

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: JUNE 18, 2018

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS: MERLINO
DICKINSON
STROUGH
FRASIER
WILD
GERAGHTY
DIAMOND

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS: HOGAN
DRISCOLL

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:
JOANNE CONLEY, DIRECTOR
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER
RONALD F. CONOVER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
RYAN MOORE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
AMY LAVINE, ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
SUPERVISORS BEATY
BRAYMER
LEGGETT
MCDEVITT
SIMPSON
SOKOL
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
MICHAEL SWAN, COUNTY TREASURER
REPRESENTING THE LAKE GEORGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND
CVB:
GINA MINTZER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KRISTEN HANIFAN, SPECIAL EVENTS & CONVENTION SALES
DIRECTOR
AMY COLLINS, TOURISM & DOWNTOWN BUSINESS COORDINATOR,
CITY OF GLENS FALLS
LAURA KOHLS, CLARION HOTEL
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
TRAVIS WHITEHEAD, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY RESIDENT
MOLLY GANOTES-GLEASON, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the June 18, 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 10:22 a.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 provided an early summer update. She apprised at the last meeting she mentioned that the Lake George area was featured as one of the top ten vacation places in the State by “*Money Magazine*” and their accolade was on the Tourism website and the Travel Guide. She indicated there were five other

publications that indicated Lake George was featured as one of the top ten vacation places in the State, consisting of *USA Today*, *Trip Advisor*, *Insider*, *Architectural Digest* and the *Post Star* who reported Labatt's beer cans mentioned Lake George, New York, as well as Thousand Islands, Buffalo and Seneca Lake.

Ms. Conley advised they had made changes to the website by optimizing the text on the home page and all the top tier pages events, attractions and lodging which gave them precedence during an internet search. She advised they were consistently competing with lakegeorge.com for the top internet search position that she said was beneficial to the area. She encouraged the Committee to look at the website which was always changing to continue to remain a search leader. She indicated there was a regional meeting held in the Town of Bolton last week that included attendees from counties in the Adirondacks including Essex, Hamilton, Franklin and Clinton. She noted there was discussions regarding what was going on in each county adding the overwhelming response was that internet searches were down. She reported Warren County analytics were consistently up year to year. She stated the advertising they had done continued to bring traffic to the website and keep them at the top of the consumers mind. She indicated 75% of the website traffic was viewed from mobile devices. She remarked the website search for Americade had greatly increased this past year, adding the more information the website contained made them an authority according to Google.

Next, Ms. Conley advised she had attended the New York By Rail Trade Show held at New York City's Penn Station, where she was able to provide directions to Lake George to individuals from Manhattan who used the trains daily and did not have a vehicle. She added there was potential growth for traveling by train.

Regarding summer advertising, Ms. Conley informed print advertisements were distributed in April and digital advertisements were constant. She said as the seasons approach they provided more digital and social media advertising, adding in June they began their television advertisement. She indicated last year their commercial won an ADDY (American Advertising Agency) award. She mentioned herself and Peter Girard, *Creative Director*, visited Working Pictures in Albany where their commercials were created. She apprised they also created 15, 30 and 60 second videos on demand, indicating they could be seen on television, but would be easy to find on the internet. She advised they had reviewed the new fall commercial and she said it provided an experience. She indicated the commercial would be released in August, reporting they were also working on short video snippets for the winter that would be available online only.

Speaking of advertising, Ms. Conley expressed they also worked on brand awareness, social media and event promotion which included Americade, Adirondack Food & Wine Festival, Larac, Hague Endurance Festival and Adirondack Woof Stock. She said advertising was shared through social media to reach additional followers. She apprised Woof Stock was held in Chestertown and had 350 social media shares; which, she said, was great for a pet friendly event. She advised supporting a small event was good for the community, indicating they promoted the Hague Endurance Festival early so individuals had a chance to sign up for the triathlon. She advised the Adirondack Food & Wine Festival was sold out on Saturday and still had remaining tickets for Sunday. She reported she spoke to Christian Dutcher, *Vice President, Americade Inc.*, who indicated Americade attendance was up and there were more vendors this year as compared to last year. He reported they were pleased with their sales and he remarked the Block Party was a success and the Village was crowded. She informed she would not receive Americade results from the Smith Trend Report until next month. Laura Kohls, *representing the Clarion Hotel*, inquired if the numbers from Americade could be broken down by day of the week mentioning the event was a week long and there was a different impact on Friday and Saturday then at the beginning of the week. Regarding mid week Americade events, Ms. Conley notified Take A Bite took place in Downtown Glens Falls on Wednesday and there was music in the park and a benefit ride on Saturday. She informed Take A Bite had low attendance and needed more attention. Amy Collins, *Tourism & Downtown Business Coordinator, City of Glens Falls*, informed Take A Bite had it's own

following and she said, it required additional advertising and directions. She informed 188 motorcycles attended the Ride For Kids benefit and the event raised \$15,000 for Pediatric Brain Cancer.

Ms. Conley apprised they were currently working on a new feature on the website titled Meeting Pages, informing the pages consisted of properties that had meeting space for events, seminars and groups.

Mr. Strough entered the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Ms. Conley informed the Smith Trend Report for April was up 6.5% and she had yet to receive the results for May. Mr. Merlino inquired if Ms. Conley would obtain the statics from area campgrounds and she replied in the positive.

Michael Swan, *County Treasurer*, reported there was a 2.4% increase in occupancy tax for the month of May.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Tanya Brand, *Group Tour Promoter*, who provided a slide show of the IPW (International Pow Wow) trade show she had attended in Colorado. She indicated the United States Travel Association reported IPW was the leading inbound travel trade show that had the potential to drive \$4.7 Billion in future travel to the United States. She said it was the largest travel show in the United States. She indicated there were nine TPA's (Tourism Promotion Agency's) that attended, adding Warren County attended under the umbrella of I Love New York. She mentioned they preselected appointments with the Tour Operators for the three day event and had 145 appointments which would create leads. She notified she met with fifty additional Tour Operators at an I love New York dinner. She mentioned appointments were twenty minutes during which time she distributed a brochure entitled *GO North* which was used to sell the region. She notified I love New York chose seven Chinese Tour Operators to tour Sullivan County, Lake Placid, The Wild Center, Saratoga Springs and the Lake George area. She advised she had attended a new TAP (Tour Alliance Partners) Dance trade show, adding attendance was by invitation only. She indicated they were unique because they bought and sold travel packages with each other. She said she worked on what they called an upstate New York pod that included meeting Tour Operators from Thousand Islands, Syracuse, Ithaca and Buffalo.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kristen Hanifan, *Special Events & Convention Sales Director, Lake George Chamber of Commerce and CVB* who distributed the *May Board of Directors CVB Report 2018* to the Committee members which she reviewed in detail, *a copy of the Report is also on file with the meeting minutes.*

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mrs. Frasier and seconded by Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Molly Ganotes-Gleason, Legislative Office Specialist

