

Board of Director Minutes

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc. Board of Directors Meeting March 20, 2008 @ Blackstone Valley Tourism Headquarters

1. Roll Call

Attendees:

Dave Balfour, Chair
Richard Murphy, Member
Len Clingham, Member
Sue Tessier-Mackenzie, Secretary
Louise Boulanger, Vice Chair
Dave Richards, Member
Robert Billington, President
Natalie Carter, Director of Operations

Absent:

Louis Yip, Member
Paul Eno, Member
Robert Cahill, Member
Jackie Boudreau, Treasurer
Robert Conway, Member
Anthony Capuano, Member
Dave DePetrillo, Member
John Lefrancois, Member
Helen Moroney, Member

2. Minutes

On a MOTION by Louise Boulanger, seconded by Sue-Tessier-Mackenzie, the minutes of the January 11, 2008 meeting were approved as amended. (Copies attached and made a part of these minutes)

3. Treasurer's Report

The Profit and Loss Statement dated March 03, 2008 was presented. Mr. Richards asked what the difference in percentage of profit and loss. Mr. Richards asked Billington if we noticed any issues with the statement. Billington noted that the RIHPC was slow in payment of an invoice from the Preserve America program, which caused severe cash flow issues for the Council.

The IRS for late filing of their taxes in 2006 fined the Council. Billington and Carter circulated a letter to the IRS regarding the penalty for the tax filings that cost the Council \$2854.67. The letter seeks a return of these funds. The Board requested that the President contact legal counsel to discuss the late filing of the taxes to determine if the accountant that did the filing has financial liability in this situation. The Board felt that the Accountant should reimburse the funds to the Tourism Council.

On a MOTION by Mr. Richards and seconded by Ms. Mackenzie the Treasurer's Report was accepted as submitted. Motion passed unanimously. (Copy of the Report is attached.

Mr. Richard's complained that Woonsocket's Autumnfest was not listed in the State Visitor Guide. He is concerned about this omission and requested a report. Billington will inquire about this omission. (The RI Tourism Division was contacted and they are searching for an answer and will promote Autumnfest in the Fall Guide in a substantial way to make amends. The Website will be updated immediately)

4. President's Report and Old Business

Mr. Billington updated the Board on the following:

a. The Tourism for Tomorrow Award for 2008. The Blackstone has risen as a top three contender for the Sustainable Destination Award from the World Travel and Tourism Council. Billington noted that the WTTC sent 12 teams of auditors from around the world and Costas Christ, the chairman of the awards criteria visited the Blackstone Valley. Billington has been invited to attend the Global Tourism Summit in Dubai in April. Billington will be attending because the Blackstone Valley will be on the world stage in front of over 100 international media outlets.

b. Roger Begin has agreed to work with the Tourism Council to help us manage the Water Cruises debt. He is setting us several meetings with creditors to discuss the same. One meeting with Navigant Credit Union has already been held and was very positive.

c. The Pawtucket River Bridge Design Project was discussed.

d. The Broad St Regeneration Project was discussed.

e. Billington informed the Board that at their former request the location for the 23rd Annual Dinner will be changed. The staff found Twin River to be very supportive of the Annual Dinner and have worked closely with Twin River to make it work within the budget allocated for the Dinner.

f. Billington asked for the Board's support to nominate the Sullivan Family and Collette Vacations as the Life Time Award Designee for 2008. The Board voted to Approve Unanimously.

g. The October Civic Tourism II Conference was discussed.

h. Billington noted regional news in the Providence Business News regarding our Green Guide and national news for the Valley in Northeast Group Tour Magazine, River management Society News and international news on Travel Mole, The Global Travel and Tourism Summit brochure that featured the Samuel Slater and the BBC.

i. Billington noted he would be working in Cedar Rapids Iowa on May 5th on Sustainable Tourism Laboratory work. The Cedar Rapids CVB is hiring the Lab to talk about riverfront development in their city.

j. Billington advised the Board that Tourism Cares just issued a check to support the Civic Tourism II Conference through Collette Vacations.

k. Billington asked the Board to support the nomination of Autocrat Coffee and Syrup as the 2008 Blackstone Valley Governor's Award nominee. The Board voted to Approve Unanimously. The State Tourism Division is hosting the Annual Tourism Luncheon where Autocrat will be recognized for their work with the Tourism Council and the maker of Rhode Island's official state drink.

l. Billington noted that a cooperative intern from JWU who is on leave from the Nepal Tourism Board would be working with us this summer.

m. Billington asked the Board to support his and Chairman Balfour's nomination of Helen Moroney as the William Blackstone Society's inductee for 2008. The Board voted to Approve this Unanimously.

n. Billington reported that Patti McAlpine said that Citizen's Bank will again support Free Sunday's on the Blackstone Valley Explorer; Navigant Credit Union is supporting our River Scholarship Program along with the National Heritage Corridor Commission and Cadillac Textile Mills.

o. Billington announced that Lily Kayamba, Group Tour Manager for the Council has not reported back from her trip to Rwanda. We are concerned and are seeking help to find her through national organizations. Mr. Richard suggested the International Red Cross. Billington also noted Ramon Rodriguez has also been hospitalized. Date of return to work was unknown.

p. Billington circulate the Room Tax Revenues for Jan 2008 and an all years report dated March 20, 2008.

q. The flyer for the May 22, 2008 Tourism Laboratory was circulated along with the new BVRI Bookmark, the Navigant Blackstone Valley Heritage Golf Tournament flyer for June 16, 2008 and the October 28, 2008 Travel Experiences Group Travel Exposition hosted with Conway Tours.

r. Billington updated the Board on his work with the City of Pawtucket to request a signature bridge for the replacement Pawtucket River Bridge project on Route I-95. He circulated preliminary designs.

s. Billington notified the Board that he is still attempting to find a way to better finance the riverboats and that the grant from Citizen's Bank will help in 2008.

5. New Business

Billington noted that Jack Stalen, a long time Valley supporter has suggested that an endowment for the Council be initiated. The Board suggested this concept be discussed at the next meeting.

6. Adjournment

There being no further business before the board, Mr. Richards Motioned the board to adjourn, a second was presented by Mrs. Boulanger. The Board adjourned at 1:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert D. Billington
President