

Date: April 4, 2024

To: Ontario County Board of Supervisors

From: Valerie Knoblauch

Re: Virtual Museum Update – Market NY CFA

David Hutchings, Chair
Sonnenberg Gardens
and Mansion State Historic Site

Lisa FitzGerald, Vice-Chair
Chalet of Canandaigua

Charles Parkhurst, Secretary
Lyons National Bank

Steve Fuller, Treasurer
Bristol Mountain

Mike Kauffman, Immediate Past Chair
Eastview Mall

Sherry Brahm-French
Arbor Hill Grapery & Winery

Mike Darling
Crafty Ales and Lagers

Lenore Friend
Finger Lakes Community College

Mark Gilbride
Lazy Acre Alpacas

Edward "Russ" Kenyon
Boylan Code

Sheryl Mordini
1795 Acorn Inn

Todd Plouffe
Indus Hospitality Group

Lori Proper
The Lake House on Canandaigua

Mike Roeder
Golf Pro

Christopher Vastola
Supervisor Town of Canadice

This letter is intended to accompany the information provided to you with regard to the lead agency status for Ontario County Planning for Market NY CFA # 135395. History Comes to Life, Virtual Museum. This memo focuses specifically on the implementation of the physical "signage."

As a reminder, FLVC continues to post online all the information with regard to this program. It includes an area for people to submit feedback and participate as the program evolves.

The address for this content is [VisitFingerLakes.com/virtual-museum](https://www.visitfingerlakes.com/virtual-museum)

The desire is for transparency as well as easy access to the followers and supporters of this program to assist us in ensuring compliance and accuracy.

Our major partners in this endeavor continue to be the County Historian, the individual town historians, and the numerous not-for-profits and private sector business who either have or may in the future be a host of a marker of some sort. The caution that I continue to reiterate – this is not a program of Historic Markers. This is a tourism program with a focus on historic markers as a tool to generate interest and engagement in Ontario County.

FLVC leadership (Valerie) continues to work with our project director at ESD (Rochester based Maranne McDadeClay). She is guiding us through ensuring that we meet all the legal requirements as signed for in the Incentive Proposal. Among these legal requirements are ensuring that we have SEQR approvals, SHPO approvals (with special consideration and approval for any Indigenous sites and/or cemeteries).

FLVC has contracted with administration for the program with Ostrander's Consulting. They are ensuring that our financial reporting systems are in place and all of our MWBE requirements are both anticipated and met.

How we selected the potential signs.

Step 1. Inventory. FLVC has contracted to have an up-to-date inventory of markers that could possible be used in this program. That inventory netted about 294 potential sites for consideration.

Step 2. Vetting. These signs were narrowed to 100 (plus some interpretive signs) which could fit the original intent of the program as delineated in the proposal. These potential signs have been selected as most likely to succeed in a) fulfilling the original promise of at least one for every town b) fitting into the promised/intended thematic buckets c) consisting of a willing and cooperative partnership with the municipality or sponsor/owner or private business for the future development of the program and the stories d) having content/resources available to fully develop the stories in an innovative technical matter as outlined in the vision and e) able to make it through the SEQR and SHPO and meet all legal requirements.

Step 3. Selection. The grant promises 50 signs. That means that we could/may lose up to 50 signs that don't make it through the process. Our intent is to not force any signs, but to move on to complete objective a, b with those signs that make it through c, d, and e above.

Step 4. Production begins. A final set of sign concepts are delivered to the content team to begin developing the stories that will come to life through the augmented technology programming of the Magic Studios at RIT and STQRY our content amalgamator and virtual trail- maker, so to speak.

Success looks like approximately 70 well-connected, curated, and developed augmented reality story telling signs. These signs are activated by QR code technology as well as geo-fencing opportunities, and some artificial intelligence and "facial" recognition technology.

Each potential sign "owner" will be contacted to sign a commitment letter for their desire to be in this program. Ultimately, the ownership of the sign is with that municipality, private owner, or special interest group who has current responsibility for the sign.

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Special Programming Notes:

Re: NYS Education Department Signs. We have a document which outlines the “ownership” of the State Education Department sign. Here is a link to that document in the hopes it can answer the frequently asked question about that now abandoned program.

Re: Sullivan Campaign and Revolutionary War and Native American - Indigenous Peoples signs. We will not be having these as one of our themes. We will work with Ganondagan and the required state regulatory agency to get special permission for any potential signage within the Native American NY State site.

Re: Cemeteries and War Memorials and Religious/Church based sites. In general, we are not identifying these sites because the approval process are quite complex. However, there are a couple of exceptions where either the historian of the community as identified it as their first choice or the story potential is considerably woven into the history of that community. Two notable exceptions are: Farmington and its history and assets with regard to the Quaker history; and the Town of West Bloomfield Pioneer Cemetery.

Re: Other New York State sites. We will have to work with NYS Parks on a variety of approvals for signage at state park. We will interact with the directors at the specific properties to attempt to facilitate an agreement. More specifically, these include: Sonnenberg Gardens and Mansion State Historic Park; Seneca Lake State Park at the border of Seneca County for a “re-erection” of a Pre-emption Road sign; Harriet Hollister Spencer State Recreation Area or the Canadice Lake State Boat Launch or the Canadice/Hemlock State Forest site for a sign about the “little lakes”.

