



Adirondack Park Agency

SHERMAN CRAIG
Chairman

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

DRAFT MINUTES
Public Awareness and
Communications Committee
July 13, 2017
Agency Meeting
WHT:KPM:mp

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE **July 13, 2017**

The Public Awareness and Communications Committee convened at 2:25 pm.

Committee Members Present:

William Thomas, Committee Chair, Daniel Wilt, Bradley Austin (DED) and Lynne Mahoney (DOS)

Other Members or Designees Present:

Sherman Craig, Chairman, Chad Dawson, John Ernst, Arthur Lussi, Barbara Rice and Robert Stegemann (DEC)

Absent – Karen Feldman

Local Government Review Board Present:

Frederick Monroe, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present:

Terry Martino, James Townsend, Keith McKeever, Mary Palmer

Public Information Update

Mr. McKeever updated the Board on the Agency's use of social media which includes Facebook and Twitter which the Agency has had success in using.

Mr. McKeever said at the bottom of the Agency's website homepage there are two links that will bring people directly to the Agency's Facebook and Twitter pages.

Mr. McKeever said the Agency uses Facebook and Twitter to post pictures to help promote the Adirondack Park. He said the Agency is also able to post public service announcements, such as the website being down for the monthly meeting. He said the sites are also used to notify the public of public hearings and events and to share messages from other agencies, such as the Governor's office and the DEC.

Mr. McKeever said the Agency has 1,800 followers on Facebook and over 700 followers on Twitter.

Mr. McKeever said going forward he would like to see more involvement with staff, such as field work, site visit and project photos. This would show the public what kind of work staff does and how it helps their communities.

Mr. Craig commended Mr. McKeever for the development over the last year.

Dr. Dawson asked if there are policies in place to who has access to both of the accounts. Mr. Craig said the Mr. McKeever is in charge for the Agency. Mr. McKeever said there is a policy on Facebook the state has in place that the Agency does follow.

Mr. McKeever introduced Dave Mason and Jim Herman with the Adirondack Futures Project. He said the Adirondack Futures is a pro bono project for developing a vision, strategy and implementation plan for the Adirondack Park.

Overview and Five-Year Update of the Adirondack Futures Project

Mr. Mason presented a five-year update on things that have happened in the Adirondack Park noting the following:

- Economic development - the growth of manufacturing; the progress of broadband; micro grant programs; the Rail Trail plan; Frontier Town gateway and planning for the Hut-to-Hut style hiking system.
- Recreation growth - new hotels being built; new marinas; high-end camping; a zip line and the land purchased by ACR. He added that NYS has funded many recreational projects such as waterfront parks, fishing pond restorations; parking areas, bike trails, visitor centers and fire tower restorations.
- Acid rain impacts are reversing, road salt reduction experiments are occurring, the spiny water flea has disappeared from Lake George and there is citizen science work on wetlands and invasives.
- Clean energy initiative. The Ticonderoga paper mill has switched from oil to gas. Solar use is expanding and bringing jobs to the region.
- Agriculture and local food programs are growing; there are more local brewers, and small dairy and cheese operations are also growing.
- Arts and Culture are growing and improving, such as movie theaters making the digital conversion.

- Transportation for airlines and trains are improving. He added that bus services are still in need of study, such as what currently exists and what is needed.

Mr. Mason also gave some updates on education, government, demographics and health care for the Adirondacks.

Mr. Mason said that promotion is working. NYS has funded a range of promotional campaigns and the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST) has worked to provide regional marketing and booking. He said the expansion of cell service is putting a lot of tourism information to smart phones.

Mr. Thomas asked if they were able to look ahead to see how climate change will affect things like recreation and economic development over twenty-five years. Mr. Mason said winter is the most vulnerable season and visitors account for thirty percent of tourism. Skiing and snowmobiling are very vulnerable, but other winter sports, such as hockey and skating, do fine.

Mr. Herman said they did a work series on the impact of climate change. One of the things that came up in the discussion was the potential for future population influx as areas of the country become less habitable. There is concern that over a period of twenty to thirty years our regulatory framework gets out of control and more houses will be built where there is forest preserve. Mr. Herman said there was also concern that other parts of the state will see serious impacts from climate change that will affect more people, and therefore those areas will start to receive more State funding than other areas.

Mr. Monroe said there has been some follow-up on the Adirondack Park Regional Assessment Project which indicated that school enrollments were still rapidly declining and asked if their research showed that. Mr. Mason said it showed level enrollments in the Tri-Lakes area which is good, but in other areas it was still declining. Two small districts ceased operations and the only proposed merger was rejected.

Mr. Lussi noted the use of AirB&B is up as a new alternative for vacation stays which is more reasonable for small towns to convert housing to spare bedrooms for people to stay. Mr. Mason said it also offers people in the town a path to invest in tourism where they can manage owning an extra house or renting out an extra bedroom in their own home.

Mr. Herman thanked Mr. Monroe for his help with the Local Government Review Board's compilation of press articles which has enabled him to get a broad picture of what is happening across the entire park.

Mr. Thomas said the whole report is very positive. Towns within the park should take notice on where we are going. Mr. Mason said the mood of the park is down somewhat but the facts are very positive, and that is the message that should be taken from this.

Mr. Mason and Mr. Herman were presented with a certificate of appreciation.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Adjournment:

Mr. Thomas, Committee Chair, adjourned the Committee at 3:20 pm.