

MINUTES

DUTCHESS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION Tourism Committee

**Thursday, November 19, 2009, 8:30 a.m.
EDC Conference Room
3 Neptune Road, Poughkeepsie, NY**

Present: A. Cross, S. DeKrey, K. Hansen, L. Hulcoop, L. Hubbard, M. Kangas, G. Mure, C. North, L. Pensiero, S. Rector, J. Reynolds, S. Turk, D. VanBuren

Absent: L. Bassanese, S. Evans, P. Feder, B. Grems, E. Hayes, B. Krevolin, A. Meagher, B. Pagano

Staff Present: M. K. Vrba, L. Higginson, F. Lauricella, N. Lutz, M. Wright

Welcome, Chair's Report, Denise VanBuren

The regular meeting of the Tourism Committee was called to order by Denise VanBuren, Chair, at 8:30 a.m. The minutes of the September 17, 2009, Tourism Committee meeting were reviewed with one correction: the site visit webstats for August were changed to 46,353 (instead of 4,353). Denise thanked Mary Kay and the staff of Dutchess County Tourism for all their effort in making the Quadricentennial a success. Denise announced that the bill for creating a U.S. Travel Office has passed the U.S. House of Representatives and should soon be signed by President Obama. Denise also announced that Mary Kay is now on the U.S. Travel Association, Destination Marketing Council.

Director's Report, Mary Kay Vrba

➤ **Walkway Over the Hudson:**

- Raised \$18,000 in sponsorship to have a Jumbotron at Waryas Park to live-stream the festivities for the Walkway Opening October 3, 2009. 6,000 people from 33 countries watched the festivities that day.
- It was estimated that 125,000 people have walked the Walkway since it's opening October 3rd.
- Shuttle service was provided by the Walkway from the Poughkeepsie Train Station to the Walkway for weekends in October and November.
- The Walkway will be open year-round.
- The following are being developed: better signage; lighting on the Walkway; the elevator.

➤ **Montgomery Place:** A recent article in the New York Times mentioned that Montgomery Place may be sold. Many questions have been raised regarding the process. Will keep the committee updated.

➤ **Budget 2010:** Tourism's budget request of \$700,000 has been reduced by the DC Dept. of Planning by \$55,000; then reduced by another \$50,000 by the DC Executive. Plans to accommodate these reductions are as follows:

- Happenings calendars will no longer be printed in hard copy, saving on printing, postage and office supplies. Information will still be available on the DutchessTourism.com website.
- Trade Shows will be cut by \$13,000, attending on ABA in January.
- Reduce non-matching funds advertising by \$20,000.
- Increase PR efforts using Facebook.
- Increase efforts to do more co-op advertising. Charlie North offered to meet to discuss co-op advertising programs.
- Increase efforts to secure grants.

- Travel Expo: Dutchess County Tourism is co-sponsoring a travel expo December 4 and 5, 2009, at the Mid-Hudson Civic Center with Escapemaker.com.
- 2010 Plans: For 2010, New York State will be emphasizing: (1) Green tourism and tagging green businesses; (2) Arts – 2010 is the 50th anniversary of New York State Council of the Arts; and (3) Women and children.

Staff Report - DCT Staff

Lydia Higginson, Deputy Director

- 580 people participated in the seven Metro North Farm Fresh weekend tours. Tourism will try to get funding for this program for 2010.
- The Great Estates Symposium will take place March 20, 2010. The theme this year will be “Food”.
- Bike New York – Plans are being developed to host a biking event in the Poughkeepsie area, possibly next summer. Have already hosted event in Harlem Valley.

Nancy Lutz, Communications Manager

- Hosted 4 French journalists and their tour hosts, as well as 7 French journalists in October. Also hosted Doreen Colondres, Hispanic food; Ron Bernthal, writer/producer WJFF/NPR; Edward F. Nesta, Luxury Experience Magazine; and Chris Bunting, New York Post.
- Wrote 23 spotlights for DutchessTourism.com in October and November.
- Distributed numerous press releases, including Holiday press releases for winter calendar, cut your own tree farms, tour decorated great estates, and community tree lighting ceremonies.
- Printed 25,000 copies of final Happenings event calendar for the holidays and winter 2010. Distributed to tourism businesses and information centers.
- Needs winter images of tourism sites featuring people.

Fred Lauricella, E-Tourism Information Services Manager

- Website Statistics – Reported on website statistics:

Site Stats:	<u>Sept.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>
Visitors to site	41,145	41,421
2007 Travel Guide:		
PDF downloads:	116	95
Events Calendar downloads	445	401

Just Say Go Getaways – averaging 500 downloads/month on our website.
 Twitter – currently 600 subscribers.

Old Business/Comments

- Linda Hubbard – Many holiday events planned for Beacon.
- Ginny Mure – CIA will be having their Dining Series again in 2010.
- Maureen Kangas – Working with Jim Marcotte to develop a New Year’s Eve “Time Square” type party on Market Street in the City of Poughkeepsie, free to the public.

Closing Remarks

The next regular meeting of the Tourism Committee is scheduled for **Thursday, January 21, 2010, at 8:30 a.m., in the EDC Conference Room, 3 Neptune Road, Poughkeepsie, New York.**

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.