

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: JULY 29, 2009

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: OTHERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS	TESSIER	REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:
	BELDEN	KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR
	KENNY	PETER GIRARD, CREATIVE DIRECTOR
	SHEEHAN	TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER
	MERLINO	PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ATTORNEY
	SIMMES	HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE & FISCAL SERVICES
	STRAINER	JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
		SUPERVISORS CHAMPAGNE
		PITKIN
		TAYLOR
		LUISA CRAIGE-SHERMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE WARREN COUNTY COUNCIL OF CHAMBERS
		MICHAEL CONSUELO, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR
		MAURY THOMPSON, <i>THE POST STAR</i>
		THOM RANDALL, <i>THE ADIRONDACK JOURNAL</i>
		CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Tessier called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 9:32 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Merlino 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 Kate Johnson, Tourism Director, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Johnson commenced the agenda review and requested a contract with Kenyon Press, Inc. to print 275,000 copies of the the 2010 Warren County Travel Guide, commencing September 21, 2009 and terminating October 30, 2009 for a total amount not to exceed \$72,809. She noted that the funds were available within her budget and added that the Travel Guide had been reduced by four pages.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to authorize the contract with Kenyon Press, Inc. as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 21, 2009 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested a contract with Amsterdam Printing to print 4,500 copies of the 2010 Group Tour Planner, commencing September 21, 2009 and terminating October 30, 2009, for a total amount not to exceed \$2,841. She noted that she was under budget for the printing of this product.

Motion was made by Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to authorize the contract with Amsterdam Printing as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 21, 2009 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson requested authorization to apply for the New York State Department of Economic Development, Tourism Matching Funds Program, for a matching funds grant to be used for the promotion of tourism in Warren County.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to authorize the submission of a grant application to the New York State Department of Economic Development as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 21, 2009 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson noted that Paul Dusek, County Attorney, was in attendance to discuss the Tourism Department's policy on the sharing of email addresses of individuals who visited the Warren County Tourism Department website. Mr. Dusek stated that in 2005 he had advised that the email addresses should not be shared for a number of reasons including the Federal Spam Act, which prohibited it based on the fact that the current website included a message that stated that Warren County did not share email addresses. He said that the question of sharing email addresses from this point forward had been addressed. He explained that the prior research his Office had performed on the matter raised concerns with sharing the email addresses due to the Freedom of Information Act, which did not require the transmission of personal information from government records for commercial purposes, as well as whether it would constitute an unconstitutional gift of public funds. He added that another concern was what the businesses would do with the email addresses and the possibility that the individuals would be inundated by emails from various businesses. He continued by saying if the County elected to share email addresses, the option had to be made available to every business within Warren County. He apprised that the County Attorney's Office had been contacted and asked to reconsider their opinion based on the current state of the economy and the fact that other communities were sharing email addresses. He stated that the policy issue was still in effect and could be changed at the discretion of the Board. He added there was no way to determine what the businesses would do with the email addresses or the types of information they would send to people.

With regards to the Federal Spam Act, Mr. Dusek advised that the County would be unable to share email addresses which had already been obtained; however, he noted, from this point forward the website could include a box that could be checked if individuals desired to have information sent to them from other businesses. He stated that further discussion was necessary to ensure that the proper procedure was followed to include this option on the website.

Concerning the possibility that the sharing of emails would equate to an unconstitutional gift of public funds, Mr. Dusek stated that the argument could be made that the County was in the business of promoting tourism and currently allowed businesses to advertise in the brochures. He explained that first and foremost the brochure was a promotional piece for the County and the law allowed for a portion of the brochure to be used for advertisements to help offset the costs of production. He said that he believed the same argument could be made for the sharing

of emails; however, he added, that would mean that the County would need to charge the businesses to access the email database. He said that charging for the emails would eliminate the unconstitutional gift argument under New York State Law but he would need to research the legality under Federal law. He advised there was a possibility of sharing email addresses but a lot of work would need to be completed and he wanted to ensure that the Committee was agreeable before starting the process.

Mr. Kenny apprised that he was in favor of sharing the email addresses if the website contained a box that could be checked by those consenting to receive emails; however, he added, he would be opposed if the website required the box to be unchecked in order not to receive emails. Mr. Tessier asked if there had been requests for Warren County to share email addresses and Ms. Johnson responded that she had received one request. Ms. Johnson advised that people whose email addresses were already in the database could be given the option to have local businesses send them emails by offering the option as part of an email blast.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Kenny and carried unanimously to table the discussion on sharing email addresses until further research was completed.

Ms. Johnson apprised that she had received a phone call on June 18, 2009 from a representative of The Today Show expressing interest in producing a live show promoting the area. She added that the senior producer had called on July 8, 2009 to say that they wanted to do a preliminary visit on July 9, 2009 if the Sagamore Resort had 25 rooms available for their visit in late July. She said that five representatives from The Today Show visited the area on July 9, 2009 and toured the Sagamore Resort. She added that she had received a phone call on July 10, 2009 stating that the Lake George Region had been selected as an on location site for the show. She advised that the prospect of The Today Show filming in Lake George had to be kept secret until NBC issued a press release stating that they would be broadcasting a show highlighting four vacation destinations. She added that she had received permission to inform the Board at the July 17, 2009 Board meeting. She noted that Warren County would see the results of The Today Show's visit for many years to come. She said that the NBC press release and nine segments from the July 27, 2009 Today Show were prominent on the Warren County Tourism website. She added that the fact that The Today Show had highlighted Lake George would be included in future print advertisements and at trade shows.

