

DRAFT

COUNTY OF OSWEGO Tourism Advisory Council

09/19/2023

Starr Clark Tin Shop and Underground Railroad Museum, Mexico

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Hotchkiss, Chairman Eva Corradino, George DeRousie, Karen DeRousie, Dick Drosse, Linda Middleton, Mercedes Niess	STAFF: Daniel Breitweg, Lisa Gray, Riesa Farnsworth, Jen Longley, Savannah Wyckoff
GUESTS:	
EXCUSED: David Owens, Josh Ludden, Kristi Eck, Robert Green	
MEDIA:	

Chairman Jim Hotchkiss called the meeting to order at 10:09 a.m.

1. Welcome and Introductions:

2. Host Presentation: Jim gave background on the Starr Clark Tin Shop and Underground Railroad Museum, and the Chandler-Ames 1855 Bank Museum, which the Mexico Historical Society purchased in 2020. Following extensive renovations, the grand opening was held this past August on Starr Clark's birthday. Jim encouraged TAC members to come back to take the full tour, which takes about 1.5 hours and is by appointment only.

3. Approval of Minutes from Aug. 15, 2023

Motion to approve minutes: Eva Corradino

Second: Linda Middleton

Vote: Unanimous, motion carried

1. Old Business

A. Website update – Daniel Breitweg said that the new Oswego County Tourism website is due to be launched at the end of November. The team is building an interactive activities map, and that agritourism, snowmobiling, racing, etc., will be big aspects of the website. Dan will share photos of the website mock ups at the November meeting. The new website's will have phone/tablet capabilities. He reminded TAC members about the opportunity to contribute to the county blog.

B. Tourism Tuesday - Jen Longley reminded TAC members that they can reach out to her if they would like her to do a Tourism Tuesday about their business. Jen will be doing the "12 Days of Christmas" with Ozzy the Elf again this year, as it got a lot of engagement last year. Ozzy will be going to the Splash Indoor Water Park and other holiday related attractions.

C. Fishing and Hunting Guide status Two additional pallets of guides were found at buildings and grounds. Lisa found more fishing charters and guides to add and now has about 68 charters and 50 guides, so some additional design changes are needed. The department hopes to have the guides printed by the end of the year.

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D. TAC meeting ideas, themes, hosts: Lisa will be talking to Stacy at the Salmon River Fish Hatchery to see if the next TAC meeting could be held there as long as they aren't too busy or have renovations going on.

2. New Business

A. Fall Harvest Update – Various u-picks are open, and places are having fall events.

B. Fishing access - Dan reported that 100 feet of the far west wall on the Oswego River is temporarily closed due to construction on foundation issues. There is still plenty of fishing access and people are also able to go out to the pier. A news release was sent informing people, including that fishing nets have been purchased to help anglers safely haul in their catches.

C. Super DIRT Week (Oct. 2-8) – Oswego Speedway began putting dirt down last week and Jen went to take photos. The tourism department will be putting up banners and running a commercial to showcase Oswego County. The department wants to encourage DIRT Week attendees to explore the county while they're here. Dan mentioned that Kenny Wallace did a good job with his article last year about his experience going to DIRT Week and checking out downtown.

3. Member and Guest Communications:

A. Mercedes Niess suggested members of TAC think about and discuss their roles in the 2024 eclipse, as she was watching the news and saw how far other areas are in planning already. Eva Corradino said that the city is putting together plans but she hasn't seen anything finalized. Eva mentioned that NASA will be at SUNY Oswego during the eclipse sending out weather balloons. Jen said the tourism department is ordering 7,500 glasses and will have some available to local organization. She also spoke about Oswego County being the only ones to have a sound light box, which will allow people with visual impairments to hear the eclipse through vibrations.

B. Linda Middleton talked about events coming up such as the Central Square Applefest and the Big East Powersports Show. She said that the new snowmobile maps should be in very soon to distribute.

C. Eva said the Oswego Historical Society's classic movie night on Oct. 9 showing "Lawrence of Arabia" and said that they are trying to plan trivia night for November. Upcoming city events include the CNY Pumpkinfest Sept. 30 and Oct. 1, and trunk or treat at the Oswego Speedway Oct. 28. The Oswego Visitor Center had the highest number of visitors this year in August, and about 30 people stopped when County Tourism staff worked during additional hours. The center will be closing at the end of September. The Holiday History Shop will be held at the visitor center starting the weekend after Thanksgiving. Jen suggested that the center be open the Monday and Tuesday of Super DIRT Week so travelers can stop in, and Dan said that the Tourism staff can help out on those days from noon to 4 p.m.

D. Jim announced that they will be passing out candy and offering mini tours at the Tin Shop on Halloween.

E. The Salmon River Fish Hatchery's open house is this Saturday, Sept. 23. Jen will be there representing Oswego County Tourism.

4. Adjournment- Chairman Jim Hotchkiss adjourned the meeting at 10:57 a.m. The next meeting will be held **Tuesday, October 24, 10 a.m. at the Salmon River Fish Hatchery, with a tour of the facility following.**