



Greene County Tourism Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Tuesday January 26, 2016

9:30 a.m.

Office of Economic Development, Tourism & Planning

Attendance:

Committee Members Attending - Courtney Reinhard, Baumann's Brookside; Russ Coloton, Hunter Mountain; Brian Christman, Christman's Windham House; Tinker Nichol森-Pachter, Sunny Hill Resort; Chuck Tomajko, Fairlawn Inn; Lenore Whitcomb, Winter Clove Inn; Suzanne Oldakowski, Bavarian Manor Inn; Beth Stewart, Windham Mountain Resort; Betsy Jacks, Thomas Cole House.

Legislators in Attendance - Kevin Lewis, Chairman; Legislators Linda Overbaugh, Gene Hatton, Aiden O'Connor.

Staff - Warren Hart, Heather Bagshaw, Nancy Petramale, Teri Weiss, Karl Heck.

Warren welcomed everyone to the first TAC meeting of the year and thanked them for attending. He also asked everyone to introduce themselves, since we have a couple new members on the board.

Heather followed the introduction with summarizing the Kaaterskill Clove Experience (KCE) marketing report. She explained the significance of purchasing AdWords, which is meant to reach people who have already shown a specific interest with their search queries. She talked about the top performing display ads, which we have multiple versions of, but the two were the Historical Cultural and Artistic Trail, and the Highest Cascading Waterfall, "We had an extremely high click through rate (CTR) with a relative low cost per click." Between the two ads, there were close to 1.5 million impressions generated.

Heather reviewed the top performing search ads, and explained that the ads drive visitors to a specific page. We found using the key word 'map' still resulted in higher CTR's, proving that people still like to view directional maps as a guide.

She also explained that during 2016 we'll continue marketing the KCE as one of our many attractions, versus in 2015 where it had its own marketing campaign funded through the CFA grant funding.

She then spoke about the website's landing pages, and the goal to drive traffic to the itineraries page. This created over twenty-five hundred PDF downloads, along with establishing a good engagement with other sections of the site.

Heather talked about our social media Facebook campaign that was additionally created to drive visits to the KCE website, she featured six of the most popular ads that were created and reviewed their performance.

Chuck Tomajko asked a question pertaining to the cost of the campaign, and Heather explained that approximately twenty-one thousand was allocated for the total display and fifty-five thousand towards international marketing.

Courtney Reinhard asked a question about our target market and regional market, in which Warren explained how we purchase through the Trade Desk, it's the most cost effective way of buying media, it allows us to purchase at a wholesale rate.

Warren went on to explain a new marketing technique being recommended by Adworkshop, called Geo-Fencing, which is a more direct means of targeting a specific marketing area. An example would be, once you get off the train in Hudson, and log onto your phone, you'll see our regional ads pop up immediately. Heather added, "We need to always be ahead of our game and the millennials of today, which is a rapidly growing generation of travelers".

Heather reviewed the digital media performance that was almost three times the industry standard. It included display advertising that targeted the Metro NY area, along with Connecticut and the Mid-Hudson Valley. We also did online banner ads with Hudson Valley Magazine and international display advertising, specifically in Great Britain. She also mentioned that our pre-roll video's received a good click through rate, 220% above industry standards!

Overall the KCE website saw a large increase in traffic throughout the duration of the campaign, with total unique page views over fifty-five thousand. Some of the top visits were from NYC, Washington DC, and London. The KCE campaign represented 8.27% of the overall visits to the Great Northern Catskills of Greene County website for this period.

Warren talked about the completion of the new Laurel House Lane, DEC parking lot, walkway and viewing platform that overlooks the Kaaterskill Falls. Stating that, it's handicap accessible, and has already started to draw large numbers of visitors to the site. This spring and summer the State will continue their work on the staircase that starts from the bottom portion of the

falls and install the bridge over the Spruce Creek. They'll continue to address safety issues at the falls in partnership with the trail organizations and the county.

Heather said, this year we will create a new hiking guide, farm stand and country store guide. All can be printed from our website, but are also available at the tourism information office.

Open discussion ensued with ideas on salvaging our winter season with the lack of snow. Heather mentioned that we are working with Adworkshop on, skiing and off mountain experience advertising to attract the winter tourist to our area regardless of not having any snow.

Warren talked about the Catskill Challenge, explaining the Governor's program, the county's partnership with CATS, and the meetings that CATS is having with the DEC and the Governor's Office on the activities that will be part of the event.

Warren also announced that the County is preparing to do a second homeowners economic impact analysis, noting the large number of second homes in the county and the importance of their spending. Roughly a third of the households in Greene County are owned by second home owners, and while the mountaintop has the highest concentration of second homes, every town in the county has at least 25%. The county has contracted with Kathoderay Media for the creation of a bulk mailer card, which will be mailed to roughly 8000 second homes and directing home owners to a landing page to fill out an electronic survey. Prizes have been donated by the county's hospitality businesses as an incentive. Camion Associates will work with the county to analyze the data and prepare the report.

Karl updated everyone on the Catskills Beverage Trail. Karl is currently working with the newly formed Catskill Beverage Trail organization to assist with the submission of the application for a NY State Trail designation. Karl and Heather are also working with the CBT on the submission of a grant for advertising marketing assistance.

A quick review of the yearly agenda wrapped up the meeting with an agreement of topics, like group discussions with lodging, attractions, etc.

The next TAC meeting will be February 23, 2016 at the Club in Windham.