

Finger Lakes Visitors Connection, Ontario County, NY
Board of Directors Meeting – Tuesday, February 26, 2019 – 5:30 p.m.
Ontario County Safety Training Center, 2914 County Rd. 48, Room 4, Canandaigua, NY

Board Member Attendance:	Present	Excused	Absent
Mike Kauffman, Eastview Chair of the Board	x		
Bob Bennett, Homewood Suites by Hilton Victor Vice Chair of the Board		x	
David Hutchings, Sonnenberg Gardens, Board Secretary	x		
Frank Riccio, Cobblestone Creek Country Club Board Treasurer	x		
Mike Roeder, Ravenwood Golf Immediate Past Chair of the Board	x		
Sheryl Mordini, 1795 Acorn Inn Bed and Breakfast	x		
John Brahm, Arbor Hill Grapery & Winery	x		
Suzanne Farley, Artizann's		x	
Carl Carlson, Cheerful Valley Campgrounds	x		
Steven Laros, Fairfield Inn & Suites Geneva		x	
Lenore Friend, Finger Lakes Community College	x		
Meg Joseph, Ganondagan State Historic Site		x	
Russ Kenyon, Kenyon & Kenyon		x	
Mark Gilbride, Lazy Acre Alpacas	x		
Dan Marshall, Ontario County Board of Supervisors	x		
Lori Proper, The Inn on the Lake	x		

Others in Attendance:

Guests, Linda Phillips, Ontario County Planning

Staff: Valerie Knoblauch, President and CEO; Carol Hicks, Christen Smith, David Lee, Kendall Knaak, Melissa Knoblauch.

Welcome and Call to Order – Chairperson Mike Kauffman called the meeting to order at 5:27 p.m. He introduced Linda Phillips from the Ontario County Planning Department, and Lori Proper, our newest board member, from The Inn on the Lake (TIOTL). Introductions were made around the room.

Mike Kauffman acknowledged with sympathy and respect the passing of Mary Luckern, board member from 1998 – 2013. She passed on February 10, 2019. Supervisor Marshall shared a few reflections.

Linda gave the board a synopsis of the Ontario County Planning Board (OCPB). The board consists of 16 individuals that represent each town in the county. Projects that go before the board are typically ones with county-wide effects, such as site plans, subdivisions, signs. The OCPB is adopting new by-laws addressing transportation, community character, economic development and tourism. Engagement with our industry is important.

Lori Proper, Director of Sales at The Inn on the Lake introduced herself. She has been with the inn since 1991 in various capacities. Her current office is at the New York Kitchen while the new facility is under construction. It is the vision that when the new hotel opens, that there will be a “campus feel” with the NY Kitchen. Valerie noted that Lori was instrumental in helping Steve Powell with the meeting space study, as TIOTL hired Steve to conduct their study and they shared their results with FLVC.

Official Business –

Mike Kauffman requested a motion on the official business. *Frank Riccio made a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 6, 2019 meeting; the December Profit and Loss, Budget vs. Actual; and the Balance Sheet as of 1/31/19. Mike Roeder seconded the motions.* All present voted in favor of the motions and the motions passed.

Executive Committee – Mike Kauffman

Mike informed the board that the committee has finalized Valerie’s annual review and he will be meeting with her early next week.

Finance/Audit Committee – Mike Kauffman (for Bob Bennett)

A meeting will be scheduled to review proposal to move money into higher interest-bearing instrument.

Nominating Committee - Valerie Knoblauch (for Suzanne Farley)

There is still one vacancy and the committee is focusing on someone from the Geneva area. They have reviewed a number of potential members and have received input from former board member, Belinda Venuti. Belinda, who is still very connected to Geneva and has experience with our board needs will introduce Valerie to these perspective members and Valerie will come back to the committee for action.

Governance Committee – David Hutchings

David informed the board that a meeting is scheduled on March 14 to review older policies and specifically, the Investment and Deposit Policy and Advisement from Authorities Budget Office versus our Investment and Deposit Policy (#112). Valerie added that Linda Phillips called FLVC and asked about tourism’s position on cell towers. We were able to provide her with our position paper on Windmills, Towers and Other Structures which may Interrupt the Visual Landscape or character of an area. The last date that this position statement had been updated was April 2008. Valerie will have the committee review the position statement and recommend any updates and/or changes.

Strategic Planning Committee – Carl Carlson

Carl reported that the committee is scheduled to meet on March 14 to review the report from Destination Services, Inc. on Meetings and Conferences in Ontario County. Valerie was with Steve Powell of Destination Services, Inc. last week in St. Charles, Missouri. They discussed the March 20th board meeting, where Steve will present his findings. A focus of the study was “pipeline projects”, currently in the works for completion in the future. Valerie passed around a chart that summarized the pipeline projects that would create additional room inventory and meeting space in the county. Steve will integrate this into his findings.

