

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**COMMITTEE: TOURISM**

**DATE: DECEMBER 2, 2009**

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

SUPERVISORS TESSIER  
BELDEN  
KENNY  
MERLINO  
SIMMES  
STRAINER

**COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:**

SUPERVISOR SHEEHAN

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

REPRESENTING THE TOURISM DEPARTMENT:

KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR  
PETER GIRARD, CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
TANYA BRAND, GROUP TOUR PROMOTER  
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK  
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN  
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD  
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER

SUPERVISORS

BENTLEY  
CHAMPAGNE  
PITKIN  
TAYLOR

LEN FOSBROOK, WARREN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

ALICE GREYER, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM, CITY OF GLENS FALLS

LUISA CRAIG-SHERMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WARREN COUNTY COUNCIL OF CHAMBERS

JANICE FOX, LAKE GEORGE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MICHAEL CONSUELO, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR

FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY

MICHAEL HOFFMAN, THE HOLIDAY INN

KEVIN SPILLMAN, THE HOLIDAY INN

JASON SHERRY, ADIRONDACK PROMOTIONS, LLC

TOM RANDALL, *THE ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*

DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*

CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

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Mr. Tessier called the meeting of the Tourism Committee to order at 11:08 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Strainer, seconded by Mr. Belden 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 presented five resolution requests, as follows:

1. Requesting authorization for attendance at 2010 in-state and out-of-state consumer shows by Tourism Department personnel and County Supervisors;
2. Requesting authorization for attendance at 2010 in-state, out-of-state and Canadian Motorcoach trade shows, sales blitz and marketplaces by Tourism Department personnel and County Supervisors;

3. Requesting authorization for agreements with various companies and agencies for 2010 brochure distribution;
4. Requesting authorization for the Director of Tourism to utilize models for photography and video in 2010 with a fifty dollar stipend to each model for services; and
5. Requesting to extend the existing contract for 2010 with Smith Travel Research, Inc. to provide hotel occupancy and rate data to Warren County.

Motion was made by Mr. Kenny, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve all five requests, as outlined above. *Copies of the resolution request forms are on file with the minutes and the necessary resolutions were authorized for the December 18, 2009 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson apprised that there was a referral from the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee requesting an agreement with McGillivray Consulting Group to provide consulting services with regard to the suitability for use of the Gaslight Village property as a performance venue. She advised that the County Attorney's Office would determine if the funds could be allocated from Special Event Funding and if not the source of funding would be from Tourism Promotion.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to authorize an agreement with McGillivray Consulting Group to provide consulting services with regard to the suitability for use of the Gaslight Village property as a performance venue, commencing December 10, 2009 and terminating December 31, 2009, for a total amount not to exceed \$3,000. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the December 18, 2009 Board meeting.*

Ms. Johnson noted that the 2009 Summer Conversion Survey had been completed and the results were included in the agenda packet. She advised that the surveys were completed twice a year and of the 5,913 people who downloaded the Summer Savings Coupons, 541 had participated in the 2009 Summer Conversion Survey. She said that of the 541 who completed the survey, 507 had visited the area, making the conversion rate 93.72%. She apprised that the results of the survey were outstanding and she reviewed the survey results for the Committee. She noted that 100% of those surveyed said they would visit in the future.

Ms. Johnson advised that they had discussed the sharing of email addresses in the past and had developed the concept of selling advertising space on the email blasts. She added that it would be a new program starting in 2010 and there would be three advertising spaces per blast. She noted that there were 18 theme blasts scheduled for 2010. She apprised that twenty participants had signed up for the email blast advertising program. She said that the cost to participate was \$1,200 and she anticipated approximately \$24,000 in revenue.

Ms. Johnson apprised that at the request of the Marketing Manager at the Holiday Inn in the Town of Lake George, the Tourism Department had implemented a Mid-Week Filler Up Program for the past two summers. She added that it had been suggested that they try a Winter Mid-Week Filler Up Program. She explained that seven properties were participating in the Winter Mid-Week Filler Up Program. She advised that the Program was on the current website and there would be an email blast related to the Program. She added that the Winter Mid-Week

Filler Up Program ran from December 1, 2009 through March 31, 2010.

Ms. Johnson stated that they had completed two email blasts; one for Winter Events and one for a Winter Getaway. For the Winter Event email blast, she explained, they had highlighted the Holiday in the Park event at Six Flags Great Escape; the Snocross event at Hickory Hill Ski Center; Adirondack Phantoms Hockey; the Lumber Jack Log Jam at Gore Mountain; the Nordica Big Air Contest at West Mountain Ski Resort; and the Frostbite Cruise and Polar Plunge Swim held in the Town of Lake George. She stated that the Winter Getaways email blast was for a contest to win one of three winter getaway packages offered by the Holiday Inn, the Queensbury Hotel and Gore Mountain Ski Resort. She added that the winner of the contest would be chosen on January 31, 2010.

