

A Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, NY
Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday, October 17, 2018 – 8:30 a.m.
Ontario County Municipal Building, 20 Ontario Street, Canandaigua, NY

Present

Bob Bennett
John Brahm
Suzanne Farley
Lenore Friend
Meg Joseph
Mike Kauffman
Russ Kenyon
Steve Laros
Dan Marshall
Sheryl Mordini
Frank Riccio
Mike Roeder

Excused

Carl Carlson
David Hutchings

Guests

Absent

Staff

Valerie Knoblauch
Carol Hicks
Christen Smith
David Lee

Welcome – Mike Kauffman called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

Official Business – *Dan Marshall made a motion to approve the following:*

a. Minutes of the September 26, 2018 meeting

b. Financials: September Budget to Actual – Draft Report; Balance Sheet as of 9/30/18

Frank Riccio seconded the motion. All present voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. Russ Kenyon abstained, as he wasn't in attendance at the September 26, 2018 meeting.

Strategic Planning – 2018 Action Items Review; 2019 Action Items Review – David Lee reported that the meeting/conference space study is moving forward and the survey was sent to 243 meeting planners on October 11, 2018. Additionally, the survey has been sent to Ontario County hotels and attractions that have interfaced with meeting planners, with the intention that they will pass the survey along to people they have done business with, to get their feedback. The Ontario County Department of Economic Development gave FLVC a list of businesses to ask them what amenities they require to bring meetings here.

David has been working on a Cultural Survey to determine the impact of cultural heritage visitors in Ontario County, and use the data to build a visitor profile and economic impact for this market. We need more participation from our cultural and heritage museums.

Marketing Presentation – Christen Smith showed an FLVC/Mountain Horse Farm brand journalism video. Mountain Horse Farm has been receiving national and international media attention and FLVC wanted to capture this visually to spur more interest. The video will be used as a marketing tool to answer the media requests that we and they are receiving. The Lazy Acre Alpaca brand journalism video was played next, with Christen again noting the impact of quality video and photos to promote a destination.

Christen presented the new publication 50 Finger Lakes Must-Dos and explained that this brochure is an interim piece, with the next visitors guide to be published in early 2019. Next, she presented the Wedding and Special Events Guide which serves two purposes: to promote Ontario County as a wedding destination and to fulfill requests for special events, i.e. reunions, girlfriends' getaways. We have created a wedding page on the website to direct people to additional information beyond what is provided in the print publication. She pointed out the quality and diversity of the photos in the guide which came from local photographers. Christen reported on the next visitors guide, noting that we are working with local photographer Gabrielle (Brie) Plucknette. Brie has been all over the county and fulfilling our need for updated, quality photos to promote Ontario County. We are focusing on being more visual in the publications. A sampling of Brie's photos was shown to the board members. Christen also mentioned the exciting media win in *Travel & Leisure* magazine. The October edition had an article on the Finger Lakes region, written by food and wine editor Ray Isle. FLVC hosted Ray (through Quinn and Co.) when he was here. *Travel & Leisure* magazine is highly regarded in the travel and tourism industry. Canandaigua was named one of the best places to retire by *AARP*. FLVC took out an advertisement in AARP magazine through the New York State Travel and Vacation Association. We created a webpage: visitfingerlakes.com/live/, to make the most of this recognition. FLVC will be creating a wellness map, highlighting Ontario County's outdoor activities, wellness products, etc. Christen credited Steve Howie of Canandaigua Sailboarding with coming up with the idea and sharing it with Valerie. His thought to position us as more than a place for wineries, breweries, etc. Cross Border Showcase, a Canadian program through Archer Communications in Rochester, is currently wrapping up. We were the premier sponsor for the program. The program was not as successful as we anticipated. We received some phone calls in response to an advertisement in the *Toronto Sun*. We will continue to explore other options for the Canadian market, possibly a co-op program with surrounding counties. Valerie mentioned a 3-minute phone message that she had received, in response to the ad in the *Toronto Sun*. The gentleman said how much he loves the Finger Lakes but given our current political situation, he doesn't want to visit at this time. Christen noted that FLVC will be hosting a Yelp seminar today, 11:30 a.m., at the Wood Library. Breanna Banford, Community Director for Yelp Rochester, is presenting.

Visitor Services Presentation – Valerie gave an update on the Gateway Project. Kendall recently attended the Destination International Visitor Services Summit and David attended the eTourism Summit. Given their feedback, Valerie believes that we need to refocus our Gateway Projects based on the information from these summits. She would like to have an information services session with the Canandaigua Chamber, Victor Chamber, Naples Valley Visitors Association and Geneva, where we would present updated information in respect to gateway and in destination visitor services. The Naples Gateway project has received DOT approval for installation.

President's Report – Valerie presented a draft document entitled *Steps toward setting up a Visitors Experience Foundation Fund*. This document summarizes the information regarding the organization's options for funding recreation/cultural/arts programs

President's Report, cont. – She reviewed the document with the board. \$25,000 has been designated in the 2019 budget to potentially begin a funding program. She asked the board for their feedback. Dan Marshall, Ontario County Board of Supervisors, expressed his concern that it could be perceived as taking taxpayer money to fund tourism related business. He will meet with County Administrator Mary Krause to discuss his concerns. Discussion ensued. Valerie stated that our tourism industry growth requires a “system” for businesses that want to improve the visitor experience and create a higher-level visitor experience to access; this is within our mission and Strategic Plan.

9:40 a.m. – Board member Suzanne Farley left the meeting.

Per today's discussion, the key items to focus on are:

- FLVC should not do this on our own;
- Align with the Strategic Plan;
- Create a long-term vision for this – both from a budgetary standpoint and a mission/vision standpoint.

Russ Kenyon noted that the board gave direction at a prior board meeting to explore the feasibility and the process of this fund. He emphasized that to move forward, Valerie is not looking for approval to start the funding, but still exploring and reviewing the process, narrowing down what to bring before the board.

Old Business - No old business was brought before the board.

New Business – Russ reported that former FLVC board member Mary Luckern is being recognized by the Boys & Girls Club of Geneva; he noted her years of service on our board.

Dan Marshall reported that there have been some contentious situations between visitors at AirBnB properties and surrounding neighbors. The Town of South Bristol will be addressing this issue. The planning department will be reviewing legislation and the current town code.

At Valerie's suggestion, Dan Marshall made a motion on behalf of the board for a *resolution of appreciation for the service of Alexa Gifford, Audrey Carrier and David Linger*. The motion was seconded by Russ Kenyon. All present voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

Adjourn Meeting - Mike Kauffman requested a motion to adjourn the Meeting. *Russ Kenyon made a motion that was seconded by John Brahm to adjourn the Meeting*. All present voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 9:54 a.m.

Minutes submitted by Carol Hicks