

RED RIVER NORTH TOURISM

MINUTES: VIRTUAL GENERAL MEETING 7:00pm, Wednesday, 14 October, 2020

Via Zoom

Marlena Muir, Vice President, sitting as Chair.

IN ATTENDANCE:

For the Board:

Marlena Muir, Community Volunteer, Selkirk; *2nd Vice President; Chair, Product and Service Development Committee*

Merilee Mollard, Community Volunteer, Selkirk; *Treasurer*

Marilyn Williams, Community Volunteer, St Andrews; *Secretary*

Laurel Sarginson, Owner, Evergreen Gate B & B, St Andrews; *Past President*

Directors:

Darlene McArdle, St Clements Heritage Committee

Rob Sarginson, Chair, Red River North Regional Heritage Group

Robert Turner, Community Volunteer, St Andrews

Ex Officio:

Tourism Advisor: Gail McDonald, Interlake Tourism Association

Municipal Appointees:

Sandra Strang, Councillor, RM St Clements

Kristin Hoebee, Councillor, RM St Andrews

Municipal Staff:

Teresa Howell, Recreation Director, RM St Andrews

Heather Bailey, RRNT Tourism Coordinator

Cheryl Christianson, Mayor RM of West St Paul

Debbie Fiebelkorn, Mayor RM of St Clements

Anna Fryza, RRNT Bookkeeper

Betty Jackson, Tourism supporter

Kris Kubay, Selkirk and District Horticultural Society

Garry Marshall, EDO, RM of St Clements

Shirley Muir, Founder and Manager, Holiday Alley/Homes for the Holidays

Kayla Parke-Wilson, RRNT Social Media Coordinator

Anna Pazdzierski, Community supporter

Fraser Stewart, Red River North Heritage Committee

Joy Sul, Mayor RM of St Andrews

Melissa Van Soelen, Interlake Tourism Association

Leila Wegert, Selkirk and District Horticultural Society

WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting, acknowledged Mayors Christianson, Fiebelkorn, and Sul, and introduced the Board of Directors. She offered the President's regrets and reviewed the protocols and procedures for the meeting.

She stated that all documents to be discussed at the meeting were made available on the RRNT web site and some had been circulated by e-mail.

1. President's Message

The meeting opened with the President's Message which had been circulated with the Agenda. There were no comments or questions regarding the Message as provided.

2. 2019 Annual Report

This report had been shared with Councils late in 2019 but had not been circulated to members due to the cancellation of the Annual General Meeting scheduled for March. It was noted that much had changed since the report was drafted and delivered.

3. 2019 Financial Statements

Treasurer, M. Mollard offered verbal highlights of the 2019 Financial Statements as reviewed by Chad Sheppard, CPA. 2019 was a very good year for RRNT and it is certain that 2020 will not be as positive. The loss of revenue generating events has had a tremendous impact.

Mollard thanked sponsors and program partners, touching on their contributions to the *Garden and Art Tour* and other programs. She remarked that the hiring of the part-time Tourism Coordinator in 2020 has had a significant impact on achieving goals and completing projects.

RRNT was unable to take advantage of the Manitoba Métis Federation's summer student grant program in 2019.

Mollard explained that there was a focus on membership development throughout 2019. Several networking events were planned and the first event was well received. Unfortunately, the following scheduled events were interrupted by Covid restrictions.

Nevertheless, there was a surplus at the December 31st year end.

MOTION:

To adopt the 2019 Financial Statements as reviewed by Chad Sheppard.