Re: Ontario County sites. We will seek county approval for any sites chosen for the program. The ideal sites on the top list are: the area in front of the courthouse (Pickering Rock, Susan B. Anthony sign). Additionally, in the Education thematic promise, we have identified FLCC campuses to tell the story of the Community College as sponsored by Ontario County here. We would seek county approval, as we are seeking as we are seeking all other approvals. Similarly, as with any other case, if the obstacles or objections are too strong, we will move on to those sites that can tell the story.

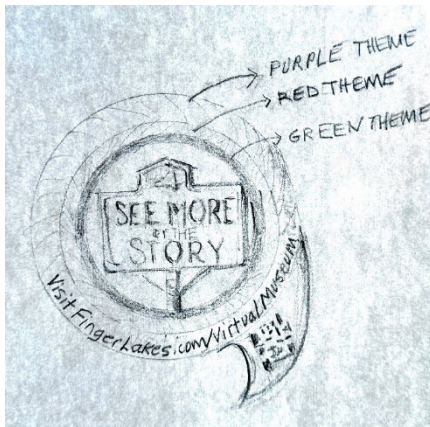
The number we are also able to do is contingent upon budget. Remember that in this case “construction” includes the technological construction of the augmented reality, incorporating that into the physical, as well as physical construction.

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What the signs will look like “Physically.”

For all signs – existing and new: Imagine a brand identifier, similar to a “stamp of approval” for Grade A or Gluten Free foods. This is a visual identifier that there is something “special” about that product. That same visual principle will indicate that there is something special with this sign. The QR code, which is highly recognized now will complete the connection.

Our common graphical element is under review in this process. This is the initial concept drawing.



For Existing Signs: The plan is that this “round” circle will be affixed to the pole, directly under the typical rectangular sign through the use of a clamping system. Details are not yet worked out on this system as we are consulting sign companies and the experts in the Ontario County highway department for advice on this application. As part of the inclusion in the program, the sign owner will understand how it will be affixed and agree to that as part of the program. If it cannot be agreed upon – then we will move to a different sign. The picture on the right is a picture for perspective purposes. We are intending to follow the 1/3-1/3-1/3 rule and anticipate that the size will be approximately 11.5 inches round.

Unique Circumstances:

Historic Buildings and/or in a Historic District. In a few cases, we may be looking to affix something to a building. This will be in limited cases but would require special permission from the approving parties. Some of the buildings that we have identified – but not yet sought nor received approval for are: Finger Lakes Visitors Connection offices at 19 Susan B. Anthony Lane; The Smith Opera House in Geneva; the Village Square Building (now the 1892 Hotel) in Canandaigua. Because these buildings are either on the historic register or in the historic district, we are aware that special permits are most likely required.

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Unique Circumstances, Continued.

Markers/Plaques/Monuments/Statues. To be done is how to “identify” those monuments or statues – such as the Elizabeth Blackwell statue at HWS or the Pickering Rock at the Courthouse or the marker in Bloomfield designating Route 5 and 20 as the original highway. None of those types of markers will be altered in any manner, nor will we affix anything to them. We are exploring options to have “stake plaques” of high quality at the base of those monuments where again, with interest for inclusion by the owner of these particular elements. We are also looking at “face recognition/AI” technology and geofencing cues that could be brought up if someone “raises their cell phone camera to them” it would trigger a reaction without any additional signage. This is to be determined and if it becomes difficult, these markers will unfortunately, not be able to be included in the program. Again, this is why we have 100 choices to get to between 50 and 75.

New Signs.

At minimum, the program calls for about 30 new signs. We hope that we can have “more” than that, but again, that’s based on budget, cost, material selection, story overlap and thematic ties, all to be determined as our Vetting and Selection Processes are completed.

Design. Beyond the material, the new signs will be shaped like a traditional blue sign. You’ll notice that there are several new signs recently installed – for instance, the Susan B. Anthony sign on the Ontario County Courthouse lawn; and the Lafayette sign on Main Street and Scotland Road in the City of Canandaigua. Notice how their shape is similar to the traditional signs, but they are distinctive in color and some features. The intent of our program is to create a distinctive brand color and emblem for this program for any new signs.

Our graphic designer for this program is Harris Studios in Bloomfield. She will create a design brand for the program. This brand will need to be accepted by all participants and will need to meet any codes, regulations of the municipality where it is placed. The concept is similar to the one that was used in the “Hungry for History” program, which was part of a trail of food related information and history. See that model on the next page.

All new signs will be branded and obviously part of this same program. We are seeking clarification if the I Love NY logo is required on there.

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New Signs, continued.



Again, that is a to-be-determined design that will be standardized across the program. Materials. Any new signs are likely to be aluminum and not cast iron. We are currently researching materials and once a standard is selected, we will seek the necessary approvals.

Timeline.

The current incentive proposal has a deliverable deadline of December 31, 2024. That is obviously going to be tight, especially for installation of new signs. However, I have been reassured that because of the late start and the unique complexity of so many sites and approvals that there will be understanding if we need an extension. We remain committed to our original timeline, but realize that our fate is in the hands of the approval processes necessary for this project. A no-later-than goal would be by Memorial Day of 2025 – ready for the next visitor season.

Questions:

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[VisitFingerLakes.com/virtual-museum](https://www.visitfingerlakes.com/virtual-museum)