

Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, New York
Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday, November 16, 2011 8:00 a.m.
Finger Lakes Gallery and Frame, Canandaigua

PRESENT

Lois Kozlowski	Carl Carlson
Dick Maltman	Dan Fuller
Frank Riccio	Bob Bennett
Jessica Bacher	Suzanne Farley
Lisa Fitzgerald	Mike Roeder

EXCUSED

John Brahm
Alexa Gifford
Russ Kenyon
Mike Kauffman
Mary Luckern

STAFF

Valerie Knoblauch
Sue Schmidt
AJ Shear
Rebecca Donovan

EX-OFFICIO

Alison Grems, Canandaigua Chamber
Spike Herzig, Geneva Chamber

WELCOME – President, Mike Roeder called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Valerie Knoblauch informed the board that Alexa Gifford was recovering from surgery, and would be missing a couple of meetings. The board wished Alexa a speedy recovery.

Mike Roeder invited Lois Kozlowski to report on her recent travels. Lois gave a brief synopsis on her “-stan tour” of five eastern European countries, and offered to share the 500 photos from her trip with anyone interested. In particular, she commented on border crossing and security and “hospitality”, as well as currency issues. She told of the level of craftsmanship of products, being unimpressed with the pottery but extremely impressed with the fabrics.

Aimee Ward welcomed everyone to Finger Lakes Gallery and Frame, and gave a brief history of her business. At Valerie’s urging, Aimee also told the board about some of the other “hats” she wears, including president of the Downtown Merchants Association, the Ontario County Arts Council, and Executive Director of the Canandaigua Lake Music Festival. Aimee told the board about plans for a Plein Air Festival in June 2012.

Valerie gave an update on Tioga County, sharing Stella Reschke’s thanks to the board for the donation of \$1000, as well as help from FLVC staff with painting, and a delivery of donated items including the copier.

CORRESPONDENCE NOTEBOOK – Rebecca Donovan passed the Correspondence Notebook. Items of note include the notice of arbitration award resulting from the lawsuit with Atomic Design, letters of support for the Canandaigua Water Trail and the Canandaigua Lake Redevelopment Project – both who submitted the Consolidated Funding Application for the state, and a letter of thanks to AJ for his presentation on green tourism to Finger Lakes Institute.

Dan Fuller gave an update on the renovations at Bristol Mountain, now in Phase I. Rocket Lodge is being expanded from 19,000 to 48,000 square feet, and this phase is expected to be completed by December 1.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS – Bob Bennett moved to **approve the Minutes of the October 19, 2011 Board of Directors Annual Meeting**. Lisa Fitzgerald seconded and the motion was passed unanimously. Bob Bennett moved to **approve the Minutes of the October 19, 2011 Board of Directors Regular Meeting**. Lisa Fitzgerald seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

Valerie Knoblauch presented the financial reports, noting that we are about \$8,000 under budget which will be spent in November on the new server upgrade. Dan Fuller moved to **accept the October financial reports**. Jessica Bacher seconded and the motion was passed unanimously.

Valerie gave an update on the audit of the fiscal year ending September 30, 2011. The auditors spent two days in our office. Deb Lemke, of Fredericksen & Sirianni, will report to the board at the December board meeting, and the Audit Committee will review the audit prior to that. All steps will be taken to enter materials into PARIS when approved by the board.

Valerie reported that we received our notice of award for 2012 matching funds from I Love New York, but stresses that this is no guarantee. Our matching funds grant, which was \$56,410 in 2011, was reduced to approximately \$42,000 for 2012. Valerie re-posted the Budget to Zoho, updated with the actual number from the County (\$814,932) for our 2012 contract. Valerie followed up with the County Treasurer and the Finance Department; both agreed on a cutoff date of September 25th for tax collections, which will give us consistency from year to year moving forward. Valerie noted that there are no matching funds budgeted, and the court settlement from Atomic Design is budgeted in uncategorized income.

CHAMBER REPORTS – Alison Grems welcomed the board to Canandaigua. Alison reported that the Chamber did 5 ribbon cuttings at an event called The Block That Rocks, celebrating all storefronts occupied. The City has budgeted \$100,000 for the streetscape project, and is working on a grant proposal for \$1.2 million. The Canandaigua Chamber has outsourced health insurance, allowing them to focus more on chamber activities.