Marketing Update – Christen Smith

Five Initiatives in Five Minutes

1. Love in the Finger Lakes – A sweepstakes launched a few months ago, in cooperation with the new *Wedding and Event Planner Guide*. The winner will receive 4 overnights and number of different experiences.
2. The marketing team is working on the new visitors guide, focusing on photos with less text. It will be an experienced-based, inspirational guide directing readers to the website for detail.
3. The marketing team is working on a new mascot, FeLiX the Alpaca.
4. A Wellness Map is being developed and will be launched in the spring. This will be a map to a wellness trail, where visitors can engage in a variety of outdoor wellness activities.
5. The Roc/FLX Craft Beverage Trail will be hosting its first tasting event, First Fest, on Friday, March 29 at Ravenwood Golf Club.

President's Report – Valerie Knoblauch

Christen reported on the upcoming 35th Anniversary Celebration Plans and Legacy Awards scheduled for Monday, May 13, to be held at the New York Beer Project in Victor. Please consider a nomination for the awards.

On May 16th, FLVC will be hosting the Board of Supervisors Retreat/Tour, focusing on tourism as economic development. Mary Krause asked this to be focused on central and western Ontario County since their last one was on Geneva, Gorham and eastern Ontario County. Valerie's proposed itinerary will include Bristol Mountain, Naples, Bristol Valley Theater, Hollerhorn Distilling and Ganondagan. She will be seeking Board of Directors' engagement.

Old Business –

Updates for the Visitor Experience Fund can be found on One Drive. Valerie and David Hutchings will be going to the Rochester Area Community Foundation next week to discuss specifics. Valerie asked Melissa to share her tour with the Naples Historical Society as it tied into the development of the Visitor Experience Fund. The society was excited to learn of the Visitor Experience Fund, as they want to build handicap accessible ramps for the recently acquired Cleveland House, which they will be converting into a museum. They also want to produce a video of the extensive stenciling in the upstairs of the house, to be shown on the lower level, for those who can't access the upstairs. Dan Marshall noted that the Bristol and South Bristol Historical Societies have combined as one historical society.

New Business – In preparation for the meeting on Planning and Development and Zoning, following this, Valerie wanted to share some inspirational product development. It seems that every business needs to continual reinvent and represent their product as consumer tastes continue to develop. She asked each team member to mention one new product.

Valerie: Igloo brunch at Kettle Ridge Farms in Victor on Saturday. Yes, brunch in an igloo.

David: Main Street Arts in Clifton Springs has a resident artist program, where the artists can rent the space upstairs and work on their art projects, while living on the premises.

Christen: New chef at the F2T Kitchen (Farm to Table), which is the restaurant at the Ramada Plaza in Geneva. Executive Chef Samantha Buyskes is originally from South Africa and has been in the Finger Lakes for the past 20 years. She has written cookbooks and she was on the sixth season of “Chopped” on the Food Network. Christen had a media request and has nominated Samantha for International Women’s Day. Samantha was also included in a recent Rachel Ray segment, thanks to our relationship with the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council and Quinn PR.

Kendall: Kettle Ridge Farm in Victor has a pancake food truck and that FLVC has booked the truck for the upcoming literature exchange in May.

Melissa: Lincoln Hill Farms in Canandaigua is in the process of adding glamping sites on the property.

Carol: The music scene at Hollerhorn Distilling in Naples. They are bringing in local, statewide and national acts. They are also serving pairing cocktails at the shows, with a connection to the musicians playing that night.

Adjourn to Joint Session with Planning –

Mike Kaufmann requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. *David Hutchings made a motion that was seconded by Carl Carlson to adjourn the meeting.* All present voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.

Joint Session with Planning –

Most board members stayed for the joint session with Planning. There were approximately 35 attendees. Linda Phillips asked the group about their interaction with tourism and shared enthusiasm for the tourism industry’s mission to both bring in visitors and preserve our sense of place and community.

She introduced Valerie who introduced our team. The team shared responsibilities for the presentation which provided a history of our organization; a look at our revenues, strategic plan, and priorities. Research assets were a focus and information was provided as to where to find these numbers on our website. There was considerable discussion about Vacation Rentals and Air BnB. Board member Sheryl Mordini helped address the impacts of this on a community and on the bed and breakfast network. This is a complicated issue with more to come.

The team presented a high level view of marketing the county and what our brand identity is that is important for the planning and zoning offices to consider. Tourism is heavily reliant upon the success of other core industries such as agriculture. Transportation, signage, historic preservation, protection of our water resources and community engagement were all touched upon.

The presentation adjourned at 8:40 p.m. Certificates of completion were available to those in attendance.

Next meeting – Wednesday, March 20, 2019 at 8:00 a.m.
Ramada Plaza, Geneva

Minutes submitted by Carol Hicks.