



Adirondack Park Agency

LEILANI CRAFTS ULRICH
Chairwoman

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

DRAFT MINUTES
Public Awareness and
Communications Committee
November 12, 2015
Agency Meeting
WHT:KPM:mp

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE **November 12, 2015**

The Public Awareness and Communications Committee convened at 1:35 PM.

Committee Members Present:

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

Other Members or Designees Present:

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

Local Government Review Board Present:

Frederick Monroe – Executive Director

Agency Staff Present:

Terry Martino, Executive Director, James Townsend, Counsel, Keith McKeever and Mary Palmer

Public Relations Director Keith McKeever introduced Zoe Smith, Director of the Wildlife Conservation Society Adirondack Chapter (WCS), and Doug Haney, Cycle Adirondacks Event Manager.

Ms. Smith and Mr. Haney began their presentation with a short video of the 2015 inaugural event Cycle Adirondacks.

Ms. Smith stated Cycle Adirondacks is a week-long fully supported cycling event designed to showcase the magnificent landscape and unique communities of the Adirondack Park. The 2015 route traveled 470 miles through eight counties and thirty five communities. The event began and ended in the Village of Saranac Lake.

Cycle Adirondacks is as an excellent example of a sustainable tourism model fully consistent with the North Country Regional Economic Development Council's goals for the Adirondack Park. This annual event will expand economic opportunity, foster reliance on local products and boost civic pride.

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Ms. Smith reported over 160 riders participated in the inguinal event. Riders paid \$1,495.00 for the seven day ride. The event created two full time and six part time jobs. \$50,000 was provided in local grants to host communities. Riders spent evenings in host communities where food and entertainment was served. There was a direct economic benefit to the host communities.

Ms. Smith thanked Empire State Development for their assistance including Market NY and Taste NY grants. She indicated there was strong community and volunteer support which was invaluable to their success. She briefed the committee on the extent of planning and logistics involved.

Mr. Haney stated that when planning the event they thought globally, not just locally, and hired a social media company to post daily as the event progressed. He detailed numerous media stories generated from the event which promoted the Adirondack Park. There were 28,000 video impressions and 20,000 people reached through social media.

Mr. Haney said that they were thrilled with the positive support from host communities. He indicated many riders were impressed with the volunteer support and civic pride expressed. He described strong commitment from Adirondack communities interested in serving as host communities for the 2016 Cycle Adirondack event. He added that they also received excellent responses on the participants' survey.

Mr. Haney stated that they used the money they received from Taste NY to infuse meals with locally produced food.

Ms. Smith outlined event challenges. She indicated travel logistics to the Adirondacks for participants added to the cost and time. She stated they will again offer a three or four day option next year in that it may be hard for people to commit to the seven-day event. Ms. Smith said that they are thinking of ways to increase ridership for 2016. She said they will be offering half week options, revising the travel companion option and having a tier pricing system.

Ms. Smith said another challenge they faced was finding vendors. She noted that a lot of local vendors are not equipped for such a large scale event of this type.

Ms. Smith discussed their vision for the future which is keeping it an annual event. She said they would also like to secure sponsorship to help with the costs, and move the event throughout the Adirondack Park and North Country region.

Mr. Thomas asked if the route will change each year. Ms. Smith said it would and would cover about 1/3 of the park each year. She added that they will go out of the blue line.

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Karen Feldman asked what the average age of the riders was and where the money for the community grants came from. Ms. Smith said the average age was fifty and the grant money was a combination of the Market NY Grant and rider registration.

Mr. Austin asked if the riders stayed in tents each night. Ms. Smith said riders choose ahead of time to camp in designated campsites or to use local tourist accommodations. She added riders also had the option to have their tents set up for them for an additional fee. She indicated about one third of the riders chose hotel rooms.

Mr. Stegemann asked about the shower and toilet vendors for the tenting areas. Ms. Smith said that this was a bit of a challenge especially for the shower vendor and lessons learned this year will help in the future.

Mr. Monroe asked if they received any occupancy tax from the counties and towns to support the event. Ms. Smith said that they did not but they are already working with local governments to plan for next year's event.

Mr. Thomas thanked Ms. Smith and Mr. Haney for being here.

Old Business – None

New Business - None

Adjournment: The committee adjourned at 2:30