

Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc.

Board of Directors Meeting
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
Pawtucket, RI

Minutes
September 8, 2015

Attendees:

David Balfour, Chairman
Barry Mechanic, Vice Chairman (by phone)
Alexander Parmenidez
Thomas Kravitz

Absent:

Judy Fischbach, Treasurer
Dave Richards
Lori Urso
Michael Gwynn
Courtney Iannuccilli
Mark Brodeur
Debra Fournier
Louis Yip, Member

Also Attending:

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

A quorum (6 members) was not present; therefore, the meeting was not called to order by Mr. Balfour, but there was general discussion on the following topics:

The Outpost – Dr. Billington reviewed discussions he has had with the Rhode Island Department of Transportation Director and Deputy Director regarding concerns about the legality of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council's lease with The Outpost at the I-295 Visitor Center.

30th Anniversary Annual Dinner – William and David Belisle will be recognized as sports leaders and John Monaghan, former editor of the Journal/Bulletin will also be recognized at the annual dinner. Lou Schwechheimer, Vice President and General Manager of the PawSox, has left that position. If he attends the annual dinner, he will also be recognized. The annual dinner will be held on October 1 at the Twin River Event Center. We would like at least 300 people to be in attendance. Board members will be e-mailed the invitation and are asked to distribute the invitation to family, friends and colleagues. The increased price for the dinner reflects our effort to create an Environmental Trust Fund to support the educational activities of *The Blackstone Valley Explorer*. The boat is 23 years old and is in need of maintenance and repair. One of our major sponsors is Mystic Aquarium/Sea Research who conduct programs and research worldwide. They like teaching on the Blackstone River and as such their environmental education programs connect the Blackstone River to the rest of the world.

American Girl Event – September 19/20 – Activities highlighting the books and movie about Grace Thomas, The American Girl™ Girl of the Year 2015 doll will take place the weekend of September 19 and 20. Activities include a train ride through the Blackstone Valley starting from the historic Blackstone Valley Depot in Woonsocket. Other activities will be at the Museum of Work and Culture (baking class and French scavenger hunt through the museum), the Slater Mill (weaving lesson), the Kelly House, *The Blackstone Valley Explorer* boat ride, the canal and the bike path. The activities correspond to the books and movie and provide inspiration to young girls. These activities also help to fulfill our mission to promote the National Historical Park and the activities in the Blackstone Valley.

The ticket price for the train has been lowered and trips have been reduced in an effort to sell out the train, as we do with our other train events (Fall Foliage Train and Polar Express). Board members are asked to promote the events among family, friends and colleagues.

Dragon Boat Races and Taiwan Day Festival – This event was held on Saturday, September 5 and was a great success. Twenty teams competed and there was a large crowd of spectators in attendance.

Financial Audit Report Update – Natalie Carter reported that the audit has begun. The auditors have the paperwork they need and all is going well. No problems have come to light at this point. Natalie, Judy Fischbach and bookkeeper Kevin Silva have been working with the auditors. The next meeting with the auditors is scheduled for the first week in October.

As part of the audit, the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council Employee Manual is being updated. There is a question regarding vacation time. The manual will be reviewed by a Human Resources professional and then presented to the Board of Directors for approval.

Strategic Plan – The strategic plan is being finished by Gayle Gifford.

Board Membership – There is a need to fill some voting member positions on the Board in order to complete our work with the Rhode Island Foundation. Dr. Billington would like to have Attorney Keith Fayan back on the Board. There was a suggestion that a staff person from the National Heritage Corridor be a Board member, but it was pointed out that Dr. Billington is a member of the National Heritage Corridor Board and can fulfill that function.

Treasurer's Report – In the absence of Treasurer Judy Fischbach, Tom Kravitz presented the Treasurer's Report; however, without a quorum no vote was taken to accept the report.

Other Business – Dr. Billington reported that the City of Pawtucket no longer owns the building where the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council offices are located, and the new owners are Pet Food Experts. There was a suggestion that someone from Pet Food Experts be on our Board of Directors. Dr. Billington would like the Park Service to be part of the building, sooner rather than later.

Next Meeting – There was discussion about calling a Board of Directors meeting before the annual dinner takes place on October 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Loos, BVTC Staff

Att: Annual Dinner Invitation and American Girl Weekend Information