started this project in late fall of 2021, but travel accommodation/events had made it difficult for them to arrive. The family adventure show was postponed until May 2022. Lisa said their first night was spent in their camper at Breitbeck Park and they were amazed by the view. Activities included exploring the parks and local nature while photographing. The parents are both world champion kayakers. She also mentioned the family of four spends six months out of the year traveling with the show. The family stayed a week in their motor home at K&G Lodge and two camera people stayed in cabins. They spent a day with the Tug Hill Outfitters doing some kayaking and orienteering. Also, the family took a canoe and camped on an island in the Salmon River Reservoir. They also biked through the city of Oswego and participated in a lighthouse tour. Lisa thanked the Oswego Fire department and the H. Lee White Maritime Museum for opening the lighthouse up for a tour early. The fire department transported the family on their boat to and from the light house. Chief Griffin, of the fire department, stopped down to welcome the family to Oswego. The family also spent a day going to museums around Oswego. The Family Adventure Show will be aired nationwide on PBS in the fall. Watertown PBS came down to film a behind- the-scenes look at the making

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of the FAS. They will air their own program in the fall, also. This show is going to be great for Oswego County and Janet did a wonderful job making the arrangements. Justin White mentioned that PBS did a documentary on Jefferson County and inquired if PBS would do one for Oswego County.

E. Member and Guest Communications:

1. Lisa Gray mentioned the TAC Schedule is on the back table. She points out the next TAC meeting place is in conference room E. Lisa also is requesting additional places to hold the meeting throughout the county. Lisa said we are still looking for another public information officer. If you know anybody who might be interested in the position to please have them send their information and resume.
2. Peter Myles mentioned Harborfest 2022 will be happening July 28th- 31st. There are extra rack cards for people to take after the meeting to spread the word about the festival. Peter spoke about the struggles with planning a festival after not having one for two years, but everything is on track. The Harborfest committee is looking for volunteers. Applications can be found on www.oswegoharborfest.com. Because of COVID the festival has been financially stressed, so if you know of anyone who would like to donate please visit our website. Jim Hotchkiss, Chairman, asked if there have been any large changes to the festival this year? Peter said they have moved their children's activities to Breitbeck park and will not be using west park. Peter noted that in 2022 they are paying more for services than in 2019. David Turner asked who is headlining the festival this year? Peter replied, Thursday night is The Motowners and Friday night is The Fabulous Thunderbirds.
3. Mercedes Niess mentioned that the H. Lee White Maritime Museum's temporary art exhibit is celebrating Harborfest's 33rd anniversary. The art exhibit consists of Harborfest posters from 1988-2022. Mercedes announced that the museum's lighthouse boat tours will begin Friday, June 24th. They also have purchased a new pontoon boat. She is requesting the council take and distribute flyers announcing the start of these tours. The museum must shorten their season because of break wall maintenance. The plan is to stop running light house tour in the middle of August. To combat the shortened season the tours will extend from Thursdays to Sundays. Paddle fest will be held July 16th. Please take posters that are available on the back table. Lastly, Mercedes talked about the success of the Lake Ontario Waterfront Festival. She said this year's festival was quite expansive, with NOAA in attendance, along with the happy pirates and many other organizations. One thousand people attended the festival. Plans are in place for the festival for next year with a few minor changes.
4. Eva Corradino said she was at the festival she spoke with a lot of people who came from Syracuse to beat the heat. The event was a huge success and she encouraged visitors to come back. Eva said that the Oswego City visitor center has been reopened. The center is open from 3-7 p.m. on Fridays and 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. on Saturdays. The traffic they have is mostly local people looking for things to do around the county. Eva mentioned that she is very happy that the county and city can share brochures and resources for our visitors. David Turner thinks it's great that the city is opening the center and he has run into similar situations with local families who are unaware of what Oswego County has to offer. Jim Hotchkiss asked if the center welcomes brochures from all over the county. Anyone who has information, please send Eva an email at evacorradino@gmail.com. The visitor center is always looking for volunteers.
5. Mary Kay Stone from the Oswego County Historical Society talked about a current archeological dig happening for SUNY Oswego. Mary Kay said that the professor that is running the dig is scheduling her students to visit historical sites around the county. She talked about an event in July, "a one woman show about Harriet Tubman". The Historical Society does not have a confirmed venue yet and are still looking at prospects. Jim Hotchkiss mentioned that the Mexico Historical Society is willing to help with this event.
6. Bob Green told a personal story about a mother and son reuniting on a bus explaining that the mother was from the holocaust and their reunion was joyous.

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7. George DeRousie reminded the council about the Fort Brewerton Chamber's fireworks show on July 3rd. He mentioned that the community came together to build a new platform by the circle K gas station. He is looking forward to this year's display which will be bigger and better than ever.
8. Jim Hotchkiss reminded the council that the Mexico fireworks display will be on July 10th at Mexico Point Park.
9. David Turner talked about a campaign that was started just as business reopened from the pandemic. A short video was put together to run in the lobbies of movie theaters and as trailers. Dave stated that this is a captive audience, and the campaign has been successful with 300,000 impressions during the new Batman block buster. He also explains that the impressions equate to .50 cents per impression. The campaign captures phone information once the person enters the theater and can push our Oswego County information to them. This recent campaign was in the Albany area, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Dave explained that the new campaign locations are looking to reach New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and further. As a new campaign this has been very successful, but it has been very hard to gather data if people are visiting Oswego County.
10. Jim Hotchkiss told a story about a family from New Jersey buying a seasonal home in Oswego County so they can enjoy nature and fishing in Salmon River.
11. Dave Granoff asked if it is possible to distribute some literature to some local realtors for people who might want to know about this area that are buying a vacation home or renting? Lisa said we do get a few realtors that call our office and request Brochures. Jim Hotchkiss asked if others would cooperate if we were to get brochures to them to distribute? Lisa said yes. David Turner mentioned with so many people search for housing online, it might be more effective to put banner ads on the real estate websites. He said that printing is very time consuming with the overall supply chain issues and affordability could be difficult with a physical copy. David Turner agrees with Dave Granoff that it is a great idea to reach the realtors.
12. Jim Hotchkiss asked David Owens if he puts QR codes on all our brochures? David Owens said we have started to bring them on our larger print items which is more cost effective.
13. Kelly Morrisette announced the beaches are now open at Sandy Island. They have been cleaning up and they are open 7 days a week. Kelly said they are looking for lifeguards at Selkirk Shores so if the council knows anyone interested to direct them to her. They have been working on a retaining wall that collapsed in 2017 with high waters. Construction should be ending around the fourth of July. Kelly said that business has been running smooth this year and they are full each weekend. Boat launches have been slow this year but that could be because of the cooler weather or fuel pricing. Jim said Kelly has done a great job opening the shoreline views. David Turner agrees that Kelly and her staff are doing a great job. He enquired about their registration patterns during COVID. Kelly said that the cabins have been packed and the beaches are full. Dave said he hopes that those visitors spill over to the neighboring places restaurants, historical sites, etc.
14. Dave Turner returned to Jim Hotchkiss's point about seasonal home buying. He said that seasonal homes are a large part of our tourism economy. Accommodation is usually number one in visitor spending along with food and beverage, but Dave explained for Oswego County, seasonal homes have always been a number two in our economy and review of tourism spending. We are always open to new ideas of how to reach this market during their seasonal stay.

5. Adjournment:

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

Next meeting will be held Tuesday, July 19, 2022, 10 a.m. in Conference room E, County Office building, 46 E. Bridge St., Oswego.