



Greene County Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

**Date: Tuesday September 22, 2015 - 9:30 a.m.
Bronck House Museum**

Attendance:

Committee Members Attending –Carol Schreiber, Baumann's Brookside; Suzanne Oldakowski, Bavarian Manor County Inn; Brian Christman, Christman's Windham House; Brook McGahan, Assistant Marketing Manager, Windham Mountain Resort; Jesse Tolz, Communication Manager, Windham Mountain Resort

Legislators in Attendance –Joe Kozloski; Gene Hatton

Staff –Warren Hart, Heather Bagshaw, Teri Weiss

Adworkshop Representatives – Kelly Frady, Rebecca Steffan, Shelly Cihan

Others in Attendance –Robert Hallock, President of Greene County Historical Society

Heather Bagshaw thanked everyone for attending the meeting which was held at the Historical Bronck Museum. Heather introduced Bob Hallock, President of the Greene County Historical Society. Bob welcomed and thanked everyone for coming to the Bronck Museum. He spoke about the history of the site and primarily about the model of the Mountain House Hotel that is on display within the museum. The Historical Society is currently making every effort to move the Mountain House model to the Mountain Top Historical Society on NYS Route 23A. They feel it will help increase tourism to the Mountain Top Historical Society facilities and also spur additional visitation to the original site of the hotel. Tourists are now able to hike from the Mountain Top Historical society to North South Lake via the Kaaterskill Rail Trail and with the State's construction of the new bridge there will also be direct access to the escarpment trail.

Warren inquired about the restoration of the model. Bob informed him that it's in need of shutters, doors, gutters, and other items. They're currently getting an estimate on the work that the model is in need of and the cost to move it to its new home. For transportation purposes the model was built in sections, which causes the least amount of damage. Additionally, the Mountain Top Historical Society building will have to be renovated to house the model. The Historical Society is raising funds to help offset these costs.

Suzanne posed the question on the estimated cost of building renovations and moving of the model. It's estimated that the model will cost \$10,000 and the renovations to the MHS building at \$100,000.

Bob also gave a brief history on the oldest house in NYS, built in 1663, and is currently undergoing restoration on the north wall.

Warren had mentioned that he and Heather had met with Bob recently to discuss economic development opportunities, tourism funding, and grant funding through the CFA Regional Economic Development Councils. This project is a perfect fit with the Kaaterskill Clove Experience.

Kelly Frady from Adworkshop introduced herself, Shelly, and Rebecca and gave a brief history of the work that they have done as the County's agency of record. She then presented the Bi-Annual Marketing Report. She explained the objective, the audience, the target market and campaigns, and encouraged everyone to ask questions, as she was going through the lengthy report.

Kelly mentioned spamming issues, but had Shelly report on that, since that field is her expertise. Shelly mentioned that illegitimate spammers are attempting to enter the system, they have become harder to read, so additional filters have been put in place and the agency continues to research these daily, "digital is constantly influx". This isn't unique to Greene County but requires additional attention on our account.

Warren added that Heather and Kelly work very closely together on a weekly basis, and just recently her and Warren attended a day long strategy session to plan for the 2016 marketing year. Overall we've had a great year, sessions have been up over 42%, and additionally organic traffic, direct traffic, referral traffic and the number of users have all had substantial increases and our bounce rate has dropped. Warren added that we've seen double digit increases every year since working with Adworkshop and rebranding our County. E-newsletter signups are also up 41% and we have over ten thousand emails in our date base.

Kelly mentioned that the Kaaterskill Clove Experience is currently the top performing campaign, but Warren added, that we'll most likely see a decrease in that next year, due to the fact that this year they received a grant in the amount of One Hundred and Fifty Thousand to spend on paid advertising to market that campaign. He added that we'll continue to work on more organic marketing efforts for the Clove in the upcoming year. Heather added that this year they adjusted the Arts and Culture advertising due to the increased amount of funding that was spent on Kaaterskill Clove marketing.

Shelly explained organic traffic sources, showing the top three search engines being Google, Bing and Yahoo, which has seen over an 80% increase. We are consistently being found organically in addition to paid advertising.

Heather added that all of our marketing efforts are downloaded to the drop box on the website, from which any tourism partner can access.

Rebecca Steffan gave a presentation on the Biannual PR Report, stating that she had 39 ongoing conversations with media regarding media visits, future story ideas and opportunities for content development. In addition she sent 76 personalized media pitches to writers, who would be an excellent fit for our region. She stated “this year we decided to focus on one-to-one outreach more than past years in order to personalize messages not only writer’s niche and beat, but to establish and build relationships too”.

Heather updated everyone on the craft beverage campaign, the new beverage web page, and photography. She announced that a couple of new wine tasting rooms or wine bars have recently opened up within the county.

Warren also mentioned that the department partnered with the Greene County Chamber of Commerce on the submission of a craft beverage grant application, leveraging the County’s advertising and marketing investment in this sector. “We asked for One Hundred Thousand” to form a NYS designated wine and craft beverage trail within the County along with paid advertising and digital marketing.

Heather talked about the new motorcycle brochure that was recently published, and this year they partnered with JIMAPCO for the base map and Adworkshop did the creative for it. This was just in time for several upcoming motorcycle events taking place within the County. Additionally, we have ride sheets and downloadable maps available on our website. We also produced a great motorcycle video on YouTube showcasing the Great Northern Catskills.

In response to a question from Carol Schreiber, Kelly briefly talked about some of the television and broadcast advertising that we do throughout the year and plan to continue in 2016.

Heather thanked everyone for attending and encouraged everyone to take a tour of the Bronck House and the property.

The next meeting will be October 27, 2015 at the Fairlawn Inn in Hunter NY.