

A Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, NY
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, May 9, 2018 – 11:30 a.m.
Rio Tomatlan, 106 Bemis Street, Canandaigua, NY

PRESENT

Mike Kauffman
John Brahm
Meg Joseph
David Hutchings
Alexa Gifford
Audrey Carrier
Russ Kenyon
David Linger
Steve Laros
Lenore Friend
Dan Marshall
Bob Bennett

EXCUSED

Frank Riccio
Suzanne Farley
Steve McGuire
Carl Carlson
Mike Roeder

ABSENT

GUESTS

Mitch Donovan

STAFF

Valerie Knoblauch
Carol Hicks
David Lee
Christen Smith
Melissa Knoblauch
Kendall Knaak

Welcome – Valerie began the meeting by reminding everyone that this is one of our “alternative type meetings” which deals less with the official business and more with conceptual topics for board discussion, strategic visioning, and opportunity. This topic is Product Development. This brainstorming meeting, during National Tourism Week, was planned at a place that is developing a new product and looking to the future.

Introductions were made around the room. We welcomed new board members Steve Laros and Lenore Friend. Valerie introduced our place hosts - owner/chef Rafael; Chris, co-owner; and Ryann, catering manager. Rafael spoke next, providing a brief background and how he started Rio Tomatlan. He explained that he decided to open the upstairs, named Quiote, to create a space where he can teach traditional Mexican cooking techniques, in a casual, relaxed setting.

President’s Report –

Valerie reviewed the timeliness of this topic. Destination 2020 suggests our role in destination management and development. A history of our actions brought everyone up to speed.

2008 – 1st Product Development List

2011 – A summary of the top products that had been developed over the past three years. Noting some alignment, but not complete.

2012 - Updated and recategorized the top product development list – putting it in to such broad categories as agri-tourism, transportation, etc.

2012 - Ontario County Economic Development changed their Strategic Plan and added Tourism Destination/Tourism Signature products. This was the first opportunity for any kind of funding for projects in our economic world. Finger Lakes Visitors Connection (FLVC) developed an evaluation system to help analyze the feasibility of these projects for economic development.

2018 - Young Strategies, updated Destination 2020 compiling a 70-page report on roles and potential products. These were narrowed to 4 – 5 broad areas by Strategic Planning Committee.

Board member Russ Kenyon arrived at 12:00 p.m.

In 2015, Valerie had asked the Executive Committee to authorize \$20,000 - \$40,000 to develop a destination product plan, to include Ontario County's need for conference space and hotel rooms. Valerie is requesting a reauthorization from the board to spend up to \$20,000 with Destination Specialists for this purpose. In addition to developing the destination product plan, this company assists in the implementation of the plan. Valerie requested that through this process the board support a recommendation to spend that money in a broader sense to determine our potential in the meetings and conference segments with the appropriate product, as well as supporting products that will enhance the visitor experience. Valerie shared a specific proposal from Destinations Specialists, a firm who specializes in meetings space evaluation and new product development for tourism. Steve Powell is the principal of the company, which is affiliated with Young Strategies as well.

Board member David Hutchings arrived at 12:24 p.m.

The board requested to ask Steve Powell, CEO of Destination Specialists, to provide destinations that we could contact and find out how their action plans have been implemented. It was agreed that Steve Powell would be invited to give a presentation at the next Board of Directors meeting. That it would be interesting to learn more about the broadbased county aspects of the product – and the implementation components of his business. This ties in to what our role is in going beyond getting product ideas identified to getting them moving forward. Steve has experience in these areas.

David Hutchings reported on the upcoming development at Sonnenberg. There was a press conference this morning to announce the land acquisition of 3 ½ acres by the New York State Park System, which had been occupied by the Army Reserve. The building will be renovated into a welcome visitor center and there will be a new main entrance for Sonnenberg. It is anticipated that motorcoach business can be doubled with this new accessibility.

Board members shared a variety of new product updates.

Christen Smith gave a background on the Blue Zones project that she is working on with Ontario County. Blue Zones is a for-profit group started by two brothers, who have traveled all over the world. They found areas around the globe where there are pockets of people living long, healthy, and productive lives. They identified 9 specific commonalities in these locations. The Blue Zones project came to Ontario County and they are interested in making our area a Blue Zones community. Christen has been working closely with Mary Krause, County Administrator, and Mary Beer, Director of Public Health, on this project.

Official Business – Mike Kauffman requested a motion to move all the items under official business. John Brahm made a *motion to approve the following*:

- a. *Minutes of the March 28, 2018 Meeting*
- b. *Financial Reports: March Budget vs. Actual, April Budget vs. Actual; Balance Sheet as of 4/30/18*

The motion was seconded by David Hutchings. All present voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

Adjourn – *Russ Kenyon made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Meg Joseph. All present voted in favor of the motion. Mike Kauffman adjourned the meeting at 1:35 p.m.*

Next Meeting – Thursday, June 14
Muller Field Station, 6455 County Road 36, Honeoye

Minutes submitted by Carol Hicks