

The Beaver Island Association

*Supporting Environmental and
Economic Sustainability*

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Special Board Meeting: Monday, September 1, 2014, the Beaver Island Community Center

Subject: relationship with the Beaver Island Chamber of Commerce

The meeting began at 1 pm.

Beaver Island Association Board attending: Bob Anderson, Jim Jones, Pam Grassmick, Beth Leuck (by telephone), Taffy Raphael, Bob Tidmore, Andy Kohls, Mark Engelsman, and Peter Igoe. Not attending: Ken McDonald, Keith Brothers, Craig Schrotenboer and Jeff Powers.

Minutes and action items:

1. Jim Jones will take responsibility for modifying the Beaver Island Birding Trail website to include a section on "Island Services". This section will include a prominent link, with logo, to the Beaver Island Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of the link is to provide useful information on island businesses and services to those persons wishing to know more about the island; including contact information for the various service providers. Other organizations which may not be members of the Chamber could also be listed.
2. Taffy Raphael will draft a concise policy statement regarding various levels of "sponsors" to be highlighted on the website. The website will also include a section on "founding sponsors" (Jim Jones, please note).
3. Pete Igoe will follow up with the Chamber board to gather board member email addresses in order to inform the Chamber of upcoming BIA activities.

The meeting was adjourned at 2pm

Overview (provided before the meeting)

Membership in the Beaver Island Chamber of Commerce is in the range of 100-150 individuals and businesses. Most island businesses are members. Annual dues range from about \$150 to \$750 per year depending upon the size of the member organization. The Chamber maintains a website that contains a great deal of information about facilities (motels, restaurants, shops, marinas, etc.), transportation (air and boat), services (such as cellphone coverage, Wi-Fi, health care, car and bike rentals, etc.), and a pretty comprehensive calendar of events. The BIA is a member at the \$150 level. The Chamber is governed by a board of directors, Rachel Teague, President, and day-to-day operations are the responsibility of Steve West, Executive Director. Steve maintains an office near the boat dock and the office is open weekdays, approximately 9am to 5pm.

The Larger Issue

The issue we are dealing with is that the Executive Director seems to have a view of what island organizations should do, and he has not been receptive to ideas that differ from his view. In some cases his responses to other person's ideas and plans have been rude, sometimes very rude and outspokenly demeaning of persons or organizations whose ideas do not conform to his views.

Relationship with the Beaver Island Association.

The mission of the BIA is to actively support programs to protect the island's environment and to encourage the development and health of businesses or programs that are supportive of the environment. The Beaver Island Birding Trail seems a perfect example of the latter. Both the Chamber

board and the Executive Director have **recently** expressed very positive feelings about the economic impact of the BIBT and the Chamber is now anxious that the BIA include links from its BIBT website(s) to the Chamber's website. The purpose of the links would be to leverage BIBT widespread popularity (over 200,000 hits on the BIBT website, plus a great deal of very positive word-of-mouth conversations about the hospitality and beauty of Beaver Island) to promote other Chamber activities and businesses.

Possible Course of action

I (and Ken McDonald) suggested at a meeting a week or so ago with the Chamber Board and the Executive Director that the BIA would be receptive to such linkages if a number of inaccuracies in the Chamber web-site with regard to birding were corrected. The Executive Director agreed to this and is awaiting a specific response from the BIA regarding desired corrections. In addition, I would be willing (reluctantly) to have a personal (one-on-one) conversation with the Executive Director regarding "the larger issue". Basically, my approach would be that the BIA is anxious to have a positive relationship with the Chamber and that this must be matched by a similar approach by the Executive Director. And that BIA's cooperation would continue only so long as it is reciprocated. I am hopeful that such an approach would result in a cooperative relationship, beneficial to both the environment and the island economy.

Specific Concerns with this approach

Pam Grassmick has raised a number of issues (and I believe Beth Leuck concurs with Pam)

Why no to the Chamber on the Pelagic page?

1. This Pelagic Tour is being promoted and developed through the field guides-not BIA or the BIBT.org. We have assisted with the logistical part of this trip in an effort to help promote the island and gather data about visitor interest and the seabirds.
2. The trip is filled-accommodations covered. <http://beaverislandbirdingtrail.org/pelagic.html> If we allow this, why don't we allow our sponsors and partners who have given thousands of dollars in support to be placed up front. The last time I looked, the Chamber was not a BIA member or offered any financial assistance to the BIBT.
3. By placing the Chamber's logo on the Pelagic tour-it looks like it is a Chamber sponsored event. The boat company is giving a discount and BIA is picking up the tab for the vans. Neither has asked to have their logo on that page.
4. This sets the precedent that all future event pages will have the Chamber's logo. I intend next year to go after funding from island businesses and they too may want their logo to be placed up front.
5. I like the clean look of the BIBT web pages and would suggest that all new interested sponsors and supporters be placed where we developed the "Thank You" spot-on the BIBT web page tab. That has worked fine-up until now. All of our sponsors and partners reviewed this format and gave their approval before the BIBT went live.
6. The Chamber site is not all business inclusive-only those business' that belong to the Chamber get promoted. We discussed this long ago when developing the BIBT that it was to include all business' that would be of interest to birders.
7. The Charlevoix, Petoskey, and TC Chamber may want be listed too. We'll know more after the NW Regional Birding Trail Planning meeting.
8. The BIBT.org is the sum total of its members-I would not like one organization who pays for one part of this be given prominent billing on one piece of the BIBT when others assisted in the many long hours of development.

I hope after you read this e-mail that you will also agree with this decision. I will make the Chamber more prominent on the "Getting Here" web page soon. I need to make additional web changes too.

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I am hopeful that the BIA board can find a way to move forward with the Chamber while addressing Pam's concerns. [Peter's comment]