

A Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, NY
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, October 4, 2017 – 9:00 a.m.
The Inn on the Lake, Canandaigua, NY 14424

PRESENT

Mike Kauffman
Mike Roeder
Carl Carlson
Audrey Carrier
Dan Marshall
David Hutchings
Bob Bennett
Meg Joseph
David Linger
Russ Kenyon
Frank Riccio
Dan Fuller

EXCUSED

John Brahm
Suzanne Farley
Donna Yudin
Steve McGuire

ABSENT

EX-OFFICIO

Mitch Donovan
Lenore Friend

STAFF

Valerie Knoblauch
Christen Smith
Jake Banas

Welcome - Chairperson Mike Kauffman called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

Correspondence Notebook – Christen Smith presented the Correspondence Notebook. She noted the article, “Tours included in Ontario County Open House,” which gives residents an opportunity to tour various county facilities and programs. She also noted a few thank you notes received based on various speaking engagements for FLVC.

ROC/FLX Craft Beverage Trail Publication – Valerie described how this publication came to be – the Canandaigua Wine Trail received grant money through the NY Wine & Grape Foundation who leveraged the grant with FLVC resources to produce this piece. Christen shared the publication which features all of the wine trail members, along with 17 craft breweries, cideries and distilleries spanning from the Finger Lakes to Rochester. It is the first piece in the launch of the Rochester/Finger Lakes Craft Beverage Trail.

Official Business – Frank Riccio made the *motion to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2017 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mike Roeder.* All present voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

Strategic Plan

Valerie reviewed the 2017 and 2018 action items. Among the major items scheduled for 2018 are: updating our brand standards manual and public relations information, building our digital assets, updating our top products list, and achieving our Destination International accreditation.

Ex-Officio – Mitch Donovan reported for the **Victor Chamber**. The Chamber has submitted an RFP in response to FLVC’s Gateway Project. Victor has a career fair coming up in early November. The town and village are working on rebranding a Victor initiative called Explore Victor Trails. “Victor” recently hired promotions director and Mitch hopes to jointly access their endeavors. Finally, they have published a community magazine.

David Linger reported that things are going well in **Geneva**. He shared maps of downtown Geneva and said they were also available through the downtown BID.

Lenore Friend reported that **FLCC** is starting to take names for its Hospitality Certificate programs – all one-year certificate programs (Hotel Management, Food and Beverage, and General Tourism Management). If you want a two-year degree, there are tracks you can enroll in within a larger program. These programs are great for an employee who might not have background in an area, but is a solid employee. They are still waiting for state approval, but they are close, so they are taking names so as soon as they get approval, they can register the students. FLCC is also in its own strategic plan process, looking at 2019-2023, and one of the areas of interest is community partnerships. She encouraged anyone to reach out if they think there is an initiative They should be looking at; community input is encouraged.

Visitors Services – Jake Banas gave an update on FLVC University. He mentioned the first project – a video project that discussed brochure distribution – wasn’t quite what he wanted it to be. He shared a new, year-long plan available on OneDrive. The program is based on goals of the strategic plan with a good mix of delivery methods is best. The plan also suggests partners in delivering the content.

Jake also discussed the Gateway Project. The overall goal of the project is to provide the best information possible in high traffic locations. He also introduced the Tom Watt kit, a menagerie of ways to provide visitor information – display racks, brochure racks, iPad kiosks, etc.

Old Business – Valerie reported that an RFP went out several times for the Gateway Projects. The deadline was September 30, 2017. Proposals were received from the Smith Opera House, Canandaigua Chamber, Victor Chamber, and a letter from Naples (Mike Joseph). The RFP was sent to Naples during the Grape Festival, therefore Mike Joseph asked for an extension. Valerie and Mike Kauffman agreed to grant a one week extension. The RFP evaluation meeting is set for October 12 at noon. Valerie will create a rubric to ensure all proposals are valid. Valerie reported it is our vision to get Gateway mini-hubs in a variety of locations. Mike Kaufmann asked for those who could help to please step up and offer their insight and help. Given the potential number of conflicts of interest, it was requested that those board members with no conflict of interest participate in this task force.

President's Report/Update. Valerie reported that in terms of occupancy tax, the county is going to take forward the legislation and re-propose it. She and David Lee met with Senator Pam Helming who is the Senate sponsor of that proposal. Sen. Helming cited the difficulty last year and said it would be a battle again this year, if it is considered a new tax. Senator Helming asked Valerie to provide more information about how many people it impacts. Valerie will provide an inventory of bed and breakfasts under three rooms. FLVC also held a forum of B&B owners who reported they did not have a great year. Ontario County Supervisor Mary Krause also attended and was a great supporter. The B&B owners expressed support for the change and requested to meet with FLVC more regularly.

Valerie also reported recent meetings or events where she was including Matt Horn's recognition by the Smith Opera House and at FLX Table and Linden Street with Ontario County officials.

Valerie reported that house projects at 25 Gorham Street are complete. The sewer was complete and grass is beginning to grow, plus painting has been done on the back and side porches. Both of these were cited in our house assessment as areas for maintenance.

Valerie discussed the "Step Away from your Desk" initiative the FLVC staff has been involved in. She's charged every team member to step away from his or her desk and do 20 to 25 site visits this year – including a B&B and hotel. Everyone is finding it very valuable to hear concerns, marketing objectives, and identify opportunities to grow tourism in Ontario County.

Valerie also mentioned – grape pie is hot! We keep promoting grape pie because it promotes the Finger Lakes.

New Business – No new business came before the board.

Adjourn –Mike Kauffman adjourned the meeting at 9:40 a.m. on a motion from Russ Kenyon and a second from Alexa Gifford. All presented voted in the positive.

Next Meeting – Thursday, December 6, 2017 – Smith Opera House

Minutes submitted by Christen Smith