

Explorers' Edge Board of Directors Meeting Minutes: June 19, 2012

Location: Nipissing University, Bracebridge

Present: Tony Armstrong, Lois Baron-Ralph, Michelle Berry, Daniel Feasby, Gary Froude (Chair), Mike Laba, Jackie Leung, Don MacKay, Randy Mitson, Jim Murphy, Andrew Ryeland, Nicole Saulnier, Ken Turner, Andy Vitch, Diane Wiber

Absent: Jerry Feltis

Staff: James Murphy, Kate Monk

Guests: Laura Hernando (MTCS), Michelle Poison (MTCS)

Call to Order:

Chair Gary Froude called the meeting to order at 9:45 am

1. Approval of Agenda – Tuesday, June 19, 2012

Motion: moved by Don MacKay

Seconded by Ken Turner

Discussion: Governance Chair Tony Armstrong asked that an end of meeting In Camera session be added for good governance to discuss materials delivery especially with new Directors.

Carried.

2. Approval of Minutes – April 25, 2012

Motion: moved by Tony Armstrong that the Minutes for the April 25, 2012 Board of Directors meeting be approved.

Seconded: Jackie Leung

Carried.

3. Financials Presentation to May 31st, 2012 – Don MacKay (Treasurer)

Don MacKay presented the financials noting that spending is just starting. He asked that Directors review the financials prior to meetings and email him with any questions.

Tony Armstrong asked if the Transfer Payment Agreement process could be explained for the benefit of new members.

Don MacKay and James Murphy explained the funding model and Operational Planning process.

Motion: moved by Don Mackay that the financials to May 31st, 2012 be approved by the Board.

Seconded: Dan Feasby

Carried.

4. Partnership Fund – James Murphy, Gary Froude, MTCS

James Murphy and Gary Froude explained the new funding model that the MTCS is putting in place next year. James Murphy noted that it is not flow through or granting, but rather matching funds to generate partnerships that will foster growth in the regional tourism industry.

Andy Vitch inquired as to how the Ministry determines funding for the different RTOs. Gary Froude responded that it is based on many things including room nights. Laura Hernando noted that funding was once call performance-based funding but is now called proportional-based funding.

Andy Vitch noted that RTO12 may be at a disadvantage with the model and inquired if it would be possible to determine how much funding the other RTOs get. Laura Hernando stated that RTO12 could research that very easily.

Andrew Ryeland stated that he does not want the funding to go to the DMOs.

James Murphy stated that the Ministry is responsible for developing an industry communications strategy to unveil the program, and stated that his understanding is that partnerships will be part of EE's business planning process.

5. Presentation by David Brushey, Muskoka Futures.

James Murphy informed the Board that David Brushey was unable to attend.

6. Committee Updates

Governance Committee – Tony Armstrong, Chair

Tony Armstrong stated that the Governance Committee has met and discussed many things, and will be working to improve policies. This group will meet next at its quarterly meeting in September. He requested that all Committee Chairs should have reports no later than a week before the Board meetings to James so they can be posted. The Committee would like to do a Governance workshop in the fall.

Marketing Committee Update – Jackie Leung, Chair, Kate Monk, Staff

Jackie Leung and Kate Monk updated the Board on recent Marketing Committee meetings and on the status of the summer marketing strategy and execution. Andrew Ryeland stated that he would like EE's Facebook social media to be "dirtier."

Research, Tracking and Measurement Committee – Jim Murphy, James Murphy

Jim Murphy advised the Board that the Committee is looking for more members. The Committee is currently working on a recreational trails pilot project, developing a Tourism Indicator Framework, and is planning to hold a facilitated whiteboard session early September to flush out details for TIF Operational Plan development for February 1st.

Diane Wiber agreed to join the Committee and act as Chair.

Tourism Operator Relations – Dan Feasby, Chair

Dan Feasby explained that the Product Development Fund applications are coming in. Andy Vitch asked for examples of what types of applications staff have received. James Murphy gave examples of the types of organizations that have taken the requisite preliminary step to contact EE. James Murphy reiterated that this is not flow through funding, but serves to fill a capacity issue for EE staff by having partners develop products.

Mike Laba inquired if there is overlap between this funding and the MTCS's new funding model. James Murphy responded no because EE's funding does not have to continue next year when MTCS implements the new model. James – no because this is only for this year...tourism partnership fund is for next year.

