

SULLIVAN COUNTY VISITORS ASSOCIATION MINUTES
100 Sullivan Ave., Ferndale, NY, September 25, 2012

Present: Roberta Byron-Lockwood, Herb Clark, Phyllis Andrews, Paul Carlucci, Norman Duttweiler, Rick Lander, Richard Glisson, Elaine Giguere, Jeanne Tulp, Elaine Fettig, Steve Vegliante, Sonja Hedlund, Anne Hart

Absent: Darlene Fedun, Stacy Cohen, Winston Clark, Alan Rosenblatt

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m.

Minutes: The minutes from August 2012 meeting were emailed and attached. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Duttweiler and seconded by Fettig. Approved.

Financial Report: The financial report was attached. A motion to accept the financial report was made by Fettig and seconded by Lander. Approved.

Audit: The audit was distributed to Board members at the August Board meeting. A motion to accept the Audit was made by Duttweiler and seconded by Fettig. Approved

Membership: The membership report was attached. A motion to accept the new members was made by Lander and seconded by Glisson. Approved.

ACTION ITEMS

Strategic Plan/RFP Discussion – An outline highlighting last week’s Strategic Planning meeting was emailed to all Board members. A request was made for Board members to send back their biographies as they are needed for the RFP. We have been separating out the different components of the RFP and have also been seeking out costs and opportunities on some of them. Hedlund pointed out that it is important to answer all the questions put forth in the RFP and to answer them as concisely as possible. We need to show change over time, show new directions and partnerships. Also include all the filming that we had a hand in bringing into the county.

Videos and stills are being prepared for the website.

Deliverables:

Branding – the I Love NY and Catskills tags are still a strong lure. We were looking for 1 or 2 things that set us apart from the rest of the state (ex: Woodstock & the Delaware River/outdoors). Tagline: Inspiring Generations or Traveling Through Generations. Example: small B&W pictures of old (Woodstock, Villa Roma, Forestburgh Playhouse, etc.) progress pictures to larger full color of what each entity is like now. Incorporate fishing, farming/farm markets, small businesses that make up who we are. Sell our diversity (“pockets of greatness”). “The past informs the future”. We should try to get in touch with Arnold Skolnick, the artist who created the 1969 Woodstock poster, to see if he would design a picture indicative of our past (guitar, etc) to be used as a branding tool (travel guide cover, ads, etc.).

We need to bring the different sectors (art & heritage, culinary, eco-tourism, county chambers) onto the Board and get them more involved in what we do and make us more aware of what they do. This will grow the county's tourism product.

There will be a posting area on our website for members, chambers, etc. to post their upcoming events, activities, meetings. It is hoped that it will become a tool for everyone to use in planning their own upcoming events so as to either "piggy-back"/package with another event or to avoid conflicting with an event.

We need to grow our shoulder seasons. One way we are looking to do this is through building upon an existing event. We intend to start with the coming spring season with the Foodstock which is held at the Villa Roma. We need to find ways to stretch it out by creating/urging/assisting with other related events within a reasonable distance. This is something that we would grow each year to eventually become a county wide food festival weekend/week. We are also looking into partnering with the DVAA's Big Eddy Film Festival in the fall and growing it each year. Discussion suggestions included having a different theme each year (comedy, drama, etc) or bringing in different elements (culinary, fishing, etc.). We have a lot of celebrities in the county that perhaps could lend their backing/expertise. Giguere pointed out that the Festival is lots of work, and we would need to find ways of funding it as well.

Hedlund suggested we consider doing a renewable energy event. Perhaps a set date for a bus tour of "green" sites within the county.

Office - We will be installing wifi access in our brochure room. Vegliante pointed out that the Legislature is very interested in our office & visitor's center being in the vicinity of Exit 104/Rte. 17B area and opened/staffed on weekends. Byron-Lockwood stated that we are currently paying under \$1500/month for rent which is inclusive of all utilities, etc. We would need to remain within those constraints. Vegliante will assist in the search for new quarters. He said that the former Brookside Homes has 2 mobile/modular offices available. In the meantime, we need more DOT signage for our current location.

Travel Guide – As the Legislature has expressed an interest in taking the travel guide in a new direction, the 2013 guide will be a 16-page lure piece. The guide as well as all advertising will direct people to our website which will contain (as it does now) all the necessary tourism business information. We are also intending to do a separate map.

Website – We are in the process of creating a "mobile" website and an app for smart phones & tablets. The cost will be approximately 1/3 of what our current site cost us.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m. with a motion by Duttweiler and a second by Lander. Approved.

Next Meeting – Tuesday, October 23, 2012 at 9 a.m. in our conference room.