



Greene County Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date: Thursday, November 21, 2013 9:30 a.m.
Greene County Office Building, Planning Conference Room**

Attendance:

Committee Members Attending – Kevin Lewis, Chairman, Greene County Legislature Economic Development and Tourism Committee; Troy Ketcham, Windham Mountain; Suzanne Oldakowski, Bavarian Manor Country Inn and Restaurant; Betsy Jacks, Thomas Cole House; Chuck Tomajko, Fairlawn Inn; Russ Coloton, Hunter Mountain; Peter Maassmann, Blackhead Mtn. Lodge & Country Club; Carol Schreiber, Baumann’s Brookside; Kevin Smith, Sunny Hill Golf & Resort.

Legislators in Attendance – Wayne Speenburgh, Chairman; Eugene Hatton; Joe Kozloski; Patty Handel

Others in attendance: Staff – Warren Hart, Heather Bagshaw, Teri Weiss, Nancy Petramale, Kelly Frady, Adworkshop

Warren welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting regarding the 2014 budget, which was prepared as a result of the Strategic Planning meeting.

Chuck Tomajko announced that Suzanne Oldakowski of Bavarian Manor was the award winning recipient of the NYS 2014 Bed and Breakfast Distinction award.

Warren showed the latest video produced by the Catskill Association for Tourism Services (CATS) representing all four of the Catskill counties, which is being used by CATS on the website and through social media. Greene County has a large representation in the video.

Chuck Tomajko suggested that the video be made available for in room access.

Heather then presented a PowerPoint presentation on the 2014 Destination Marketing Campaign as well as the proposed 2014 TAC Campaign. The TAC Campaign included: Continuation of both an Adventure Campaign and Destination Wedding Campaign, along with a continued commitment to TV Advertising (Winter/Summer). Heather introduced the concept for this year’s Adventure Campaign, “Take a Pic with RIP” that we’ll be launching in 2014. This campaign will primarily be completed through social media, specifically our twitter account. This will be a more cost effective way of leveraging our tourism dollars. We will have an entire schedule of Rip visits for the upcoming season set up shortly. Discussion and suggestions took place on the campaign including consideration of a Rip bobble head, and other retail items.

The Destination Wedding campaign was explained in the PowerPoint. Russ and Troy both have seen a tremendous increase in their destination weddings. Russ said Hunter has seen an approximate 25% increase along with bookings into 2015. Betsy also commented that the Thomas Cole House has seen an increase in weddings there too. Tourism staff commented that the Point is already booked for 2014 and 2015 bookings are strong.

The TV campaign, along with broadcast production and on-location videos was talked about as well. Warren mentioning that it's the largest expense. Russ made the suggestion for 2015 that Hunter Mtn. and Windham can contribute to this campaign which will add leverage to their ski commercials.

Heather and Kelly then presented a PowerPoint presentation on the 2014 TAC priority projects, the first item being the new "Responsive Website". Kelly explained the benefits and advantages for changing over to the Responsive Site, especially considering the new priority given by Google to responsive design. Additionally, as so much of our site is also used internally by Greene County residents and tourists, we need to give the customer a good visual experience with copy, photos and video. Everyone agreed that the Responsive Site was our top priority in 2014.

The second TAC priority project is the development an interactive mapping component to directly tie the tourism attractions, lodgings and listing data to the county map. This will provide a better interface, especially for our mobile users to find the tourism services provided within the county. The TAC agreed this was a high priority and that it should be included within the budget. The interactive map will be designed and included within the Responsive Website build.

The next 2014 TAC priority project presented was development and implementation of an On-line reservation system. After several minutes of discussion it was decided to further research this topic throughout 2014 and possibly implement in 2015. As a result, the TAC 2014 budget will be repurposed with the funds originally proposed for the reservation system to be placed into the paid media marketing campaign for 2014.

Heather also suggested that with the success of the strategic website assessment grants this year, we will continue to offer them in 2014.

The overview of the 2014 goals included:

- New Responsive Website, with priority on major attractions and tourism businesses that have on-line reservation systems, and enhanced listing data, photos and videos.
- New Interactive Map to provide enhanced searchability of our tourism businesses, especially with mobile users.
- Fully Integrated Destination Marketing Campaign (GNC 3.0 Handout) 7 Campaigns, 3 Target Audiences, with Digital Marketing, Paid Media (PPC), Search Engine Optimization, Public Relations and Social Media.
- TV Broadcast Advertising (Summer and Winter).



- Increase in site visitation.
- Increase in conversion of outbound traffic to our tourism businesses as more traffic equals more tax revenue.
- Continue to investigate on-line reservation system and revisit in 2015.

Chairman Speenburgh spoke briefly, and commended the committee for the work that they've accomplished within its first year. He went on to talk about some of the issues that the State and County have been facing throughout the year. One of the items being, I love New York has changed directors for the second time within a year. He went on to say that many of the roads within Greene County need upgrading, which is quite costly to the County. One of the larger projects that the administration has been working on is the lack of radio communications throughout certain sections of the County, primarily on the mountain top, and the importance of broadband for our tourists and residents. Currently towers are being installed on top of Windham Mountain. He also mentioned that the Legislature will be looking into the creation of a committee similar to the TAC, focusing on the downtown development and main street revitalization retail sector, with an investment in the County. He also updated every one on the status of the casino gaming issue.

The Chairman announced that the TAC will continue to be supported by the Legislature for the upcoming year.

The TAC decided not to hold a meeting in December and the next meeting will be in January 2014.