

Minutes of the Adirondack Coast Cultural Alliance / Destination Master Plan Meeting at Chamber of Commerce April 6, 2017



Kristy Kennedy of the North County Chamber of Commerce/Visitors' Bureau opening the meeting at 8:00 am welcoming those present from the local history/arts/culture community, and from Egret Communications, to review progress since the last update in 2015, and where we are going.

Present: Frank Baehre (PAFB Museum); Barb Benkwitt (Schuyler Falls Town); Jim Brangan (Lake Champlain Basin Program/Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership); Clinton County Historical Association- Geri Favreau, Helen Nerska; Julie Dowd (CCHA and Genealogy Society & Library); John Krueger (CVNHP), Melissa Peck (ACCA coordinator/PBS); Village of Champlain – Janet McFetridge, Celine Paquette, Gregory Martin (?); Chamber of Commerce – Kristy Kennedy, Alina Walentowicz; Bob Harvey (Egret Communications).

Bob Harvey began by speaking briefly about the beginnings of the Destination Master Plan (DMP) in 2010, remarking that the history of this area is key to growth for the area.

John Kreuger mentioned the Battle of Valcour's 250th anniversary with Benedict Arnold which will occur in 9 years. Julie and Helen mentioned the interest in boots-on-the-ground in battlefield sites, and how at the MANY (Museum Association of NY) conference just held there were discussions about funds for restoring and saving them.

Kristy talked about the value of the "I LOVE NY" website –linked with Path Thru History – and that travel writers do connect through ILNY. Venues like BOPA, Babbie, ATM, Underground RXR are using ILNY; connect with the Chamber who can get others into that site for event posting. Wording that works is key.

Front Desk Training will occur in May in the Champlain Centre Mall – another way for attractions to make their venues known.

We talked about reaching local area residents and feel most are now more aware of the history/arts/culture community here. It is imperative to reach people from out of the area – tourists from Florida as an example – who can be reached before they leave home to find out more about the area, and then can plan to stay here for several days, rather than just as a stop off when traveling through the area. We need to have the infrastructure available in hospitality, venues and transportation to accommodate. Making this destination an experience will be key for the younger folks/millennials.

Some examples described were the possibility of a Trolley from the marina to Margaret Street on Friday evenings to facilitate boaters easily coming into town. Providing walking/biking tours of the areas, both guided and self-guided. The ADK Wine Trail is good – how to leverage that to more 'trails' or experiences. The airport info desk in the new expanded airport will be key to welcoming tourists and sharing information. The escape from Dannemora (movie to be televised ~April 23) has been a boon to tourism. How to capitalize on that both within the Village of Dannemora and the general area? Tours to see the manhole cover/escape route?

Re-enactors, people in costumes to enhance the ambience, food events, Friday night happenings, bike share also mentioned. Glitter-ify the experience!

Jim Brangan shared there were 15 grants recently awarded from LCBP/CVNHP – to AARCH for book publication, Lake George ROV re shipwrecks, Warren County for an interactive exhibit on logging, David Graham for French heritage, Champlain for photos/exhibits, CCC/SUNY for Plattsburgh Power - electricity, KDL for Boats/Travel Trains, Sacandaga for Feeder Canals. Ticonderoga is already working on steamboats with kids. These are all related to the theme Corridor of Commerce.

Suffrage is a key theme this year, and example being the recent presentation at the Strand on Petticoats of Steel.

The new year's plan for Making of Nations will be discussed on April 28 at LCBP. Grants will be included for interpreting this theme, local heritage grants, kids learning through arts, wayside exhibits like at Fort Brown (LCBP will assist for free). The local stakeholder regions will also meet in Lake George in October for the international summit.

Jim also mentioned that the Passport Stamp Program is used in many different areas – the 100th Anniversary of National Parks, Art Museum at SUNY Plattsburgh, ECHO, Missisquoi National Refuge.

The key in all areas is what to work on – what to plan and budget – what programs to establish – what will focus on the interpretive theme of Making of Nations. Topics could include Native Americans, New Netherlands, New York – right up to the War of 1812, and including civics teachings. There will be about \$300K available – Senator Leahy is trying for equity for grant money for this area. Sponsors include LCBP, Great Lakes Fisheries, EPA and CVNHP.

Lots of thought-provoking discussion.

Any updates to the Destination Master Plan – please contact Kristy Kennedy at the Chamber who will get the updates to Bob Harvey at Egret Communications.

The meeting adjourned shortly after 9 am. It was a good exchange of ideas with promise for the future.

NEXT ACCA MEETING - Thursday, May 11, 8:30am – Location to be determined.

Respectfully submitted,

Barb

Barb Benkwitt
Secretary, ACCA