

ROOST Board Meeting Notes
Tuesday, March 10, 2015

Board Members:

Mike Beglin	Cris Lussi
Adam Boudreau	Melinda Little
James Lemons	Kate Fish
Bob Hockert	Sarah Wilson
Chris Ericson	Laura O'Brien (phone)
Ed Finnerty	

Staff:

Jim McKenna
Carol Joannette
Kerry Shannon Blinn

Meeting called to order at 5:35 p.m.

- I. Adoption of Agenda - Moved by Chris Ericson. Seconded by Cristina Lussi. All in favor.
- II. Approve Minutes - Moved by Ed Finnerty. Seconded by Bob Hockert. All in favor.
 - January 13th meeting
 - January 19th dinner meeting
- III. CEO Report & Departmental Updates - Jim McKenna
 - The last three months we've had a lot going on, and I think that we're recognizing that the challenge we have is still pretty big, but we have a lot of different organizations going in the same direction now.
 - In regards to Franklin County: AdirondackLakes.com is the URL Franklin County used for tourism promotion. We have proposed using three URLs for Franklin County tourism regions: Tupper Lake, Saranac Lake, Malone.
 - We now have more golf courses, more ski areas, etc.
 - This work takes a lot of relationship building and that is taking a lot of time
 - We answer to 1 non profit board and 8 municipal boards
 - We're working to make the regional message consistent
 - In Tupper Lake over this weekend there was the BrewSki, anecdotally we were advised that people came to because they saw the Lumbersexual blog.
 - Cris Lussi: What are we paying for in regards to advertising?
 - Carol Joannette: We're not doing any pay per click, but we do have various campaigns depending on the season, subject, county, etc., as well as paid Facebook posts.
 - Cris Lussi: People are not very happy with LakePlacid.com, I'm hearing that people think we're spending all our time elsewhere. Can we come up with some report to show what we're doing?
 - Jim McKenna: Good idea. We can show that LakePlacid.com is on the top of the Adirondack sites, not just out of our sites.
 - Cris Lussi: People don't think they're getting their fair share.
 - Jim McKenna: Overall occupancy levels are up, even with new rooms. Annual ROI report, that's the one that gets the direct visitor information that would be helpful for this.
 - Mike Beglin: Make a sub-committee to address this.
 - Sarah Wilson will head sub-committee, Cris Lussi will work on it too
 - Work to show everything being done for Lake Placid, in lay person terms.

- NCREDC Update
 - Jim McKenna: Governor Cuomo put out in the annual budget that the normal REDC process will continue, plus extra money this year. \$1.5 billion for 3 REDC regions, out of 7 eligible regions; We are putting plans together for \$500M awards.
 - Kate Fish: There is some pressure from New York State legislators to divide money a little more evenly.
 - Jim McKenna: If our region is awarded money, the idea is to come up with an overall strategic priorities that are data driven. Infrastructure wouldn't be funded unless connected to another tourism related priority.
- Adirondack Winter Challenge (March 8, 2015)
 - Jim McKenna: It went well overall. There were a lot of legislators from southern New York State. We worked with ORDA on this. The mileage we get out of Challenge is great, and it's good for Albany to have a seamless event.
- Conference Sales Team (Maryjane Lawrence, Ashley Andrews, Scott Gardner)
 - Have completed 9 contracts recently
 - They're building momentum, looking at new angles on how to fill space and not just traditional meetings.
- Talk in state budget about minimum wage going up to 10.50
 - Chris Ericson: We're being crushed on tipped workers wage going up.
 - Cris Lussi: I think it's going to back fire, I don't think hotels will tip out banquet service
 - Chris Ericson: I have waitstaff making over \$300 a night on tips. Tips are going to go down, menu prices are going to go up. Going to cost my business roughly \$75,000/year.
- Legislative Roundtable March 19th
 - Lake Placid Club Boat House
 - ROOST is co-sponsoring with NYSHTA
- Vacation rentals in regards to Occupancy Tax
 - This will be a topic of conversation over the next couple of weeks
 - Jim McKenna is going to Essex County Board of Supervisors meeting on March 16th to discuss occupancy tax on private vacation rentals
 - Jim McKenna: I really looked into this, talked to realtors in Lake Placid and did some math. Figuring it's somewhere around 35 nights/year on average. This is an issue that is going to come up and a couple of different things could happen here.
- Franklin County is looking at implementing an Occupancy Tax
 - Their proposed tax is 5% and includes private rentals
 - Estimated to start around \$500,000 first year
 - The law is worded so that 95% goes to tourism promotion
- Clyde Rabideau wants to get DOT working on "Bonjour Adirondacks" signs, Jim McKenna told him we would help.
- Discussion regarding Ed Weibrecht's recent Guest Commentary in the Adirondack Daily Enterprise.
- Do we need a Franklin County board member? Or a Malone board member?
 - Everyone think about possible candidates and get to Mike Beglin and Kerry Shannon Blinn, and it will be addressed next meeting
 - Cris Lussi: We need to update bylaws and replace Sharon Piper (Schroon Lake Region)