Motion: Moved by Dan Feasby that the Tourism Operator Relations Committee be granted the authority by the Board of Directors to approve up to \$10,000 maximum funding of projects, for up to 75% a project, to a total accumulative committee spend of \$100,000.

**Seconded: Don MacKay
Carried.**

Transacting Committee – Don MacKay for Jerry Feltis, Chair

Don MacKay reiterated preliminary results of Fuel & Fun campaign that were presented by Committee Chair Jerry Feltis at the previous Board meeting.

Andy Vitch asked to join the committee.

Community Relations Committee – Don MacKay, Chair

Don MacKay gave a recap of the previous Community Relations Committee meeting. He stated that Rob McPhee from MCN attend the meeting without formally being invited or included on the agenda to discuss an MCN initiative.

Andy Vitch asked what the mechanism for measuring tourism receipts is. Gary Froude indicated that it has been discussed previously and that the Research, Tracking and Measurement Committee is working on the Tourism Indicator Framework. He also indicated that OTMPC will

be rolling out consumer research in September. James mentioned that HST tracking as a short-term solution has been discussed in many previous Board meetings.

Don Mackay informed new board members of process with OTMP.

Laura Hernando indicated there is a research division at the Ministry that she could connect EE with. Andrew Ryeland requested that the Board send a letter to the Ministry. Don MacKay indicated that he has contacted Norm Miller to move things along with the Ministry regarding tracking of receipts.

Laura Hernando indicated the Neil Coburn, RTO Manager at the MTCS, will attend the next Community Relations Committee meeting to answer any high level questions members may have.

Don MacKay stated that he did not want to talk about the MTCS's new funding model until all the components were finalized. Gary Froude disagreed and said it is part of an open and transparent process to let them know as much as EE knows about it. – said it's part of the process to let them know about it.

Laura Hernando indicated she would be willing to write a status update of the model for the next committee meeting if EE wanted her to.

7. Round Table / Other Business

Andrew Ryeland: indicated that the fee for attending the TIAO Summit is \$600 and too much for individual operators to pay. He would like them to move the conference further into the shoulder season.

Mike Laba: reported that Muskoka Brewery is partnering with Amsterdam Brewery to sponsor the Honda Indy, taking over from Labatt. Indicated that there is a 3-year contract and there would be potential opportunities for EE in the next couple of years. He agreed to take EE tent cards and take-aways for EE summer strategy to the Indy.

Don Mackay: indicated that the industry as a whole has contracted.

Ken Turner: July, August and September look good. A saving grace for June has been Hydro renting rooms.

Tony Armstrong: numbers are up a bit from last year but down from 2 years ago. Not a lot of corporate business.

Laura Hernando: indicated she is fielding many calls for the Tourism Development Fund at this time.

Jackie Leung: indicated that outdoor activities and experience packages are the biggest sellers and that last minute bookings are popular.

Randy Mitson: indicated that past winter was the worst ever for Algonquin Outfitters so they are looking forward to summer. Working heavily on social media including with a Facebook business coach.

Dan Feasby: had a good winter. Spring is looking okay as is summer, but Fall needs a boost so he is looking forward to the Fall campaign.

Diane Wiber: Just opened their business last year and it is going well.

Nicole Saulnier: Great start to the year: ice cream selling well, float plane training going well and sightseeing up a little bit even though they are down a plane.

Michelle Berry: up to 5% over last year at this time. KOA turns 50 years old this year.

Jim Murphy: summer and fall looks healthy according to reservation data. CTC working with AP for Signature Experience public wolf howl.

Andy Vitch: numbers are good at Sunny Point Resort and looks like it is going to be another best year. Has owned different kinds of businesses and wonders if northern tourism is viable at 20% occupancy. Noted that Sunny Point is #2 on Trip Advisor for Parry Sound and that #1 is Glen Burney Lodge.

Lois Barron-Ralph: working with partners to create a better experience. Patio opening on Georgian Bay.

Andrew Ryeland: wants to take a look at group corporate strategies – bring whole companies/corporations up.

Gary Fourde: Muskoka Chautauqua participating as part of a \$750,000 sweepstakes with OTMPC and Muskoka Tourism featuring author Joseph Boyden in Muskoka. Gallery is going well. Best year so far.

Don MacKay: Frustrated by the lack of timely delivery of research by OTMPC. Stated that we need more up-to-date consumer research and that he will never advocated working with OTMPC for this kind of project again. Stated that biking is becoming ever more popular and we need to capture that market.

8. Board went In Camera to discuss Governance.

9. Adjournment before establishing next Board meeting.