Spike Herzig reported that the Geneva Leadership Program is entering its 10th year, and is now re-named the Finger Lakes Leadership Program. The Canandaigua and Victor chambers have been invited to participate, and there is a tourism segment. Geneva has a new mayor, Ron Alcock. Spike reported that there is money in the City budget for tourism economic development. Jessica Bacher added that 40 downtown businesses are planning a special open house for December 2nd.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM – Valerie reported that a Request for Proposal for the research project was sent to 4 companies, and we have received two bids. Zeitgeist Consulting submitted a proposal at a price of \$86,000 and Young Strategies submitted a proposal at a price of \$38,500. Valerie reviewed the proposals with Board member, Alexa Gifford, who had used both consultants in the past. Upon review of the specifics of the proposals and discussions, Valerie recommends that we award the bid to Young Strategies. Lois Kozlowski made a motion to **authorize Valerie Knoblauch to award the \$38,500 contract for research to Young Strategies**. Bob Bennett seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Bob suggested that final payment of the contract be subject to the acceptance of a final report. In response to a question from the board, Valerie explained that the research will be used as a basis for our Top Product List and Strategic Plan, to define our consumer profile, and to communicate statistics requested by the media. Dan Fuller asked if there is a plan for annual updates of the data. Valerie indicated that she will inquire about that in the structure of the program.

COMMITTEE REPORTS – Lisa Fitzgerald reported for the Nominating Committee, recommending the appointment of David Hutchings, Executive Director of Sonnenberg Gardens, to fill the expired term of Chris Iversen - September 30, 2014. Dan Fuller moved to **accept the recommendation of the Nominating Committee** to appoint David Hutchings to a term which expires September 30, 2014. Carl Carlson seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. Valerie noted that there is still one vacancy on the board, and she requested input from the board to the nominating committee on a potential candidate. The nominating committee will be reviewing and deciding if they would like to fill the final slot or keep the vacancy.

MARKETING REPORT – Valerie reported that we received a call from Chef Noah Sheetz at the Governor's Mansion with a request for Finger Lakes food products for Chef Noah's reception for 120 Assembly members at the Governor's Mansion.

Valerie reminded the board that our current marketing partnership lasts through June of 2012, and that it's important to communicate next year's plan to the industry which is budgeting now.

AJ reported on two big media wins with a combined 35 million impressions. *USA Today* featured the Finger Lakes online and in print, as a result of a journalist contacting AJ, and the "11-11-11 Deals" pitched by Quinn and Co. were picked up by USA Today, and publications in Dallas, Denver and Tampa. The New York Wine & Culinary Center appeared in the *AAA New England* magazine, and AJ pitched Ontario County's 4-diamond romantic inns to AAA New England. AJ and Valerie will be doing deskside visits to media in New York City with Quinn and Co. in December, pitching Nature's Health Club. AJ is promoting this year's Christmas On Us, as well as working on ideas for 12-12-12 and December 21st, 2012, the end of the Mayan calendar.

Valerie attended the Social Media for Tourism conference in Tunica, Mississippi. The conference is for destination marketing organizations, and is in its second year. Valerie will consolidate her notes and share with the industry on November 30th, and with a tourism class at FLCC on November 18th. Valerie's overall impression was that there is no formula for social media, but you have to be in the game. She got some ideas on how to apply social media to meetings business, and looks forward to educating the industry.

Valerie displayed the board metrics, noting that mobile devices views in September 2011 were up 298.95% over September 2010. Hence, you will soon be seeing a proposal for a mobile website. The research project by Paul Smiths/FLCC students was presented in class; Valerie, AJ and David attended. The project involved interviews with frontline staff at Ontario County lodging properties to learn what visitors were asking; Valerie shared the students' PowerPoint presentation with the board. Valerie continues to work with Mary Kay Vrba, Dutchess County, on a culinary program with New York University students and expects to report in December.

FLVC staff conducted an educational session at the FLCC Victor campus on the new website Packaging Portal, which allows the industry to enter packages directly into our website. All packages are still approved by Sue Schmidt and David Lee, and subsequently uploaded to the GetawaysNY website. Jessica Bacher attended the session and reported that attendees were excited about the new portal, particularly noting the feature that allows partners in the package to featured and linkable. The ability to include a photo for a package on our website continues to be a benefit for paid partners only; Lois Kozlowski commended the staff for their consistency in enforcing this policy.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Valerie reported on motion in the office. Work continues preparing the upstairs room for the new server, which should arrive in early December. Rebecca has moved to an office upstairs.

NEW BUSINESS – Jessica Bacher noted that musician Ben Folds stayed at the Hampton Inn while in town for his performance at the Smith Opera House. Dick Maltman reported seeing Assemblyman Sean Hanna with Steve Martin on a tour of Finger Lakes Casino and Racetrack. Bob Bennett noted that a ghost-hunting team stayed at the Homewood Suites while on assignment hunting ghosts at the Naples Hotel.

ADJOURN – Dick Maltman moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Jessica Bacher and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Next meeting: December 14, 2011 3:00 p.m.
OptiGolf Centers, 10 Commerce Drive, Victor

The board meeting will be followed by our Holiday Gathering at 4:30