IV. Financials & Audit

- Jim McKenna: Spreadsheet regarding funding sources - Meister came up with this for us based on what we wanted
- Charlie Cowan recommends to contract a Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
- Ed Finnerty moves to allow the Chair and the Treasurer to seek part time engagement to be reviewed, as well as moving forward with an RFP for auditors. Chris Ericson seconds. All in favor.
- Note: on the list of auditors to include in the RFP, the name is incorrect for Douglas Hoffman's firm.

V. Marketing Report - Carol Joannette

- Discussion regarding Lumbersexuals blog post
- Carol Joannette: This week's blog and emails has been increasingly successful, we have been getting a lot more engagement, a lot more shares, etc.
- Kate Fish: Mayor Rabideau loves the idea of a Lumber-Con.

VI. Readdress Committees - Mike Beglin

- Mike Beglin: I want to get committees more empowered and more directed in this next year. Table for next meeting, but everyone please think about this.

VII. Regional Reports

- Lake Champlain Region - Beth Hill - not present
- High Peaks Region
 - Discussed this region previously throughout meeting
 - Jess Collier has been having a lot of travel writers
 - We have a lot of planning for 2016
 - There are paddling promotions underway, French Canadian marketing, motorcycling promos (gotourny.com)
- Saranac Lake - Melinda Little
 - Melinda has been sick, and did not prepare a report.
- Schroon Lake Region - Currently no representative.
- Whiteface Region - Bob Hockert
 - Annual dinner is a week from tonight at the Hungry Trout.
 - Prep underway for summer
 - Numbers are up in most places for biking
 - Bridge over the Ausable, by the Visitor Center, is demolished and being rebuilt. It won't be back until June.
- Tupper Lake - Adam Boudreau
 - Series of 1st and 2nd annual events this year that have been very successful
 - BrewSki tripled their numbers and the blog tied everything together, blog also enticed locals to go to site,.
 - Registration numbers are up 20% for Tinman so far
 - Civic center will be getting worked on
 - Lumber-Con: met with Woodsmens Association, and they are willing to give us 3-4 fairly safe events for Lumbersexuals to try things out at Woodsmens Days. Also will contact Woodsmens Association to trademark Lumber-Con.
 - James Lemons has contacts with a circus group that tours with Lumbersexual style show (juggles axes, etc.)
- Hamilton County - Laura O'Brien
 - Some of Hamilton County numbers are down, but snowmobiling is picking up
 - Very cold weather is affecting winter season
 - Inlet had very good attendance with their Fire & Ice event
 - Oak Mountain had their winter carnival and it was very cold so they had low attendance
 - SPARC is a relatively new group in the Speculator Area

VIII. Open Issues

- Jim McKenna: We're going to be receiving an RFP for the World Championships of Half-Ironman. Dates would be late August, earlier September. Multi-day event, and more than one race. Over 87 countries present. There is an event fee for us to host it.
 - Chris Ericson: I think we pursue it but work on the date being after Labor Day.

IX. New Business

- Resolution: Accounts for Franklin County Contract
- Reservations System
 - Carol Joannette: We need task force committee to talk about online booking issues, to talk about all the different scenarios and about what we should do.
 - Sarah Wilson: what has changed?
 - Carol Joannette: We have our own system, that Adworkshop built, but some smaller properties use it as their management system, it's a problem if they use more than one. If we move to another system, we could lose information and leads but we'd have more inventory in the system. For example, Bookings.com: We can contract with them, and can get commission back if we use them, but would still lose leads.
 - Cris Lussi: I want you to look into linking reservation systems (linking hotels to us.)
 - Mike: We need a task force. Sarah Wilson and Cris Lussi will look into this issue.

X. Executive Committee

- Canceled, but was on agenda. Executive committee will try to meet within the next week.

XI. Adjournment at 7:19 p.m.