

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: MARCH 29, 2018

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS: MERLINO
DICKINSON
FRASIER
GERAGHTY
HOGAN
DRISCOLL

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

JOANNE CONLEY, DIRECTOR
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER
MARY ELIZABETH KISSANE, COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS: STROUGH
WILD
DIAMOND

SUPERVISORS LEGGETT

MAGOWAN

SIMPSON

MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER

REPRESENTING THE LAKE GEORGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB:

KRISTEN HANIFAN, SPECIAL EVENTS & CONVENTION SALES DIRECTOR

DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*

THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*

CHRIS SOUTH, *THE SUN*

MOLLY GANOTES-GLEASON, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

*SEE SIGN IN SHEET OF OTHER MEETING ATTENDEES

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the March 29, 2018 Meeting of the Tourism Committee; the meeting in its entirety can be viewed on the Warren County website using the following link:
<http://www.warrencountyny.gov/gov/comm/Archive/2018/tourism/>

Mr. Merlino called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 12:17 p.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Joanne Conley, *Director of Tourism*, who distributed copies of the Tourism agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing her agenda review, Ms. Conley advised the only items included on the agenda for discussion pertained to updates. She indicated they were working on advertising and marketing for the beginning of the vacation season. She apprised *Time.com/Money Magazine* selected Lake George as one of the top twenty destinations in 2018. She added Lake George was mentioned in *Time Magazine*, which had a circulation of 2 million subscribers and it was also on their website. She advised she contacted *Time Magazine* to inquire if they could use their *Money Magazine* accolade throughout 2018 and had received permission to do so. She advised this logo was going to be placed on the home page and every footer throughout the website and on the cover of the Travel Guide. She apprised the entire Lake George area was enthusiastic. She indicated an article they had posted on Facebook reached 1.6 million with 17,000 likes, 3,800 shares and 3,400 comments. She advised the website was viewed 37,000 times.

Ms. Conley notified the Tourism Department had received an “ADDY” Award from the American Advertising Association for their 2017 summer commercial. She mentioned this year they would introduce a new fall commercial

and she said they were currently working on small video clips for the summer season.

Next, Ms. Conley informed of what was currently taking place in the area, reporting I Love NY was promoting a bracket competition to go along with the March Madness Basketball Tournament that promoted the top sixteen mini destinations across New York State. She indicated in Warren County the only property they selected was The Sagamore Resort. She apprised they were in the final week with only two properties remaining to vote on and she was confident The Sagamore would be the winner. She added the grand prize was a free nights stay at The Sagamore Resort.

Ms. Conley notified Adirondack Day would be held in Albany on April 16th. She informed the purpose of the event was to inform Albany Legislators about all the Adirondacks had to offer. She mentioned Hamilton County had received a \$60,000 grant to construct bicycle trails at the southern end of the Adirondacks, which would be a point of interest. She stated the Warren County Safe & Quality Bicycling Organization would be in attendance advocating for cycling with a display. She advised they would be able to speak with Legislators regarding the concerns they had in Warren County and how they could advocate for the County.

Following, Ms. Conley notified they would be doing co-branding with the Lake George Chamber of Commerce and CVB. She indicated the CVB would use the Lake George Area logo along with their Lake George Area Convention and Visitors Bureau logo on the Travel Guide. To continue the branding, she noted they would populate the meeting page on the website. She advised this was great way to combine services; she informed they already shared computer software and would be providing the Chamber with copies of the Smith Trend Reports (*STR*). She noted there would be a chance to share photos, videos, marketing and promotion in the future.

Continuing, Ms. Conley spoke regarding the position of the Assistant Tourism Coordinator and reviewed a list of goals associated with the position in detail; *a copy of the list of goals is on file with the meeting minutes*. She informed there were twenty-five applicants for the position which they would begin reviewing and interviews would commence in the coming weeks.

Regarding an update on the *STR*, Ms. Conley informed that the January and February numbers were up and February, with an increase of 5.8% for the month of February. She mentioned good things were taking place and there was a lot of positive momentum moving forward.

