



Greene County Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date: Tuesday June 23, 2015 - 9:30 a.m.
Historic Catskill Point**

Attendance:

Committee Members Attending –Carol Schreiber, Baumann's Brookside; Suzanne Oldakowski, Bavarian Manor County Inn; Denise Kerrigan; Zoom Flume; Russ Coloton, Hunter Mountain; Betsy Jack, Thomas Cole House; Chuck Tomajko, Fairlawn Inn; Brian Christman, Christman's Windham House; Beth Stewart, Windham Mountain Resort

Legislators in Attendance – Kevin Lewis, County Chairman; Joe Kozloski; Gene Hatton

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

Heather Bagshaw thanked everyone for attending the meeting which was being held at the Historic Catskill Point. She also spoke about the asset that the Point is to the County and the economic impact it brings to the Village of Catskill and Greene County. In addition, she spoke about Dick Brooks who is the Museum and Point Manager and how instrumental he is in keeping the place open and running during every event. He will also be available to give everyone a tour after the meeting if they would like. The Tourism Advisory Committee approved the March TAC minutes.

Patty Austin, Sales and Marketing Coordinator for the Tourism office, oversees the daily operation of the Point and handles all the event scheduling, including the Freight Master Building, Warehouse, Docking, and Grounds. Patty gave a brief history and update of the property. She encouraged everyone to meet Dick Brooks and take a tour of the museum, stating that he is a wealth of information. In addition, Warren also spoke very highly of Dick Brooks and the asset he is to the Point.

Heather then proceeded with a PowerPoint presentation on the 2015 County Beverage Campaign. She previewed the web landing page along with the map highlighting the beverage locations and listing output of all properties. The site will also feature local beverage events that take place throughout the year.

Continuing with the Beverage Campaign, Tourism has purchased print advertising in the Wine Enthusiasts in the July 2015 edition, along with digital advertising in the same magazine for the

months of July through November 2014. The digital advertising targets both desktop and mobile users. In addition, Tourism will be purchasing pay-per-click advertising during the same time period. We'll be targeting our regional market areas with all of our advertising.

Heather then showed examples of our spring and fall banner ads for the campaign, with the County now showcasing our craft beverage producers and now representing the County as the up and coming craft beverage tasting venue.

Additionally, Heather also spoke about the broadcast production for the beverage campaign. To enhance the website listing and creative production a photo shoot took place in May. It included shots of brewery locations, the owners, brewing facilities, and several beverage shots throughout the County. These photos and videos will enhance our photography library, and will be used on all future beverage campaigns and promotional items.

Heather also spoke about the Drop Box feature on our website that is now available to our tourism properties, partners and the Legislature. She explained the steps to gain access to all our media files and photos. It's free for everyone's use and she encouraged everyone to take advantage of it. She also showed examples of what exists in Drop Box on campaigns.

Warren informed everyone that Karl Heck has been working with Jeff Friedman from the Greene County Chamber in the preparation of the Craft Beverage Grant Application to be submitted to ILNY. The Chamber will be the official applicant and County Tourism will be lead on advertising and marketing components. The Chamber/County has requested \$45,000 in grant funds for 2015, and \$47,000 in 2016. The matching funds are coming from the County tourism budget, with funds that have already been allocated for the 2015 county craft beverage campaign and planned for 2016. The County funds allow us to leverage state funds.

Heather then continued with the PowerPoint presentation for the motorcycle campaign. Heather reviewed the landing page and the map that highlights three different tours; the Emerald Isle Tour, Mountain Clove Run, and the Grand Tour of the Catskills. Additionally, it will feature motorcycle events with a link to the listing page. She also passed around the motorcycle map that was "hot off the press" for everyone to see. Ride sheets for each of the designated routes are also being finalized.

Kevin Lewis commented that Greene County should consider working with CATS to determine if there is interest in producing a Catskill Region motorcycle/driving map that depicts driving tours, GPS locations, and gas station and amenities throughout the Catskills, noting as an example, that the Adirondacks has a great motorcycle map product.

