



Greene County Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date: Thursday, January 29, 2015 - 9:30 a.m.
County Office Building**

Attendance:

Committee Members Attending – Betsy Jacks, Thomas Cole House; Suzanne Oldakowski, Bavarian Manor Country Inn and Restaurant; Brian Christman, Christman's Windham House; Denise Kerrigan, Zoom Flume; Lenore Whitcomb, Winter Clove Resort

Legislators in Attendance – Kevin Lewis, Chairman County Legislature; Eugene Hatton

Staff – Warren Hart, Heather Bagshaw, Nancy Petramale, Teri Weiss, Karl Heck

Warren opened the meeting, thanking everyone for attending the rescheduled meeting due to the snow storm. New members pending appointment were introduced and welcomed, Lenore Whitcomb from Winter Clove Resort and Denise Kerrigan from Zoom Flume. Warren reported that there were three resignations of the TAC committee members; Peter Maassmann, Bernadette Gavin-Palmieri, and Troy Ketcham. Both Peter and Bernadette resigned due to work and family time commitments. Troy has left Windham Mountain Resort employment and accepted a new position with the YMCA. Chip Seamans from Windham Mountain Resort will be the new representative. In February, the formal resolution appointing members to the TAC should be acted upon by the Legislature.

Heather and Warren recent met with Adworkshop reviewing the 2014 end of year reports and finalizing the 2015 destination advertising marketing plan. Heather stated that we exceeded our digital marketing goals and performed very well in 2014. The digital marketing world is ever evolving and changing, and so will we in order to maintain our high rankings. She then presented the 2015 Marketing Plan Point presentation to the committee. The EOY report will be emailed to everyone in February before the next meeting.

Two of our major projects for 2014 were fulfilled, being the launch of the adaptive responsive website and the interactive map. Changing to an adaptive website allows the site to be viewed on all technology devices in its proper format. The new interactive map exceeded our site usage expectations. People are quickly able to personalize their search for major attractions and lodging to coincide with their trip.

Additional goals met for the year, included: the production and distribution of a new Vacation Map, which for 2015 replaced the Places of Interest Map insert in the 2014 travel guide; and the addition of a Performing Arts landing page.

The Tourism Office continues to prioritize communication and education with our tourism properties and partners. In 2014 the Office distributed campaign creative and messaging, digital assets as well as media plans, via digital sharing using "Drop Box". Heather explained the benefits and features of it, how it enables us to share our large files, photos and videos with everyone.

Heather then reviewed the 2014 broadcast production and showed several video clips of our seasonal and adventure videos, along with the summer and winter TV commercials. She also talked about the use of 2014 Digital Pre-Roll that we created for Travel, Events, and Weddings. These are quick fifteen second video segments, something new to the digital marketing world.

Heather explained the 2015 Broadcast and Print production schedule. For broadcast production, we'll be capturing additional summer and winter b-roll video for broadcast TV commercials. Print production for 2015 will include a new golf brochure, which will be available next month, along with a beverage trail rack card and a motorcycle trail rack card to coincide with the launch of these two new TAC supported campaigns. The motorcycle and craft beverage campaigns will be launched in late Spring, early Summer, and will also include both still photography and video.

Heather explained the 2015 marketing strategy, the objectives, target markets, and the target audiences. Then she talked about each campaign, the season for each and the call to action. Heather also announced that the 2015 travel guide will be delivered next week. This year the release date was moved up much earlier making it available for the 2015 winter and early spring travel shows.

Heather then reviewed the paid media segment of the Power Point with the TAC, mentioning that it represents over 50% of the total 2015 budget. She explained the "Pay Per Click" campaigns and the significance of higher Google rankings along with our Search Engine Optimization.

Warren added that our site continues to perform well, and that we continue to be first in domain authority in the market. Adworkshop does a great job of keeping us at the top of the Google search rankings.

Warren then spoke about the craft beverage campaign. The Economic Development Office is simultaneously working with the local wineries, brewers, and distillers to organize a state designated Greene County Beverage Trail. The craft producers are responsible for the formation of a not-for-profit board, by-laws, officers, and terms of membership for the trail. The Economic Development Office is assisting the producers with application to the state for designation of the trail. We are also working with the Greene County Chamber on submission of a craft beverage grant application to ILNY seeking additional advertising and marketing funds through the State's

new program. In the mean time, the Tourism Office is working on the new craft beverage webpage.

Warren also spoke about the progress on the motorcycle campaign. Branded routes and ride sheets will be an important part of the campaign. The TAC added that a noticeable increase of Canadian motorcyclists are traveling into the Catskills looking for driving tours. Motorcycle maps of the Adirondacks and surrounding areas will be examined for interconnections with broader touring opportunities. The campaign will also directly leverage the large motorcycling events in the County, both on-road and off-road, including Hunter Mountain's Color in the Catskills and Blackthorne's Catskill Mountain Thunder.

Warren gave a brief overview of the newly released 2013 Economic Impact of Tourism in New York prepared by Tourism Economics for ILNY. The report highlights key economic trends and data for the State and then does a region by region breakdown. For the Catskills Travel Region a few Power Point slides were of importance:

- Tourism is most important for the Catskills and the Adirondacks.
- Tourism spending in the Catskills was over a billion dollars and grew by 2.8% (3rd highest percentage growth of the 11 travel regions)
- Tourism spending in Greene County was \$148.6 million dollars growing by 2.7% (2nd highest in the four county Catskill travel region) (Ulster 6.6%, Greene 2.7%, Sullivan -4.9%, Delaware – 0.3%).
- Greene County continues to be the most dependent upon tourism with 22.6% of all tourism employment in the region sustained by visitors.
- Tourism in the Catskills generated more than \$133 million in state and local taxes.
- Sales, property, and hotel bed taxes contributed more than \$72 million in local taxes.
- Were it not for tourism-generated state and local taxes, the average household in the region would have to pay an additional \$961 to maintain the same level of government revenue.

Warren then displayed the Greene County Tourism Gateway signs that are being designed, purchased, and installed through the Kaaterskill Clove Experience Grant. The signs are roughly three by four feet, and will be permitted and installed by the Greene County Highway Department at the major entrances into the County. The signs convey a simple welcome message to Greene County, uses the county tourism brand, and logo elements of the Great Northern Catskills, and depicts the shape of the county. Warren spoke briefly about additional signage as part of the Kaaterskill Clove Experience, to coincide with the cultural trail and grant program. Kaaterskill Clove Experience locational and directional signs will be placed along the trail. They are currently being designed and reviewed for regulatory compliance.

Warren also spoke about the Catskill Association of Tourism Services (CATS) organization. Through an RFP process, we have contracted with Adworkshop as CATS new Agency of Record. As part of a CFA Tourism grant, CATS will be using Adworkshop to build a new adaptive responsive

website. CATS hopes to replicate the good results that we've had with Adworkshop in Greene County.

Heather announced that the Tourism seminar will be held on Tuesday May 5th at Villa Vosilla from 2:00-5:00 p.m., followed by the Greene County Chamber sponsored Business after Hours. There will be two break-out sessions at the seminar with possible topics being digital marketing, and the evolution of the continually changing social media world. Finally, Heather distributed the TAC calendar for the year.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 24th at Christman's Windham House.