Moved: Merilee Mollard

Seconded: Sandra Strang

Carried

4. 2020 Interim Report

The Chair introduced the Interim Report, which provides a synopsis of the first three quarters of 2020. She called on several present to add any further comments to the report.

a. Tourism Coordinator

H. Bailey, RRNT Tourism Coordinator, said that along with summer student Hope Pochinko, as much as possible was accomplished given the new challenges. All things considered she felt it had been a positive summer season. There were a number of videos posted to You Tube, and features and articles added to the web site.

b. Kennedy House

R. Sarginson commented on the activities of the Kennedy House Renewal Committee. A Renewal Plan was accepted by St Andrews Council and negotiations with the Province have begun. The Committee is pursuing the Province to do structural repairs and it is possible that with community support the necessary

work could be done in a less costly fashion than earlier suggested. Another meeting with the Province is scheduled in late October.

c. Social Media

K. Parke-Wilson, RRNT Social Media Coordinator, reviewed some of the stats provided in the report. There was an overall increase in activity due to Covid, with people seeking diversion close to home.

She pointed out that the majority of our “fans” are from Winnipeg and not the local area. In future the focus will turn to posting high quality photos and targeting specific demographics. Search engine optimization will also be addressed.

d. Treasurer’s report

M. Mollard gave a verbal synopsis of the current financial position. A detailed reporting for the year will be available at the Annual General Meeting in March.

She highlighted the advertising made available through partnership with Interlake Tourism Association. This included print placement in the *Asian Guide* and the digital billboards in Winnipeg offered by Travel Manitoba.

Mollard reported that the lack of revenue was due to the cancellation of several programs, notably the *Garden and Art Tour*. She pointed out that RRNT sponsorship of the *55+ Games* stands until they are held in 2021 but that unfortunately the *Ice Fishing Show* has been cancelled this year. In past years this event has been an important direct contact opportunity with fishers.

Other positive features included videos and stories regarding the Selkirk Murals, the *Red River Paddle Challenge* sponsorship, and the weekly presence at the waterfront markets throughout August. Many of these projects were aided by the MMF summer student.

The two major changes to activities for the remainder of 2020 and moving forward into 2021 are the transfer of *Holiday Alley* and *Homes for the Holidays* to RRNT and the new *Destination Selkirk* initiative.

5. Holiday Alley & Homes for the Holidays

S. Muir explained the absence of *Homes for the Holidays* this year. Program volunteers were prepared to continue this year but by August it was clear that due to Covid many homeowners were becoming nervous about welcoming so many guests into their homes, so the event has been postponed.

Hosting a virtual event was considered but the cost was not reasonable. *Homes for the Holidays* is intended to be a money generating event not a cost centre. It has been very successful over the years, raising over \$150,000 for housing related projects in the local community, and there is confidence that it will continue to be a success in future.

Muir continued with a comprehensive report on the *Holiday Alley* program. Coordinators have met with the Public Health Officer and the event has been reformatted accordingly. This has meant rethinking how things are presented and how the public can be engaged. It will go forward on a scale that is cost effective. *IG Wealth Management* has been secured as title sponsor.

Muir concluded by noting it was exciting to have some clever young people involved who bring new ideas and perspectives to the planning of this important community event.

6. 2021 Budget and Program Highlights

The Program highlights and proposed budgets for 2021 were provided. These will be ratified at the next meeting of the Board of Directors.

At this time the Chair mentioned there were vacancies on the Board. These can be filled on an interim basis with formal elections held at the AGM in March. Those with interest in joining the Board are invited to come forward.

L. Sarginson, Past Chair, indicated it was gratifying to see many initiatives continue to move forward.

Mayor Fiebelkorn, RM of St Clements, offered her compliments on the work done by RRNT and committed the further support of Council.

Mayor Joy Sul, RM of St Andrews, echoed those sentiments stating she is especially eager to see the reestablishment of Kennedy House as an active public amenity.

Secretary, M. Williams thanked all those who assisted in preparations for the meeting and thanks the RM of St Andrews for the use of Zoom.

The meeting closed with a viewing of the Red River Paddle Challenge video sponsored by RRNT and ITA. It captured the spirit of the day and will be posted on the web sites soon.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm

Minutes approved ___ as circulated

___ with amendments to be reflected in the minutes of Annual General Meeting #3, March 2021 (date to be determined).

President _____ Date _____

Secretary _____