Heather spoke about Jimapco and that we've partnered with them to produce a riding map with details on must see stops, gas station locations, distances and much more. The use of Jimapco was very inexpensive and we received the rights to files to make future changes.

Heather also talked about the paid media part of the motorcycle campaign. Print advertising will be placed in American Iron Magazine in July and Backroads Magazine in October. Digital advertising will be running from July through November within those same publications. And Pay-Per-Click will also be supplementing the media from July through November too.

She also showed examples of both print and web creative production that will be placed in Backroads Magazine and American Iron Magazine. Additionally we'll have available the brochure map outlining the three tours and downloadable PDF ride sheets for each tour. We will also be producing videos of each motorcycle tour in its entirety (high speed mode).

Chuck liked the idea of incorporating 3-5 day motorcycle tours with surrounding counties and including overnight stays at local B&B's, Inn's and other facilities.

Heather spoke about mountain biking, and that the interest in the sport has substantially grown in Greene County over the years, especially since Windham Mountain has hosted the World Cup. She also announced that the Roundtopia Mountain Bike Trails has recently opened, and provides single and double track riding trails for the more experienced rider. She also mentioned that the Tourism office will be applying for a 2015 CFA grant on behalf of the County's mountain biking attractions and amenities. These funds will be used to enhance the webpage, possibly do a market analysis comparing Greene County riding trails to Kingdom Trails in Vermont. "We continually compete with Vermont for riders, and yet we're much closer in proximity for most of the cyclists." "Our focus is to increase traffic to our area that would normally be heading to Vermont."

Warren added that our mountain biking efforts will support: Windham Mountain Resort and the new Bike Park; the Town of Windham and their efforts to designate Windham as a MB Ride Center; the Round Top Mountain Bike Association and the Roundtopia Mountain Bike Trail; Windham Area Recreation Foundation (WARF) representing the Windham Path and the Elm Ridge Forest MB Trails; The Village of Tannersville and Town of Hunter on the Huckleberry Trail and Kaaterskill Rail Trail.

Suzanne mentioned that NMBA had a group of about one hundred kids that stayed at the Bavarian Manor, and biked throughout their trails around the property, and they were the best group of kids and parents ever. They loved the trails, they were clean, and their families were very involved with them. It's a very clean industry and she will always welcome them back.

Warren mentioned that our CFA grant applications are focusing on recreation, trails, events and activities and amenities for tourists, such as, the beverage trail, the motorcycle and biking trails. We then align these with places to stay, which brings lodging revenue and visitor spending, allowing us to stay ahead of the competition.

Russ added that "we are light years ahead in all of our advertising efforts, and it's paying off."

Betsy then asked Warren if she could speak regarding their meeting with the NYS Bridge Authority, Olana, Scenic Hudson, and the Village of Catskill and the County. Their goal is to make the Rip Van Winkle Bridge into a tourist attraction, just like they did with the Walkway Over the Hudson. Scenic Hudson did a study to connect trails to the historic sites on both sides of the bridge and to also promote the bridge as a walkway. Betsy stated that the entities are working towards submission of a 2015 CFA grant application. Since the Bridge Authority is improving the walkway and making an eight million investment to upgrade bridge, this is a great opportunity to partner and use the Bridge Authority investment as the match for the grant.

Warren added that the County Tourism Trail Plan was recently completed, and one of the recommendations was to create a “skywalk” on the RVW, leading to infrastructure improvements, such as parking and sidewalks, to ultimately make a connection from the RVW to the Thomas Cole House. The working team on the project still needs to decide who the lead applicant will be, the sources of funds for grant writing, and tasks for each of the partners. There would need to be safe access to the Thomas Cole House. Parking also needs to be addressed along with the “octopus” of roads on the Columbia County side of the bridge.

Joe Kozloski mentioned that several years ago the intersection just over the bridge on the Columbia County side was addressed with D.O.T and basically they said no to making any changes or improvements.

Warren agreed that we have hurdles to meet, and said that Columbia County was not at the table, but will be at next meeting and that a follow up with D.O.T. is necessary. The deadline for the 2015 CFA application is July 31st.

There will be no meeting for the months of July and August and the next one will be in September.