

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
175 Main Street
Pawtucket, RI 02860

Minutes
May 17, 2016

Attendees:

David Balfour, Chairman
Barry Mechanic, Vice Chairman (via phone)
Judy Fischbach, Treasurer
Louis Yip
Thomas Kravitz
Dr. Joyce Koutsogiane
Paul Palange

Absent:

Dave Richards, Secretary
Alexander Parmenidez
Courtney Iannuccilli
Mark Brodeur
Michael Gwynn
Debra Berardis

Also Attending:

Dr. Robert Billington, President, BVTC
Natalie Carter, Director of Operations, BVTC
Joan Loos, BVTC Staff
Robert Cox

1. Call to Order. Mr. Balfour called the meeting to order at 12:02 p.m.
2. Approval of Minutes from March 8, 2016. Joyce Koutsogiane moved, Tom Kravitz seconded, and the minutes of the March 8, 2016 Board meeting were unanimously approved as presented.
3. Closure of RIDOT BRCNTS Contract. Bob Cox, Project Manager, summarized the project that began as the Blackstone River and Canal Navigation Transportation System and became the Site Feasibility Access (SFA) Project. In June 2009 Tom Queenan from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation along with planners from the towns of the bordering communities asked the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council to manage the project. The project and study was conducted with the help of senior engineering students from Roger Williams University and their advisors. A Corridor Land Use Evaluation (CLUE) was conducted to determine a suitable piece of property without a brownfields remediation site involved that provided access to the river. The result was only one such site was identified with the possibility of development, which is across from the Pawtucket Water Department on Branch Avenue. The students designed two versions of the site, one which included a bike path and one which did not include a bike path. The recommendations have been forwarded to the Department of Transportation and the project has been closed.
4. Treasurer's Report. Judy Fischbach reviewed the Income Statements and Balance Sheets as of the end of March 2016. Paul Palange moved, Tom Kravitz seconded, and the Treasurer's Report as presented by Judy was unanimously accepted.

Proposed 2016/2017 Budget. Judy Fischbach reviewed the proposed BVTC 2016/2017 budget. There was discussion involving how advanced ticket sales for events would be handled in the budget. Potential moving expenses are also included in the budget. After discussion and with all questions being answered, the BVTC 2016/2017 budget was unanimously approved.

4. Director's Report.

- The newly-refurbished Explorer riverboat was launched a week ago at Central Falls landing with 80 school children, scientists/educators from Mystic Aquarium and media present.
- The Samuel Slater canal boat has been refurbished and cleaned and is ready for it's first overnight guest this Friday.
- East Providence – It was hoped that the BVTC would be assisting East Providence with their tourism development this next fiscal year.
- The BVTC hosted a Networking event with Professor Brian Lavin from Johnson & Wales University this morning as he presented, "Emerging Tech Trends in Tourism: Embracing Mobile & Social to Shape The Visitor Experience".
- The Outpost at the I-295 Visitor Center has been ruled illegal by the Federal government. The Outpost will remain open for as long as possible.
- National Park – The Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park was included in a publication by USA Today and NatGeo Wild called "Your Guide To Our National Parks", celebrating the 100th anniversary of the National Park system.
- Bob had invited to the Board meeting Seth Goldenberg, CEO of Epic Decade, and acting Chief Marketing Officer for Commerce RI. Mr. Goldenberg had another commitment today, but he will be conducting "Make It Yours" programs on May 25. Board members were invited and encouraged to attend one of these sessions, either at Slater Mill or at the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Visitor Center.
- Bob reviewed the contract negotiations for The Polar Express with Warner Brothers/Rail Events. He feels we have an extraordinary proposed contract for 2017, 2018 and 2019 for 10%, 12% and 15%. However, we can opt out of the contract at any time, providing that we have not begun to sell tickets for the following year. It was unanimously agreed that the agreement with Warner Brothers/Rail Events should be signed.
- Boston Surface Transportation Company is now leasing the Woonsocket Train Depot, where The Polar Express takes place, from the Department of Transportation. A commuter railroad is planned and when it becomes active, it will affect how we use the building for The Polar Express.
- We are considering running a train event from Worcester, Massachusetts to the Nautilus submarine in Groton, Connecticut.
- We will be running another American Girl train in September and are working with American Girl Corporate through the Boston store.

- BVTC 11th Annual Golf Tournament will take place on June 6 at Crystal Lake Golf Club in Burrillville. Board members were asked to find additional golfers for the event and were encouraged to golf and/or to attend the dinner. Barry Mechanic asked for a brochure that could be sent out as an email to contacts.
- Board candidates – Bob asked the Board to be thinking of candidates for the Board of Directors from Burrillville, Gloucester, Smithfield and North Smithfield.
- Joyce Koutsogiane asked about having the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council represented on a float in the Cumberland 4th of July parade.

5. Adjournment. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Mr. Balfour at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Loos, BVTC Staff