

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: TOURISM

DATE: JULY 31, 2016

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS MERLINO
DICKINSON
STROUGH
FRASIER
LEGGETT
SEEBER
MONTESI
MACDONALD
GERAGHTY
HYDE

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR VANSELOW

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

JOANNE CONLEY, DIRECTOR
PETER GIRARD, CREATIVE DIRECTOR
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER
RONALD F. CONOVER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, ACTING COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MARY ELIZABETH KISSANE, FIRST ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS SIMPSON

SOKOL

REPRESENTING THE LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & CVB:

MICHAEL CONSUELO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KRISTEN HANIFAN, SPECIAL EVENTS & CONVENTION SALES DIRECTOR
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
LESLIE LOVELACE, SECRETARY TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD
*SEE SIGN IN SHEET FOR OTHER MEETING ATTENDEES

Please note, the following contains a summarization of the July 31, 2017 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/2017/tourism/>

Mr. Merlino called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 10:33 a.m.

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

Copies of the Tourism agenda were distributed to the Committee members and a copy of same is on file with the meeting minutes.

Commencing the agenda review, Mr. Merlino spoke about the Smith Trend Reports and gave a presentation on the Tourism Budget. During his presentation, Mr. Merlino noted not all of the travel statistic information was being accurately reported in the Smith Trend Reports, and therefore they did not reflect the true State and occupancy tax for Warren County. He mentioned a recent e-mail he received from the Warren County Lodging Association, which he personally felt was insulting and embarrassing; *a copy of the presentation is on file with the minutes.*

Chairman Conover entered the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Joanne Conley, *Director of Tourism*, who commenced her agenda review with a Tourism update. She spoke about the tag line in commercials, "The Original Vacation is Calling!", which had been trademarked with the help of the County Attorney's office. She also spoke of e-mail blasts and promotions on Facebook. She noted the number of followers on

Facebook had increased over the last year. Peter Girard, *Creative Director*, added that prior to Ms. Conley taking over maintaining the Facebook page, the page had 11,000 and it had now grown 1,900%. He added that Facebook was one of the top four websites that US visitors were using. Ms. Conley mentioned an RFP (*Request for Proposal*) would be released in the future to obtain a contract to assist with Public Relations.

Ms. Conley informed the Tourism website had been launched on May 1st and she said the efforts were paying off. She mentioned their e-mail blasts only reached 10,000 readers but Facebook reached hundreds of thousands of readers. She added that Tanya Brand, *Group Tour Promoter*, had been working with The Wild Center, as well as Saratoga and Clinton Counties, for the "Go North" program which was based on the statistics reflecting that visitors from abroad tended to visit the area for an extended stay.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ms. Brand who spoke of workshops that she and Ms. Conley had attended; she noted during on of these workshops they had learned Norwegian Airlines was currently flying into Stewart International Airport in the Hudson Valley twice a week which would add to the influx of visitors. She added the addition of that airline would help lessen traffic at JFK Airport and Customs would be easier at Stewart International Airport, which would also appeal to International visitors.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Girard, who apprised the I Love New York program organizers had contacted the Tourism Department and inquired about the branding the County was using as it had made an impression on them. He said although the Tourism Department was not large, it was making great strides for the area.

Ms. Conley apprised an RFP had been sent out for a booking engine, but no responses were received. She explained the booking engine would have allowed for a book now option on the Tourism website but Mannix Marketing had informed her it would be hard to do, as a multi-million dollar investment would need to be made.

Next, Ms. Conley spoke about the proprietary nature of the Smith Trend Reports which allowed them to be shared with the Tourism Committee, but not with the Tourism Advisory Group or other members of the public. She advised the cost of the report was \$6,800 per year. A lengthy discussion over the report ensued which involved both the Committee and members of the public.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Kristen Hanifan, *Lake George Chamber of Commerce and CVB Special Events & Convention Sales Director*, who distributed copies of two handouts entitled June 2017 CVB Report and July 2017 CVB Report before proceeding to highlight each. *A copy of the reports are on file with the minutes.*

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mrs. Frasier and seconded by Mr. Montesi, Mr. Merlino adjourned the meeting at 12:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Lovelace, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board