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Explorers' Edge Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, November 12, 2024
Zoom

Present: Angela Pollak, Darren Smith, Dave Anderson, Didier Dolivet, Gabriela Hairabedian, Tristan Berry, Sarah North-Harris

Resource: Laura Ross, Peter Coish (Kuration)

Regrets: Jackie Leung, Hilary Chambers, Anubandu Lakhera

Staff: James Murphy, Jake Good, Rebecca Francis, Erin Smit (taking minutes)

Round Table Director and Staff Meet & Greet

Call to Order and Chair Remarks: Darren Smith called the meeting to order at 10:08am.

Conflict of Interest: n/a

Approval of Agenda – November 12, 2024

Motion: Sarah North-Harris

Seconded: Tristan Berry

Discussion: n/a

Carried.

Approval of Minutes – September 25, 2024 and October 9, 2024

Motion: Gabriela Hairabedian

Seconded: Darren Smith

Discussion: n/a

Carried.

BOP Status – Partnership, Regional Tourism Summit Outcomes & Fiscal Planning

Attended the TIAO summit in Hamilton; opportunity to make connections and network with provincial policy representatives, building relationships and discussing policies impacting regional tourism development. Top of mind was MAT tax discussions and funding for the model. Planning cycle for the RTOs as well as provincial projects that all RTOS take part in like research was heavily discussed. Met with the Minister to discuss tourism priorities, potential support and alignment on initiatives that benefit the region; noted he was familiar with the RTO model, with the current government keen on ROI and the economic impact of tourism. Noted as a DDO with the pillars we're given to work under, some of these items cannot be assessed with ROI but are long term projects building capacity; also discussed

transportation and inbound packages enhancing regenerative opportunities. Met with Niagara region ED as well, great chance to network with members from across the province enhancing insights on strategies, challenges and opportunities for collaboration.

Discussed the Women in Tourism event; well sought after with a great mentorship aspect. Sold out with 50 guests in attendance. Sarah North-Harris commented on the mentorship piece as well; many in attendance from those new to the industry to veterans with lots of insights to share; creating connections and opportunities.

Discussed the Regional Tourism Summit (the deck will be sent out this week to attendees). Summit event sold out and was the first event RTO12 has charged admission fees for. Spoke to the engaging panel discussions, sparking conversations and providing valuable feedback. Representation from all of our sub-regions and a diverse attendance of business owners and industry representatives. Product development highlights in panel discussions showcased innovative offerings and future opportunities in the region. Lots of positive feedback from visitors; a package will be posted online today so visitors have access to the decks and information that was shared during the day.

Budget will be reconciled from the event; funds to cover costs from partnership allocation and core funding. Looking forward, will seek sponsorship with longer lead time; to highlight in the BOP moving forward with separate allotted budget.

Discussed partnerships in the works; \$166k budget allocation with projects meeting with matching funds. If the funds are not allocated, the money is transferred back to the government (separate budget line in the TPA). Projects require MOU, third part consultants and a wrap report. Some projects that have been put on hold include the West Parry Sound District Museum, Seguin Township and Ontario French Authors Association; other projects being finalized and wrap reports requested.

Upcoming items include post summit survey and information circulation as well as final report submission and circulation. James Murphy will be attending the National Convention for Camping in Ontario in Niagara Falls and hosting a Sustainability Workshop there with Kate Monk, as well as staff travelling next week to the Northern Ontario Tourism Summit in North Bay.

Up Next:

- Board of Director Planning & Survey
- Camping In Ontario Conference & Sustainability Workshop – Niagara Ontario
- Northern Ontario Tourism Summit – North Bay Ontario
- Big Applause Awards
- Product Development Survey
- Labour Gap Analysis
- Lakehead University work-integrated learning partnership
- Partnership Reconciliation – Final Reports
- Draft 2025 – 2026 Business and Operational Plan
- Regenerative Travel Agency

Governance – Election of the Executive Committee

AGM in June 2025, looking for a temporary executive for the next 6 months, with possibility for the executive roles to be rearranged following the AGM.

Smith will stay in the Treasurer role, looking for members to step into Chair and Vice Chair roles. Martyn has resigned from the Festival of the Sound and our board, Roberts resigned from the board. Smith asked if anyone was interested in stepping into a leadership role for the next six months. Executive meet every two weeks for half an hour. Gabriela has been on the board with SABA for four years; would be willing to step into the Vice Chair role for the next 6 months. Sarah North-Harris asked if there was a minimum amount of time to be on the board before taking on an executive position; Murphy mentioned he checked the bylaws and there is not.

Motion for Election of the Executive Positions

Chair: Gabriela Hairabedian

Vice Chair: Sarah North-Harris

Treasurer: Darren Smith

Motion: Tristan Berry

Seconded: Didier Dolivet

Discussion: n/a

Carried.

Motion to Adjourn at 10:42am