



DRAFT MINUTES
Public Awareness and
Communications Committee
January 15, 2015
Agency Meeting
WHT:KPM:mp

**PUBLIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE
JANUARY 15, 2015**

The Public Awareness and Communications Committee convened at 2:05 pm.

Committee Members Present:

William Thomas, Chair, Sherman Craig, Bradley Austin (DED), Dan Wilt and Dierdre Scozzafava (DOS)

Other Members or Designees Present:

Lani Ulrich, Chairwoman, Karen Feldman, Arthur Lussi and Robert Stegemann (DEC)

Local Government Review Board Present:

Gerald Delaney, Chairman

Agency Staff Present:

Terry Martino, Executive Director, Keith McKeever, Public Information Director and Mary Palmer.

Public Awareness & Communications Report

Keith McKeever gave a brief report on New York State's new branding program created by the Governor's office required for state agencies. He added the Agency is in the Recreation and Environment group which includes the DEC.

Mr. McKeever also noted that staff is working on the Annual Report. He added that the Board will receive the report at the February meeting.

Mr. McKeever introduced the guest speakers from the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST) who presented about efforts to promote the Adirondack Park through the use of innovative web technologies and social media:

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James McKenna - CEO, Shaun Ondak - Promotions and Digital Marketing Manager and Jasen Lawrence - Website Development Manager.

Shaun Ondak gave a presentation on Adirondacks, USA which is a virtual tour of the Adirondacks. He stated the website allows a person to visit the Park from their computer or mobile device exploring the mountains, lakes and communities that comprise the Adirondack Park.

Jim McKenna noted that marketing is about visuals and showing people community amenities. He added that Adirondacks, USA shows people the diverse community experiences during all four seasons.

Mr. McKenna demonstrated how the website works starting in one town and using the linked points to move throughout the park. He added that it's available for business owners for a small cost so they can promote their business through a virtual tour.

Sherman Craig asked if the website can superimpose a business' website. Mr. McKenna said that the business can link from Adirondacks, USA.

Mr. McKeever noted that the Agency or anyone with a Facebook account, can like Adirondacks, USA and share the spins which are updated on a regular basis. Liking Facebook pages is a way to work with ROOST and Adirondacks, USA to promote tourism.

Karen Feldman asked how you tie the Forest Preserve into the local communities. Mr. McKeever said that with the virtual tour you can work your way down from the top of a mountain using the different spins that visualize people hiking, camping and shopping in local stores.

Robert Stegemann asked how they coordinate with other websites. Mr. McKenna said that currently they are only linking to the websites that they manage.

Lani Ulrich, Chairwoman, noted it is unique to see a 360 view because it provides viewers with a much more detailed understanding.

Ms. Ulrich asked how much of the park is represented on the website because currently no site covers the entire park. Mr. McKenna said ROOST covers Essex and Hamilton counties and some areas in Franklin County. He stated ROOST has options for other regions to participate.

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Mr. Thomas added that if it was park wide it would be an advantage to the Park. He noted that this is something Warren County would really want to be involved in.

Ms. Ulrich encouraged ROOST to continue to get the message out to those outside of their region.

Bradley Austin stated that this is a tourism program and something he would take back to the DED for discussion.

Gerald Delaney stated that in the Park tourism is underserved by offices out of the Park that deal with tourism.

Terry Martino asked if Visit Adirondacks was the Adirondack web portal. Ron Ofner, of the Adirondack Regional Tourism Council, said that the web portal is housed there. He added that it does have all the recreational assets for everything within the Park listed there.

Mr. Austin asked if ROOST measured how long people stay on the site. Jasen Lawrence said that the site has had 100,000 unique views. He added that a visitor averages about eight pages per visit, and average site time is currently five and a half minutes per person.

Mr. Lawrence noted that emails go out to about fifty thousand visitors weekly that ranges in a wide variety of topics. He added that one of the things Shaun's project does is tell an Adirondack story through a blog, which is a first-person view of things that are going on in the Park.

Dan Wilt asked why they use panoramic pictures and not video. Mr. Ondak said the panoramic pictures allows users to choose where they want to go. He added that video requires more computer resources and therefore would limit potential user base.

Mr. Thomas commented that we have all these regions in the Park that advertise themselves and this website would be the overlying thing to cover the entire Park.

Ms. Ulrich thanked the speakers for the work that they have done with the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism stating that this was a phenomenal project. She then presented them with a plaque.

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Old Business

None

New Business

None

William Thomas, Committee Chair, adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:45 pm.