



SVTA Marketing Committee Conference Call
July 10, 2017
3:30 p.m.

Present on Call:

Helen Morton, Delaware North at Shenandoah National Park
John Shaffer, Luray Caverns
Jamie Woolf, Capital Ale House
Jo Diedrich, Leisure Media 360
Nathan Garrison, Grand Caverns
Felicia Hart, Front Royal Tourism
Tracy Marlatt, SVTA

Absent: Julie Armel, Museum of the Shenandoah Valley; Greg Miller, Country Inn & Suites – Harrisonburg

Helen Morton started the meeting at 3:31 p.m. Following the provided agenda, the group discussed:

1. **Review 2017-2018 Moore PR Agreement:** Helen and board worked with Kathy Moore, of Moore PR, to have her invoices submitted monthly in an effort to keep her work on budget and to insure timely payments for her work. Helen asked if anyone on committee worked with a PR professional, Felicia Hart answered yes. She shared that these contracts are a “work in progress” and have to be somewhat flexible, when a story or reporter pops up. Felicia asked the following questions:
 - a. What is meant geographically by “the Shenandoah Valley” (page 1 of Moore Public Relations Contract): Helen responded Harpers Ferry, WV to Roanoke, VA.
 - b. Under Media Outlet, letter d., Felicia asked if phrasing should be payment the following month for services provided the current month. Helen responded it is to be “in the month for the month.”
 - c. Again, under Media Outlet, letter f. Felicia wondered who approved the out-of-pocket expenses and should their names be listed in contract. Helen’s answer: Jaime, as committee chair, and Steve Everidge, SVTA board treasurer. Felicia expressed the concern that there was a legitimate paper trail for said expenses.
 - d. Felicia also suggested that a section be added under these bullets that “Any work/work product done by Moore PR becomes the property of SVTA.”
 - e. Finally, Felicia asked if it is possible to see Moore PR’s distribution list. Helen said she could ask for this list but as John Shaffer pointed out, Kathy Moore may want to keep the list proprietary. Helen will follow up with Kathy to see what she is willing to share.

ACTION STEP: Tracy to make edits to contract and send to Helen, to then send on to Moore PR. **COMPLETED**

2. **MATPRA Attendance: Media Marketplace on September 13.** Kathy Moore will attend the Media Marketplace on behalf of SVTA on September 13 from 9 am – 12 noon and has requested that other SVTA folks, who have media experience, cover the remaining meeting sessions on Sept. 13th & 14th. Suggestion was made that Julie Armel, located in Winchester would be possibility, as well as Sergei Troubetzkoy, SVTA board member. Felicia Hart indicated she, too, would be there and could help.

ACTION STEP: Need to send info about MATPRA event to the whole committee (Helen & Tracy).

3. **2017-2018 Budget Review, outline monthly spend/allocation:** Helen quickly reviewed the budget with the committee so all would be informed of overall budget and where money was allocated.
 - a. Felicia requested that the Google Analytics be shared with the group. (Action step: Helen)
 - b. Helen explained that other than some winter promotion for winter activity, the efforts are reduced in January, winter, and then picks up again in Spring.
 - c. 2016-2017 Grant Re-imburement status: Julie Armel submitted the grant last year; at this time there is just over \$9,000 in reimbursement due to SVTA. Julie is working on getting all outstanding invoices and paperwork submitted to get this money received. Helen indicated that if received, some of these monies could be used for future PR-marketing efforts.

ACTION STEP: Julie to give update to committee; submit paperwork.

4. **PR/Social Updates:**

- a. John shared that he truly believed that Kathy Moore went above and beyond with her work on behalf of SVTA and that from a year ago's perspective, SVTA is making great progress. He also indicated that perhaps it is too soon to know how effective all the new efforts have been (new website, AdRoll, Kathy's other efforts, etc). Helen concurred and shared that she met with a blogger this morning who is covering the Valley that she wouldn't have met him without Kathy's efforts.
- b. Images on the website and in AdRoll will be changed out for the leaf-peeping season.
- c. Helen shared that with the stories John Robbins writes each month, the website is fresh and changing, so when someone visits the site multiple times, they are seeing different content & images.

5. **Digital advertising proposal** from Vista Graphics: Sam, our Travel Guide Sales Rep, talked with Kathy at the June membership meeting and gave her a proposal that lists the digital promotions that Vista Graphics offers. The group briefly discussed and felt some of this is already being done by Kathy; that with our limited budget, the group passed on working with Vista Graphic.

ACTION STEP: Helen to follow up with Sam. **COMPLETED**

6. **2018 Travel Guide:** As early plans are starting for the 2018 guide, Sam had requested that there be one SVTA point of contact with Vista during the editing phase.

- a. Helen shared that ideally we would like to start on ad sales in September. Didn't start till November last year, which put whole project behind. Need to get contract signed off so Sam/Vista Graphics can get started.
- b. After paying expenses, SVTA made \$752 after the production of guide. If more ad sales are generated, then SVTA can make more money offsetting brochure distribution costs.
- c. Jo discussed that she helped in the past, would be willing to help this year. Felicia shared she has proofing skills and would also be willing to help. Group discussed need for guide to have "one voice" communicating with Vista Graphic on top of catching typos.

7. Website Update: Helen shared that the banner ads are rotating, looks great. Also had the headers brightened with improved overall appearance. Finally, under each region's listings, if one clicks on it, one is taken directly to the event's page, not to landing page – much more direct, efficient, user friendly.

8. Travel Show email leads/response: Helen shared that there had been a break-down since transition away from Collie Corg, former management company, with receiving leads generated from the travel shows, BRPA and online. Last week we received over 740 direct mail leads from Blue Ridge Parkway Association and over 1,200 email leads from the travel shows. Helen added herself to the website online link and shared there had been 23 requests since Friday. Link is now fixed.

ACTION STEP: Helen will work with Gretchen Long of Queen City Creative who created the "Epic Experiences Ahead" to develop the email template. **COMPLETED**

9. Quarterly Newsletter: Helen asked John Robbins if he would be willing to write a quarterly email newsletter to distribute to our growing database of emails (from #8, email leads from online and travel shows). He agreed to do this as part of his current writing contract. Will need to determine if this distribution will happen via Mail Chimp or Constant Contact. Goal is to get the first e-newsletter out by July 21st.

ACTION STEP: Helen to contact Julie re Mail Chimp. **COMPLETED**

10. Posting Member News on mysvta.org: Helen asked Tracy to work with Wild Apricot support tech staff on making updates to the membership website.

Action Step: Tracy to follow up with Stephen, of Wild Apricot.

11. Next VTC Grant Submission: Opens on 9/6/17 and due on 12/5. Review on 11/6: Helen and John discussed that it seems VTC is not awarding full request amounts; it is more @50%. John discussed the difficulty of what expenses can be used as part of the matching, expenses that are already being incurred by the organization. Travel Guide cannot be used. What about Kathy Moore's time? TG distribution costs? John stated that if one can show proof of return (ROI – return on investment) the expense should be able to be used in grant. Felicia has some grant writing experience, is willing to assist with the grant effort.

12. Open discussion: Again, discussion about hard to know about current efforts, if people were seeing a difference, an impact, to all of the new PR & marketing efforts. Again, need to give it time. And again, "light years ahead" of this time last year.

Next meeting call will be held **Tuesday, August 8th at 1:30 p.m.**

Helen concluded the meeting at 4:22 pm