Michael Swan, *County Treasurer*, provided copies of the Occupancy Tax Report to the Committee, *a copy of which is also on file with the meeting minutes*. He apprised a total of \$4,331,652.82 in occupancy tax revenues had been collected for 2017, which was an increase of 3.77%, or \$163,327.63, over 2016. With regard to 2018 occupancy tax revenue collections, he indicated \$219,597.63 had been received through March 28, 2018, which was an increase of 4.93%, or \$10,823.46, over the \$208,774.17 collected for the same period in 2017.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Tanya Brand, *Group Tour Promoter*, who mentioned she had emailed a copy of the 2018 Marketing Plan to the Committee members. She advised group travel shows were an important part of her marketing plan. She informed she had attended a show every month since the beginning of the year. She provided a sideshow of the shows she attended, indicating the largest had been the American Bus Association Marketplace held in Charlotte, South Carolina. She said there were information booths and a business floor where the DMO (*Destination Marketing Origination*) provided one-on-one discussions with those who chose to make an appointment. She advised the appointments were seven minutes long and there were thirty-nine pre-selected appointments and another seventy-five that were gained from the booth. She indicated she attended the Heartland Travel Showcase and the Florida Sales Mission. She notified I Love NY had an academy bus that took her and sixteen others on a tour from Miami to Orlando to visit twelve different tour operator offices. She indicated at each location she provided a pitch for future business. She said the reason was that New York City, as well as Miami and Orlando, were the largest gateway cities for international travelers. She added the event also included a tour operators breakfast.

Mr. Dickinson exited the meeting at 12:38 p.m.

Finally, Ms. Brand notified of two upcoming international events, one being for International Blogger Fans which she explained was a conference in the Finger Lakes region where a number of bloggers would be chosen to take a fan tour in the Adirondack region. She informed there was going to be an International Pow Wow following which seven Chinese tour operators would attend a Regional Fan Tour.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kristen Hanifan, *Special Events & Convention Sales Director, Lake George Chamber of Commerce and CVB*, who distributed copies of her February 2018 Report to the Committee; *a copy of the Report is also on file with the meeting minutes*. Ms. Hanifan reported that last month there were nine leads which led to 7,465 room nights and she had booked three new events resulting in 653 new room nights. She mentioned since January she had booked five new events for 2,572 new room nights for the region year to date. She indicated she was working on repeat room business with Hemmings Cooperate Allegiance for 200 plus room nights; Northeast Barbershop Quartet for 150 room nights; and Prime Time Lacrosse and Trilogy Lacrosse for 1,200-1,500 room nights. She advised a new way the CVB would provide convention services for large scale and sporting events was to provide a Dine Around list to the teams ahead of time by reaching out to local businesses and restaurants to inquire who would like to participate. She added Dine Around was new for them and it aided restaurants during the busy summer season. She mentioned they had lost three events, equating to a loss of 1,060 room nights. She said the Family Travel Association was lost because they wanted too many items at no charge and she indicated a Field Hockey event would consider the area in 2019. She provided an overview of what the CVB provided to the County.

Ms. Hanifan informed she attended the Adventure Travel Trade Association Elevate Conference with a co-worker and member of the NYSDEC (*New York State Department of Environmental Conservation*) for four days where they were presented as luncheon sponsors. She indicated they presented to roughly three hundred attendees at the event held on March 15th. She apprised they produced a video which included introductions by I Love NY and NYSDEC representatives; she added that the second part of the video, which focused on the area and region, was written and produced by herself. Ms. Hanifan then played the video for the Committee members. She indicated she was working with I Love NY and NYSDEC on marketing and public relations and they received a CFA (*Consolidated Funding Application*) grant that was provided through Market New York in support of bringing three hundred international tour operators and travel media to the area next year. She indicated they also produced a teaser brochure that was distributed at the luncheon. She added at the luncheon they were able to give away trips with help from Adirondack Hamlets to Huts who provided a five night, four day sampling of North Creek to Indian Lake hike and paddle guided trek with lodging and meals. She also thanked Adirondack Winery, Fort William Henry Hotel & Conference Center, Adirondack Extreme and the Lake George Steamboat Company who provided an overnight guest pass and tasting to create your own itinerary.

Concluding, Ms. Hanifan informed they would be launching the first German-style Christmas Marketplace at the Festival Commons at Charles R. Wood Park, December 7-9, 2018. She displayed a logo that would be used for the new event.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mrs. Frasier and seconded by Mrs. Hogan, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Ganotes-Gleason, Legislative Office Specialist