



BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

April 7, 2015
411 Main St. Catskill, NY
10:30 a.m. - 12:00 a.m.

Committee Attendance – Jeff Friedman, Greene County Chamber of Commerce; Kay Stamer, Greene County Council on the Arts; Lisa Jaeger, Windham Chamber of Commerce; Ted Banta, Columbia-Greene Board of Realtors; Liz Kirkhus, Lovely.

Staff –Warren Hart, Teri Weiss, Karl Heck, Frank Alguire

Others in Attendance - Kathleen McQuaid, KathodeRay Media Inc.

Kathleen opened the meeting with the March advertising report. We have seen a dramatic increase in the number of likes and shares to our Facebook page, due to our advertising efforts. “Our posts are attracting new organic views, and a good mix of business owners and consumer page likes”. We have an array of fans that we’re attracting, not just locally, but we’re seeing a large increase of people from the NYC area and the Hudson Valley viewing our pages. Additionally, a majority of our pages are viewed by women.

Our website has also seen a huge increase in traffic due to our advertising campaign as well. A considerable amount of those increases were organically driven. From March of 2014 to March of 2015 we have seen a 218% increase! Our website page views have also increased over 200%.

Jeff asked the question “are we seeing a correlation between the success stories that we post on the website versus the page searches that people are looking at”? Kathleen supported that by identifying the article placed around St. Patrick’s Day, and the number of clicks that the retail store Guaranteed Irish received around that same period.

Kathleen next reviewed the March Search Engine Optimization report with everyone. Once again in this report we saw a significant increase in visitor traffic, especially the display ads, direct traffic, and organic traffic was at an all time high. KathodeRay Media monitors this website daily and reviews all the analytical data, and one of the items she noticed with visitors to the site, was a higher than average bounce rate, and while people were viewing the site, we weren’t keeping them at the site very long. In order to combat this issue Kathleen suggested

adding an “E-book” link to our pages. This E-book allows us to create “a book” of pertinent information such as, information to start a new business, into this one link. Having readily available information right on the site, entices the visitor to research a bit further and engages them deeper into the site. “It’s also good added attraction strategy, and allows us to capture additional emails for our database”, said Kathleen.

Ted felt that the E-Book was a great idea and would be very successful and would possibly engage people to actually call for more information. Kathleen said that the first E-book will be very general, and further on down the road, when we determine what each region specifically identifies as their business goals, we’ll create them to suit each goal.

Kathleen talked about some additions to our marketing campaign. We will now be producing two E-blast newsletters once a month. One will focus on the consumer and the other for the business owner. “Each month we will feature a business or two, announce new business openings or expansions and promote our coupon specials and discounts offers”, said Kathleen.

Warren mentioned that these E-blast newsletters will also enhance our local marketing efforts and we’ll additionally feature our best success stories, but in order to create these we need each BAC representative to forward any current business openings, relocations or expansions to us and we’ll produce content for the e-newsblast.

Kathleen then reviewed the Facebook posts, and encouraged everyone to forward her stories that would be good to post, and she will get them into the schedule.

Warren next tasked the BAC members with an assignment; he asked them to review their towns within their regions and to think about what each town’s business/investor goals would be. This will help guide our advertising efforts towards certain sectors; we need each town to help identify the unique opportunities each provides for investors. For example, Catskill could be considered to have a “cool cluster” of retail shops with historic waterfront spaces. For every negative we need to turn that into a positive opportunity. Every month we’ll have a quick update regarding new businesses and opportunities which will help steer the direction for our advertising. Another example is Tannersville; the town reviewed their inventory of shops along the main street corridor, and decided on a specific sector of business to focus their advertising efforts on, and determined that a pharmacy would be a good fit for the community, and successfully with the help of Greene County one will be opening up very soon.

Teri spoke about the collateral distribution, and at the last meeting packets were given to everyone for distribution to their designated business regions. Everyone said that distribution was going very well, and the feedback that they are receiving has been very positive. She also advised them to let her know if they need help with distribution to businesses, and she’ll gladly assist them.



Lisa Jaeger from the Windham Chamber, said that the response she has been getting is very good, businesses are very cooperative in accepting the collateral and displaying it. “The business community is very excited that the County is supporting this program and that they see the need and the significance of the project”. She has been distributing her collateral at all of her chamber meeting, this is proven to be a great strategy and she feels that it’s visually starting to connect.

Ted Banta from Premier Realty, our representative for the Cairo area, said that the program has been well received. He has been speaking about it at all the town board meetings and distributing the collateral at those also. Ted would like to see more involvement from Cairo businesses.

Jeff will be hosting the Greene County Chamber of Commerce Business after Hours event at the National Bank of Coxsackie in Cairo in May, at which time Teri be attending on behalf of Buy and Invest in Greene, talking about the program and handing out the collateral. Teri has also been attending most of the Chamber After Hours events with Jeff and speaking about the program and distributing collateral. She’s attended events in Coxsackie at the Downtown Bistro, the Catskill Community Center, the Catskill Public Library, and will be at the Women in Business event in a couple of weeks and at the National Bank of Coxsackie in May. Teri has received very positive feedback from attendees of all of the events she’s attended. Teri, Warren, Karl, and Jeff will be attending the Durham Chamber meeting on April 14th and speaking about the campaign, main street revitalization and tourism activities.

Liz Kirkhus spoke about upcoming items and changes that will be taking place in and around Catskill. The Catskill Area Business Owners Group will be hosting a local merchant meeting on April 9th at which time they’ll be previewing the new website. She also spoke about the new shuttle system that will be picking up from the Amtrak station in Hudson, coming to the Thomas Cole House, then dropping people off at the Community Center on Main St. in Catskill, and then going to Olana in Columbia County and back to the train station. Currently they plan on running this shuttle from May until October on Saturdays and hopefully extending it to Sundays too. This will help increase visitors to our Main Street and our local businesses. In addition, the Community Center will also be hosting a local farmers market within the center on Sundays starting in May.

Lisa Jaeger mentioned that distribution of the collateral has been going great and well received in the Windham area too. She also talked about the Windham Shuttle and how successful it is,

and it has helped alleviate the parking issues on Main St. in Windham. She explained that it was a collaborative effort between the Windham Chamber, Windham Mountain and Majestic Mountain Taxi. Signage, a map and schedules were also created to help advertise the shuttle. Additionally, Lisa mentioned that the local businesses, approximately thirty-five of them contributed \$100 each, which helped pay for the driver and gas of the shuttle. There was a minimal ridership fee of Three to Five dollars collected depending on one-way or round trip service. This year the Chamber is hoping to receive some grant funding to offset the costs of the shuttle.

Teri asked everyone their opinion for regularly schedule meetings or organically scheduled, and the consensus was to schedule one approximately every six weeks. She will set up the schedule and send it via email to everyone.

The meeting ended at 12:10