



## **Greene County Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Date: Monday, February 26, 2013 p.m.**

**Location: Greene County Economic Development, Tourism and Planning**

### **Attendance:**

**Committee Members Attending** – Kevin Lewis, Chairman, Greene County Legislature, Economic Development and Tourism Committee; Brian Christman, Chrisman’s Windham House; Bernadette Gavin-Palmieri, Gavin’s Irish Country Inn; Troy Ketcham, Windham Mountain; Suzanne Oldakowski, Bavarian Manor Country Inn and Restaurant; Carol Schreiber, Bauman’s Brookside; Chuck Tomajko, Fairlawn Inn; Betsy Jacks, Thomas Cole House; Peter Maassmann, Blackhead Mountain Lodge; Gerry Tschinkel representing Russ Coloton, Hunter Mountain; Kevin Smith, Sunny Hill Resort and Golf Course.

**Others in Attendance** – Jim Hitchcock, County Legislator; Linda Overbaugh, County Legislator; Patty Handel, County Legislator; Gene Hatton, County Legislator; Joseph Kozloski, County Legislator; Kelly Frady, AdWorkshop, Rebecca Steffan, AdWorkshop, Shelly Cihan, AdWorkshop.

**Staff** - Warren Hart, Heather Bagshaw, Patty Austin, Teri Weiss, Karl Heck

### **Minutes:**

The minutes of the January 14, 2013 meeting were approved.

### **Destination Marketing Report:**

Warren welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Distributed with the minutes were the 2013 TAC Meeting and Topic Schedule. Warren reviewed the TAC meeting schedule for the year, emphasizing the importance of the TAC receiving input from the tourism businesses. The TAC meeting schedule will alternate monthly between business meetings in the County Office Building and site visits to tourism businesses around the county. The tourism site visits will provide an opportunity to gain valuable input from the different tourism segments, including: Resorts, B&B/Inns, Golf, Sportsman, Winter Sports, Attractions, and Art/Culture/History. Starting with the March, Winter Clove Inn in Round Top will be the host and the target group will be All Inclusive Family Resorts.



The April meeting will be the Spring Tourism Seminar, to be held at the Kaaterskill Hotel at Hunter Mountain.

Warren updated the TAC on the Adventure Passport Contest and Advertising Campaign. The Campaign is on track and will run from Memorial Day to Columbus Day. The Adventure Passport Contest will include a fully integrated advertising campaign as previously outlined in the TAC priority projects presented to the Legislature (landing page, paid advertising, PPC, public relations). Additionally, table top displays and brochures will be provided to our lodging partners to distribute to our visitors so they can participate in the contest. Launch of the campaign and instructions for the tourism businesses will be available in April. Visitors will also be able to access the Passport Buy-One-Get One and the Passport Contest on the Tourism Website.

Warren also updated the TAC on the purchase of the new tourism vehicle. The county is purchasing a Jeep Wrangler 4x4, which will be fully integrated into the Adventure Passport Campaign and will represent the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County Brand and adventure theme. The vehicle will have a full body wrap, depicting the adventure brand and will be accessorized and equipped and used as an advertising campaign. The Jeep will be used as our moving billboard. The Jeep will be used at major events and festivals in county and will be used out of county at trade and travel shows. Procurement of the Jeep and accessories will take place in the next couple of weeks, planning for the vehicle to be in service in May to coincide with the launch of the Adventure Campaign. We'll be requesting bids and receiving quotes within the next couple of weeks. We anticipate the Jeep to be in service in May. Warren then informed the TAC that we have had a very positive response from our tourism businesses with donation of prizes for the Adventure Campaign. Several grand prizes for all inclusive family vacations were donated, along with meals, tickets and fun activities at some of our major attractions. Donations have also been made for outdoor sporting equipment to go on the top of the Jeep. Warren thanked the TAC as several of them had donated prizes as well.

Legislators Hatton and Lewis made suggestions regarding our logo on vehicle magnets and stickers.

Warren then asked Patty to update the TAC on some new events for 2013. Patty mentioned that we've had an inquiry for a new race call the "Mud Race" basically it's an obstacle course similar to Warrior Dash. There are certain requirements that need to be met, she is currently waiting for responses from property owners. She also listed several new bike races that are being added to the existing races; Grand Fondo, Hunter Mountain Cyclocross, and the Windham US National Mountain bike race. All of which are a new series of 2 day bike races. Anthem Sports will also be holding a cycling camp in May. The mountaintop is quickly becoming the place to hold cycling events and supported by our adventure brand and advertising campaigns.



Warren then welcomed and introduced Heather Bagshaw who is now the new Marketing Manager within the department of Economic Development, Tourism & Planning.

Kelly Frady, Shelly Cihan and Rebecca Steffan from AdWorkshop attended the meeting and gave a “Year End Summary” presentation on both paid media and search optimization. Kelly addressed several questions and comments during the presentation.

Shelly Cihan then spoke about increasing organic searches, the importance of pay per click key words, optimization, with the main objective to increase overall visits to the site. Shelly also answered several question from TAC members.

A discussion then took place regarding the need of the tourism industry in general to use the digital tools discussed by Adworkshop (modern websites, digital advertising, social media, search engine optimization) and that many of the businesses could benefit from education to improve their websites and presence on the web. The term “Website Tune Up” was coined.

Warren then spoke about the upcoming Tourism Seminar in April at Hunter Mountain. The primary agenda is yet to be determined. Karl Heck with be working with Heather and the Greene County Chamber to begin organizing the event and finalizing the agenda

Adworkshop stayed after the meeting to hold in-house training on public relations for tourism staff.

**Meeting Date and Location: TAC Meeting –March 26<sup>th</sup> 9:30-11 a.m. at Winter Clove**