

# DRAFT

## COUNTY OF OSWEGO Tourism Advisory Council

07/19/2022

Conference room E, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
County Office Building, 46 E Bridge St, Oswego

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b> Jim Hotchkiss, Chairman Eva Corradino, Paul Lear, Linda Middleton, Dan Young	<b>STAFF:</b> Dan Breitweg, Lisa Gray, Raven Hobson, Kelly Jordal, Jen Longley, David Owens, Dave Turner
<b>GUESTS:</b> Sarah Conley, David Granoff, Kelly Miller, Mary Kay Stone	
<b>EXCUSED:</b> George DeRousie, Karen DeRousie, Peter Myles	
<b>MEDIA:</b>	

Chairman Jim Hotchkiss called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

2. **Approval of Minutes from June 21, 2022**

**Motion to approve minutes:** Eva Corradino

**Second:** Linda Middleton

**Vote:** Unanimous, motion carried

3. **Old Business**

**A. Billboard Advertising:** David Owens spoke about two billboards that are currently running throughout Upstate N.Y. One billboard located on I-90 near Utica and the other on I-81 near Sandy Creek. David mentioned that the focus of the I-90 billboard is Beaches, both Sandy Pond and Sandy Island Beach is pictured. Kelly Miller expressed concern about the extremely low water level in the canal and the inability for boats to gain access to Sandy Pond. She knows people who have left with their boats because there isn't access to Sandy Pond due to low water level. Dave Turner said that the water flow is controlled by the International Joint Commission, and they work together with both countries to monitor the waterways. He asked if we are hearing from boat launches that they are closed due to low water level. Jim Hotchkiss stated that Mexico Point's water level looked all right. David mentioned that the focus of the I-81 billboard is Salmon River Falls and the Oswego Lighthouse, both locations are pictured on the billboard. Linda Middleton mentioned that a previous billboard was hard to read because the font was too small. David said this campaign was focused on a brand awareness message as a strategic marketing tool because if no one replaces our billboard, the message will stay up and it remain relevant. Paul Lear stated the city beaches/parks are becoming more popular as tourists come into the area.

**B. Updated Fishing Report:** David talked about the updated fishing report. If members would like to sign up, they can scan the QR code which will redirect you to a sign-up form. The reports are sent out on Thursdays via email through a marketing service, Mail Chimp and is posted on Facebook. By using this service, he can tailor the report to viewers as a newsletter. Our data is coming in at 33-34%, with 600-700 subscribers so far. This is a successful number compared to what the report was previously. David also showed a video of charter captains giving a series of top ten fishing tips. Jim asked who fishes the Oswego River more frequently, visitors or locals? David replied it depends on the time of the year along with the species of fish they are looking to catch. The report is posted every Thursday between 10 a.m. -11 a.m.

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- C. **Oswego County Fair:** Lisa Gray said the Oswego County Fair this year is August 17<sup>th</sup> through August 21<sup>st</sup>, open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily and until 5 p.m. on Sunday. The tourism building has space/tables available for members to create a display. If anyone would like a booth, please her. She also asked organizations to provide a volunteer to work the space 1 shift through the weekend. The tourism staff talked about coming up with ideas for more hands-on activities for youth. There will be a coloring station, a photo opportunity station, and other games. She isn't sure if the sheriff's department will attend the fair to do the youth ID's so keeping the youth busy with fun activities will be great. The sign-up sheets are due Friday July 22<sup>nd</sup>, but she can get an extension. We are setting up the building on August 12<sup>th</sup> from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jim asked if there will be a history building again? Mary Kay Stone confirmed there will be.
- D. **Tourism Tuesdays:** Jennifer Longley said the first posting of "Tourism Tuesday" was about lighthouse tours. The views were already at almost 1200 and there were 30 shares. Lisa said there was an up tick in light house tour bookings. Jen that both her and Dan Breitweg will be headed to Vanderkamp on Thursday. She mentioned that she has shot video footage from Selkirk, Sandy Island Beach, and the Star Clark Tin Shop. She requested members offer suggestions on places to visit. The videos are around 30-45 seconds long, but if a member would like it to be longer, she could work with them on that.