Ms. Johnson said that the Quarterly Newsletter had gone out to 735 area businesses. She advised that the application for the Matching Funds Grant and the marketing plan had been submitted; copies of which are on file with the minutes. She stated that they were anticipating approximately \$85,444 in matching funds. She noted that it was \$500 more than was received the previous year.

Chairman Monroe entered the meeting at 11:20 a.m.

Ms. Johnson stated that she had included a chart on Lodging Properties in Warren County in the agenda packet. She added that the chart showed the number of properties by Town, including how many properties were year round and the number of rooms available per Town both year round and in the summer season. She advised that correspondence from Richard Willmen, President of Colonel Williams Resort, Inc. and Michael Hoffman, of the Holiday Inn, had been included in the agenda packet.

Tanya Brand, Group Tour Promoter, apprised that the Group Tour Planner had been delivered and the cover had been redesigned. She added that there were some new advertisers in the Group Tour Planner and a few that had not advertised in a few years. She listed some of the advertisers, as follows: The Sagamore Resort; Shoreline Cruises; The Alpine Lodge; and The Flamingo Resort. She said that a couple of new itineraries had been included, including one entitled, 'A day just like Rachel Rae'.

Ms. Brand stated that Velo Quebec, a bicycling organization, had chosen the Lake George area as their departure site for their 2010 Le Grand Tour to be held in August 2010. She said that more than 2,000 tourists would be bussed into the area from Southern Montreal with tractor trailers following that would contain their bikes, equipment and luggage. She explained that approximately 250 hotel rooms would be needed for staff and participants and noted that the Fort William Henry Resort had offered 120 hotel rooms at a reasonable rate. She apprised that the tour would depart the Lake George area and travel to Ticonderoga and Plattsburgh before ending in Montreal. She explained that she was awaiting a response from Adirondack Community College (ACC) to use their campus as a departure point, registration area, camp site, and headquarters for showers, restroom facilities, emergency shelter and some meals. She added that if ACC was unavailable Velo Quebec would consider the Adirondack Sports Complex as a second choice. Ms. Brand thanked Janet Kennedy, Director of Lakes to Locks Passage, for implementing the Quebec/New York Tourism Initiative. Mr. Strainer asked what day of the week the 2010 Le Grand Tour would be held and Ms. Brand responded that it would

be a Saturday in August 2010.

Peter Girard, Creative Director of the Tourism Department, said that he had been working on converting the website from fall to winter. He displayed the website for the Committee members and played the thirty second and one minute winter television commercials. He noted that Hickory Hill Ski Center had been added to the skiing page of the website. He stated that both of the winter television commercials utilized new footage that had been acquired within the last year. He advised that as soon as there was snow they would get photos and video of Hickory Hill Ski Center. He explained that Len Fosbrook, President of the Warren County Economic Development Corporation, the Lake George Chamber of Commerce and the owners of the three mountains (West Mountain Ski Resort, Gore Mountain Ski Resort and Hickory Hill Ski Center) had worked with the Warren County Tourism Department to develop a three mountain initiative. He added that the goal of the initiative was to increase winter tourism and to market Warren County as a skiing destination. Mr. Girard displayed posters which had been produced to advertise the three mountains for the Committee members.

Ms. Johnson stated that there were no pending items for the Tourism Committee.

Luisa Craige-Sherman, Executive Director of the Warren County Council of Chambers, apprised that the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce would be hosting the Council of Chambers monthly dinner that evening at the Fort William Henry Resort in the Town of Lake George. She added there would be a comedian for live entertainment. She advised that the Council of Chambers was in the process of planning for another educational program for Spring 2010. She said that the results for the End of Season Survey would be available to share at the next Committee meeting.

Michael Hoffman, of The Holiday Inn, thanked Ms. Johnson for the work completed by the Tourism Department. He stated that from a hotelier's point of view, business was declining. He added that he felt the worst was yet to come and an additional 2.5% decline in business was expected for 2010. He suggested that hoteliers and restaurateurs needed to have some input into the tourism promotion process. He advised that they had held one meeting with hoteliers and Warren County Tourism but they had never met again. He voiced his opinion that regular meetings should be held at least every six weeks to develop new ideas to increase tourism.

Mr. Tessier thanked Mrs. Simmes and Mr. Sheehan for all of the time that they had expended working on the Tourism Committee.

In honor of Mr. Tessier's retirement and his last Tourism Committee meeting, Ms. Johnson presented him with a cake.

As there was no further business to come before the Tourism Committee, on motion made by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. Strainer, Mr. Tessier adjourned the meeting at 11:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist