



**Tourism Advisory Council Meeting Minutes**  
*"Draft – Subject to Board Approval"*

**Date:** Friday, January 8, 2016

**Location:** Jacob Javits Convention Center

**Attendance:**

TAC Members

Cristyne Nicholas, Peter Carafano, Jan Chesterton, Nancy Elder, Gail Grimmett, Katherine Nicholls, Alexandra Stanton, Elinor Tatum, Senator Betty Little

**Phone:** Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel, Dan Fuller, Tom Mulroy

ESD / NYS Staff

Gavin Landry, Executive Director of Tourism; Ross Levi, Vice President of Marketing Initiatives; Lisa Soto, Project Manager - Tourism Marketing and Partnerships; Jamin Clemente, Tourism Executive Assistant; Rowena Sahulee, Director of Tourism Marketing, Licensing & PR; Anna Pakman, Director of Digital Strategy; Cristina Melendez, Social Media Manager; Kate Dunn, Editorial Assistant – iloveny.com; Markly Wilson, Director of International Tourism

**Phone:** Chyresse Wells, Deputy Press Secretary; Tom Regan, Associate Counsel

TAC Guests

Linda Ayares, Finn Partners; Mary Kay Vrba, Dutchess County Tourism; Anna Karnowski NY Water Taxi; Dominique Young, NY Water Taxi; Erin King Sweeney, jetBlue Airways; Dena Libner, NYC & Co; Makiko Matsuda Healy, NYC & Co; Chris Heywood, NYC & Co; Fred Dixon, NYC & Co; Bryan Grimaldi, NYC & Co; Michael Bopp, NYS Canals; Brian Stratton, NYS Canals; Daniel MacEntee, NYS Senate; Doreen Guerin, Jacob Javits Center; Tony Scalfani, Jacob Javits Center; Randy Borschedt, former TAC member

**Phone:** Sonia Lindell, NYS Business Council

**Meeting called to order: 11:10am**

**I. Approval of minutes - Cristyne Nicholas**

- Motion to approve by Senator Betty Little.
- Minutes approved with a second by Peter Carafano.

**II. Chairman's Report - Cristyne Nicholas**

A. Welcome / Meeting Overview

- TAC would like to thank Senator Little for her exemplary service.
- Today Gavin will review the deliverables from the Tourism Summit along with recent and upcoming tourism initiatives, Fred Dixon from NYC & Co. will give an update on their work, and we are going to tour the NYS aisle at the New York Times Travel Show.
- Many thanks to Alan Steele of the Javits Center, for offering to host today's meeting.
- Tony Scalfani and Doreen Guerin will talk to us about the Javits Center expansion.

B. Javits Center update (Tony Scalfani and Doreen Guerin)

- The Javits Center is the busiest convention center in the country and twelfth largest.
- Customers are moving in or out 330 days out of the year and booking 5-7 years in advance.
- \$1 billion investment to expand by 1.2 million sq ft - 50% more than the current 2.1 million sq ft.
- Prime exhibit space increases by 90,000 square feet, totaling 500,000 gross sq ft contiguous.
- Five times more meeting rooms - there are currently no meeting rooms.
- 60,000 square-foot ballroom - the largest in New York and the northeast.
- A four-level truck garage to meet the needs of approximately 20,000 trucks.
- Construction is expected to break ground later this year.
- At least 15 new events are expected following the renovation - more lucrative events, higher economic impact events, such as conferences with doctors, high tech companies, etc.
- Recent renovations added 703 WiFi access with the ability to service 70,000 WiFi users. at one time - the most advanced technology system in the country among convention centers.
- Most convention centers in this country are supported by some type of subsidy and this convention center fully stands on its own and has no such subsidy.



**Empire State  
Development**

### C. New York Times Travel Show

- The show is taking place starting today through Sunday here at the Javits Center.
- I Love NY won the award for the most innovative aisle last year.
- This year ILNY is supporting Taste NY with a culinary theme and all 23 NYS aisle exhibitors are encouraged to incorporate NYS food and drink in their booth.
- There are three familiarization tours for tour operators and the press going to the Hudson Valley, Capital Saratoga, and Long Island.
- Spokespersons for Taste NY are presenting at the I Love NY Trade Panel, Consumer Panel, as well as Meet the Expert Session taking place this weekend.
- Ross Levi will be on Meet the Experts session tomorrow to talk about LGBT travel.
- Other NYS panel representation include: Dutchess County, Sullivan County, Catskills, Central NY, Visit Syracuse, Long Island CVB, Hilltop Hanover Farm and Environmental Center, Long Island Wine Council, Museum Association of New York, Metro North, Amtrak, New York State office of Parks and Recreation, Ski Areas of New York and New York State Canals.

### D. Tourism Summit recap

- The morning session hosted important stakeholders from across the state discussing various tourism issues and concerns.
- The governor sent a video message laying out the importance of tourism to NYS, his commitment to tourism, and announced our new winter ad campaign.
- Many of the issues that we've been discussing on the TAC and in our subcommittees were part of the conversation such as transportation challenges for visitors to upstate, the importance of amateur athletics and special events, and the need to address lodging issues.
- Additional issues discussed were: leisure travel, agritourism, and international tourism.
- The governor's tourism initiatives (deliverables) were announced at the end of the summit, to help address the issues and to increase tourism - Gavin will walk us through them.
- The biggest announcement was the \$50 million commitment for tourism.

## III. NYC & Company update - Fred Dixon / Bryan Grimaldi

- Year-end numbers
  - Police statistics show that NYC is the safest big city in the U.S.
  - The forecast year-end number for NYC tourism was \$58.3 million, which was an increase over \$56.5 the year before and we believe it will be met.
    - Coming up with these numbers is a difficult science - more art than science.
    - Inputs from the federal government, Port Authority, and hotel performance.
  - There may have been a new record in terms of hotel room night sales – 1.5 million room nights more than the year
    - No city in the country is adding hotels or selling rooms the way New York City is.
    - NYC ended the year almost at 110,000 rooms, a record number for New York.
    - NYC added 35,000 hotel rooms in the last 7 years, the entire inventory of San Francisco.
    - 40% percent of the new hotel properties that have opened have been outside of Manhattan – Marriott, The Opera Hotel in the Bronx, and 190 more hotels overall.
- Infrastructure investments (demand generators) - giving people reasons to come to New York
  - One World Observatory opening, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and soon the Met Breuer (the old Whitney building).
  - Staten Island - the New York Wheel and the Empire Outlets.
  - LaGuardia, Penn Station, and Javits are investments that NYC & Co has long advocated for.
- International travel and the strong dollar
  - In the first half of 2015, people were already committed to traveling and spent less when they were on the ground due to the strong dollar.
  - Second half of the year people began to travel less and stayed a shorter amount of time.
  - Impacts key markets like Europe - NYC is the number one market for every European country – 1/3 of all overseas visitors come to NYC.
  - The pound is stronger than the Euro against the dollar, so UK travel is doing well.
  - The Brazilian exchange rate was almost 1:1 and now it's 4:1 - Last year there were 900,000 visitors and it will be a challenge to reach that number this year.

- China is having a difficult time with their stock market, but they continue to travel. We are working hard to make sure that our members are ready for the Chinese inbound travel.
- Chinese President Xi and President Obama are going to be celebrating the relationship from a tourism perspective of the United States in China all year long.
- India is another long term market that is being looked into.
- Strengthening federal level representation to ensure the visa waiver program is protected.
- The international market is critically important for NYC. It accounts for 1/5 of all the travelers that come here but half of all the spending and half of all the hotel room nights.
- Promotions and initiatives
  - New promotional campaign for group space, *Make It NYC, Meet Where You Want to Be*.
  - Expanding the city-to-city co-promotional program to share best practices and messaging: London, Madrid, Amsterdam, Sao Paulo, Mexico City, Seoul, Milan, and Paris (next).
  - Link NYC - The pay phone franchise has been reconfigured for a free public WiFi system for residents and visitors. 1,500 units in the next 12 months and 7,500 units in 4 years.
  - NYC & Co is re-launching their website and digital platform with a new mobile app to help visitors navigate. That may be an opportunity to help promote NYS alongside NYC.
- Events
  - NYC is hosting the finals of the COPA Centenario Latin American soccer tournament - second highest viewed television sports broadcast in the world after the World Cup in June (will bring in international travelers from Latin America).
  - NYC is hosting one of the preliminary rounds of the America's Cup in May – yacht racing along Battery Park towards the Statute of Liberty (will bring in a high-end luxury audience).
- Partnerships
  - Professional Conference Management Association of Vancouver - sponsoring their new business event series all of next year, to be announced at their conference this weekend.
  - I Love New York – promoting NYS and NYC around the world in tandem and it has been a great success. Also teaming up in Australia this summer, could do more in Canada.
  - Discover New England – Boston, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Philadelphia, NYS and Washington, D.C. all promoting the east coast as a destination.
- Airbnb
  - Currently unregulated, untaxed and is very competitive with the hotels.
  - Some nights bring 35-45,000 additional units through Airbnb and similar lodging.
  - New Year's Eve had over 40,000 guests in Airbnb in NYC.
  - New state law makes short-term rentals illegal under Building Codes in NYC - does not apply upstate, so legislation may help level the playing field.
  - Some upstate counties have changed their bed tax occupancy tax to collect from short term rentals (a week or for less than 30 days).
  - There is a concern for people who have rented lake homes for decades and this would take that ability away from them. It is different from Airbnb competing directly with hotels.
  - There are areas that need this where the inventory is lacking during certain seasons for events such as in Cooperstown during induction weekend.
  - It was suggested that TAC look into this, possibly with NYC & Co. – NYSHTA may also have some information.

#### **IV. Executive Director Report - Gavin Landry**

##### **A. Tourism Summit deliverables and next steps**

- \$50 million investment announced by Governor Cuomo.
- Last year \$100 billion in economic impact for the first time ever.
- This year's deliverables on transportation, lodging infrastructure, and reimbursement for sports and events were all issue that were worked on by the TAC subcommittees.
- Transportation - \$4 million to enlist partners in ways to connect downstate to upstate.
- Lodging Infrastructure - NYS needs appropriate lodging stock throughout the state and an environment that is friendly for appropriate lodging development.
- Reimbursement for special events - Partners throughout the state are interested in bringing regional, national, international events to NYS that require large and other financial incentives.

- Tourism 2020 – Included a focus on bleisure (business and leisure combined) to capitalize on the opportunities with corporate partners who can extend stays by increasing awareness of NYS. Business travel is 20% of all travel.
- B. CFA update
- Round 5 - \$83 million worth of tourism related projects (\$12 million Market NY funding).
  - More lodging products than ever including: a Mirbeau Hotel in the Hudson Valley, a major hotel near the CIA, and a Harbor Hotel in Chautauqua.
  - Also a National Comedy Center in Jamestown with comedy training and development
  - The governor announced \$13 million for Round 6.
- C. New I LOVE NY licensing program
- A new licensing agency has been signed after 20 years of one agency.
  - Brand Sense Partners is moving the program in a new direction that is more reflective of NYS than just the souvenir market.
  - Based in LA, a holistic design, branding and licensing business development group.
  - Clients currently include Dodge, Marriott, Nordstroms, Britany Spears and others.
  - Looking options such as at a direct retail relationship with a sporting goods store to sell an Adirondack line of tents, a Hamptons line of bicycles, etc. with info about travel in those areas.
  - Ideas for home décor, outdoor recreation, fishing and hiking and combining with big box stores and small boutiques throughout NYS.
  - Brand Sense spoke to the regional TPAs, other state agencies, the Ski Association of New York, etc. to have a full understanding of the assets of New York State.
- D. Museum promotion - Anna Pakman
- Launching a major social media promotion for first quarter in line with the Neil Patrick Harris ad that promotes NYS cultural institutions.
  - Partnered with 13 museums throughout NYS to offer a 15% discount to the Wild Center, Albright Knox, Remington, the Cradle of Aviation, Dia:Beacon, and others.
  - Curated itineraries are available that include additional activities for the weekend.
  - The second component of the promotion takes Instagram influencers for familiarization tours.
  - Inspired by a global movement of photographers and travel enthusiasts have been going to institutions like the Met and Louvre in Paris and taking photos of when they are closed.
  - This allows followers to experience museums in a way that is not possible when open.
  - The 9/11 Museum and the Met are also part of the program.

## V. New Business

- The sports & special events subcommittee may have a meeting between Albany and Buffalo.
- A grass roots dance group in Brooklyn is struggling – is there state funding?
  - Recommended that they look into CFA funding. The Council for the Arts has a 90% success rate. They should call their local Assembly member or Senator for assistance.
  - Another member suggested that there is a place in the Catskills that supports residencies for small art groups to work together.
- Taste NY has gift baskets for sale in the Grand Central store and a store in the Javits Center.
- February 6 – Tea Town in the Hudson Valley is hosting Eagle Fest. Up to 350 bald eagles from Canada and New Jersey come there to nest.

## VI. Tour of the I LOVE NY activation at the New York Times Travel Show

Next meeting:

Monday, March 14, 2016  
 11am – 1pm  
 633 Third Avenue, NYC