## 4. New Business

- A. **Photo Collection:** Raven Hobson said we are currently reaching out to all our tourism partners requesting photos for the new visitor guide and other future marketing projects. If members have had photos of tourism venues or events, please submit them to Raven.Hobson@oswegocounty.com.
- B. **State Fair Initiative:** The NYS Fair will be held August 24<sup>th</sup>- September 5<sup>th</sup>. We will be teaming up with the 1000 Islands Region to share brochure spots. The visitor guide trifold, fishing and hunting guide, Tug Hill guide, and Salmon River trifold will be available for attendees to take. There are spots for two large brochures and four small tri-fold size spots. There will be a tourism video shown at Chevy Court, before the 6 p.m. entertainment, and Chevy Park Experience Stage before the 8 p.m. show. Jim asked where the 1000 Islands display will be? Lisa replied in the center of progress with the I Love NY display. Kelly requested general brochures to display at the Holiday Inn Express. Raven will bring them. Eva Corradino mentioned there is a visitor center in downtown Oswego that Kelly could send people to for information. Paul Lear requested to work with the Holiday Inn on redesigning the "friends of the fort brochure" as they have sponsored the project in the past.
- C. **Member and Guest Communications:**
  - 1. Jim asked how the sanctuary is coming along. Dave said an announcement could be made this fall or the end of the year, along with the one for Fort Ontario project. There is a lot that could happen in the next six months that would elevate Oswego County as a destination. He talked about the growth in the Albion area with infrastructure which could enhance tourism. Dave also explained that each project is driven by the previous project. Dan Young said that their community development is in line with our tourism outlooks and goals. They strive to have a diverse audience and to promote Tailwater Lodge as a welcome hub for families and more. Dave said they are looking to grow the infrastructure on a county level so more businesses can develop once they get water, sewer, and broadband. Jim asked how the broadband project is coming along? Dave said they have maps of every town and village and have surveyed each road. He also mentioned that they are partnering with all the towns and villages to help co-fund the project. The cost to get fiber down each road would be \$50,000 a mile in rural areas. The county is looking to dedicate 20% of the funds to put towards broadband and are requesting the towns and villages to put in 10%. Together it would total \$7 million to leverage with the state to receive the remaining funds. Jim asked if the broadband would lower the cost of the services. Dave said he expects to be working with multiple providers for private partnerships and once there are more choices for services it will open lower cost situations.
  - 2. Kelly asked about the artisan skate park that is being built. Eva said it is on the east side of the river near lock 7. She said this skate park will be free to the public and there is not currently a date of completion.

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3. Dave introduced Dan Breitweg as the new Deputy Director of Community Development, Tourism, & Planning. Dan is currently in the training and immersive stage of his position learning about Oswego County.
4. David Granoff talked about new tourism statistics. He said people are not afraid to fill up their gas tanks to travel this summer. He reported the marine sanctuary is coming along and they are expecting to get approval by the spring. The Erie Canal is having their 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2025. The Safe Haven Museum has welcomed a new board of directors and they are planning their grand re-opening this fall in October.
5. Eva said the city just printed a new city destination rack card. She explained it is a two-season bifold activities and events guide. She also gave a positive update about the visitor center downtown Oswego. She requested Jim bring in a tin shop banner for display. The center is open Thursday or Friday between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.
6. Linda Middleton said the snowmobile association is working on their paper map again this year. There is still ad space available if anyone is interested. She also requested family-oriented photos for the map. David said he is currently sending new photos to Linda. Linda said last season was busy but was a short season weather wise.
7. Mary Kay Stone said the Richardson-Bates House Museum is hosting a family fun day on August, 21<sup>st</sup>. She said there will be old fashioned games and fun for youth along with an ice cream social.
8. Lisa said that paddlefest this year was a success with 296 paid participants and a total of 310 paddlers including safety staff. She said it was a perfect day to be on the water. Dave asked where the larger percentage of paddlers started from - Minetto or Fulton? Lisa said many started in Fulton, but the larger number started in Minetto.
9. Paul said History on Tap at will be held at Steamers Bar and Grill on Wednesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7 p.m. The topic is the Underground Railroad. The Oswego Players will present *Pride and Prejudice* August 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 p.m. inside Fort Ontario. Tickets are available through the Players. August 14<sup>th</sup> at 3 p.m. Rob Corradino and Justin White will be talking about the history of the newly restored fence monument. August 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> the fort will be hosting a civil war reenactment. Symphoria was a success and is already scheduled for July 2023. He also noted that for Harborfest there will be no lawn parking at the fort, only first come first serve parking in the lot. Once the lots are full, they will be closed. He said there will be food vendors present. Paul also talked about a new PBS special on Dr. Mary Walker by Ken Burns that will air on September 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>. He said the fort will still be holding Haunted History tours on October 14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> and will be offering lantern tours on Wednesdays and bringing back the Post Cemetery tours.
10. Eva said there will be a block party, August 5<sup>th</sup>, in downtown Oswego. She said they will be holding family fun days at Breitbeck Park on August 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> at 12 p.m. – 6 p.m. It is youth focused, with blow up bounce houses, food, performers, and face painting booth. The Dragon Boat Festival sponsored by the YMCA will also be on August 6<sup>th</sup> at Breitbeck Park.

## D. Public Comment:

1. Dave suggested using the tiki boat tours as a recruitment tool for local businesses. He was thinking the historical venues could team up with the economic development team to create a short informational history tour along the lake front as a unique experience for prospective employees. Jim said this might be something we could work with the chamber on. Mary Kay said boat availability could be an issue. Eva said the tiki boats do have off days during the summer or possibly the H. Lee White Maritime Museum could help supply the boat. Dave mentioned that this option could be included into recruiting packages for businesses.
2. Kelly offered to host the August meeting at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites.

## 5. Adjournment:

Chairman Jim Hotchkiss adjourned the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

Next meeting will be held Tuesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 10 a.m. at the Holiday Inn Express & Suites. Located at 140 E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Oswego NY