Mrs. Simmes noted the Sagamore Resort did a great job in preparing for the taping of The Today Show and she added that it had been a great advertisement for the area. Mr. Kenny thanked Ms. Johnson for all the effort she had put forth.

Peter Girard, Creative Director for the Tourism Department, said that there had been press releases on the website pertaining to The Today Show and they had sent out email blasts to 100,000 people. He stated that on Monday, July 27, 2009 the County computer system had been slow due to over 6,000 people trying to access the Warren County Tourism website. He advised that as The Today Show website posted the nine segments of the show, the Information Technology Department was posting them to the Warren County Tourism website.

Mr. Girard stated that an email blast had been sent out on July 8, 2009 which highlighted hiking, biking, climbing, camping and fishing. He added they had included a 'refer a friend' in

the email blast to help build the database. He apprised they had done a Canadian email blast that highlighted shopping for Canadian Friendship Week. He stated they had done an art email blast highlighting the Degas & Music exhibition and the LARAC (Lower Adirondack Regional Arts & Crafts) Festival. He noted that the Fall Brochure had gone out to the printer and added that they had gone with the 'Picturesque' theme. He continued by saying that they had started the fall advertising campaign. He said that they had developed a postcard that directed the recipient to the visitlakegeorge.com website. Ms. Johnson interjected that when the Department responded to regional leads, the Travel Guide was included in the material that was mailed out. She added that the Adirondack region received daily leads that were sent the post card to encourage them to visit the website where they could download the Travel Guide or request that one be sent to them. Mr. Girard advised that Warren County Tourism had a full page advertisement on the back cover of the New York State Winter Guide.

Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter for the Tourism Department, stated that she was working on the 2010 Group Tour Planner and added there were eight new advertisers this year. She said she would add new pages and redesign the cover. She continued by saying that a page would be added to include motorcoach friendly events and escort notes.

Ms. Brand apprised that she had hosted and assisted Ted Hugger, of Sawlex Expo Management, with site inspection of the Warren County Fairgrounds as a possible location for a logging expo. She noted that Saratoga and Washington County Fairgrounds were also under consideration. She advised that Jim McGlaughlin, owner and promoter for Mac Events, had completed site inspections at the Adirondack Sports Complex and the Glens Falls Civic Center, for a potential 2011 Home and Flower Show. She noted that both Sawlex Expo Management and Mac Events had been leads derived from the advertisement that was placed in *Expo Magazine* in May.

Ms. Brand stated that she had hosted a FAM (familiarization) tour for two group leaders from Boston Seniors who were looking at the Glens Falls and Lake George areas for a potential tour for their group. She said that Boston Seniors had won a FAM tour from a promotion that had run in *Bus Tours Magazine*. She said there was a postcard included in the August edition of *Group Tour Magazine* that encouraged people to go to the website to sign up for a FAM tour. She circulated a binder that she said was a great resource tool for group tour operators.

Ms. Brand advised that she had become a member of the I Love NY Group Tour Advisory Committee, which would allow her to advise and provide feedback for future involvement in group tour programs. She said that she had provided a hospitality exhibit and promotional materials for the New York State Realtors Association for their meeting at the Queensbury Hotel on July 9, 2009. Mr. Strainer thanked Ms. Brand for supplying the promotional material which had been distributed to Realtors from all over New York State and he commended her on her presentation.

Ms. Brand apprised that she had attended the ESSAE (Empire State Society of Association Executives) show in June, where the Warren County exhibitors had presented a unified theme with Adirondack style decorations and evergreen trees at each booth. She said she had also attended the Destinations of New York State's NYC Sales Exchange show, where she had met with domestic and international tour operators. She listed the upcoming shows and the advertisements which had been placed, a list of which is included in the agenda packet.

Ms. Johnson stated that there were no pending items to come before the Committee this month.

Luisa Craige-Sherman, Executive Director of the Warren County Council of Chambers, stated that the delegates of the Council would meet throughout the summer to prepare for their fall fundraiser in September. She added that two years ago they went on a cruise and last year they had gone to Natural Stone Bridge and Caves. She said that they were considering a picnic at the Warren County Fish Hatchery for this year's fall fundraiser, which would be held on September 10, 2009. She advised that the October meeting would be held at the Stony Creek Inn. She said that the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce would host the November and December meetings. She stated that the Warren County Council of Chambers and the Lake George Chamber of Commerce commended Ms. Johnson on the work she had accomplished with The Today Show. She advised that The Today Show broadcast would create a benchmark for comparison. She said that she had attended a meeting of The North Creek Business Alliance, which was a group of businesses that functioned as a main street program, and they had requested additional time when an advertisement solicitation came in. She stated that she was in favor of the sharing of email addresses, as the internet was a more visual medium and businesses preferred to utilize the internet as it was more cost effective.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. Kenny and seconded by Mr. Belden, Mr. Tessier adjourned the meeting at 10:26 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist