

## DIGBY AREA TOURISM ASSOCIATION [DATA]

### 2015 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

**Meeting:** May 6, 2015 AGM, Digby Fire Hall

**Present:** Saskia Geerts, Greg Turner, Mary Tibbetts, Ian and Carol Barnes, Tom Goodwin, Linda Graham, Tina Frost, Bob Benson, Bill and Bernice Schrank, Diane Theriault, Richard and Monika Treleaven, George Manzer, Penny Graham, Virginia Tudor

- **Welcome and Call to Order:** Chair Saskia Geerts called the meeting to order at 2:05pm and welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance.
- **Introductions:** Everyone at the table introduced themselves.
- **Approval/Additions/Deletions to Agenda:** Chair Saskia Geerts asked if there were any additions or changes to the agenda. There were none.

*Linda Graham made a motion to approve the agenda.  
Seconded by Diane Theriault. All aye. Motion carried.*

- **Approval of previous minutes:** Chair Saskia Geerts asked if everyone had reviewed the minutes of the 2014 AGM and called for any changes.

Page 1, Other Attendees: Greg Turner is mentioned twice.

*Greg Turner made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 13, 2014 AGM, with correction.  
Seconded by Linda Graham. All aye. Motion carried.*

- **Treasurer's Report:** Carol Barnes gave her report and called for question.

Bernice Schrank asked about Doers & Dreamers; Treasurer Barnes gave a general description and Greg Turner showed Bernice a copy.

Diane Theriault asked if Treasurer Barnes is still due some monies or has she already been reimbursed. She has not as yet been reimbursed.

*Diane Theriault made a motion to approve reimbursement of \$110.50 to Treasurer Barnes.  
Seconded by Greg Turner. All aye. Motion carried.*

*Bernice Schrank made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report.  
Seconded by Tom Goodwin. All aye. Motion carried.*

- **Annual Report:** Chair Saskia Geerts gave an update on the new and improved web site and explained the different sections of the site and she and Vice-Chair Turner gave an update on the trails.

The web site statistics were impressive. The old google analytics showed 84 unique visitors while the new site shows 282 unique visitors.

Richard Treleaven asked if members could put pictures onto the Facebook page themselves, which they can. Greg Turner clarified that pictures can be put on Facebook by members but we do not want the public to have access to the web site for making changes or additions. He also asked how do we facilitate member ads.

Chair Saskia Geerts and Secretary Mary Tibbetts administer the web site and any questions or comments, etc. should be directed to them via the DATA email: [tourism@digbyarea.ca](mailto:tourism@digbyarea.ca).

Chair Saskia Geerts said we need to keep very active with social media. It is the best and most cost effective way to promote the area at this time. DATA now has twitter and instagram accounts in addition to FaceBook. When using Twitter designate Digby Area Tourism using @digbytourism.

Vice-Chair Greg Turner has been looking at novascotia.com with regard to how our area is represented and making sure all the information is accurate and up-to-date, including the hiking trails. He is meeting with Bob Powell to discuss hiking trails and improving the information about trails in the Doers and Dreamers and novascotia.com.

Currently there are 10 trails in this area which meet the criteria. The three criteria are: i) well maintained; ii) publicly owned or with proper easements; and, iii) insured. George Manzer asked if the trails have names. They do and both Saskia Geerts and Greg Turner have a list of the names. Questions were asked re criteria for different trails and basically each trail needs to be confirmed that they are not on privately owned lands. Most trails are multi-use but not all.

Diane Theriault thanks DATA for making and maintaining the website. It is a lot of work. Tom Goodwin seconded that and everyone agreed it is a good web site.

Chair Saskia Geerts let each member present know it is important that they keep an eye on novascotia.com for all it has to offer in way of free advertising. DATA is linked to novascotia.com. The provincial marketing dollars are going to larger areas and it is up to each of us to do what we can which is why at the marketing level we have to do more with social media which is a low cost option. Ian Barnes asked if DATA could add items on novasotia.com and Saskia Geerts said we can.

Working with novascotia.com and all of social media is and will continue to be on-going and DATA is working to keep up-to-date with it all but members should also remain aware of all that is available.

*Chair Saskia Geerts made a motion to approve the Annual Report.  
Seconded by Carol Barnes. All aye. Motion carried.*

- **VIC closing update:**

Chair Saskia Geerts indicated that DATA is at the table with Bay Ferries and the Province. Discussions are on-going and details need to be determined and worked out. When updates become available we will inform our members. We have no one on the Yarmouth ferry but Bay Ferries will be having someone on the Saint John/Digby ferry, with financial assistance from the province.

As of this date there have been no answers to the questions DATA put forth and there is no update. The province owns the VIC but it sits on Digby Pines land.

There will be a UNESCO sign put up and right now the discussions include where to put the sign, what will the logo be, etc. This will be updated.

Richard Treleaven said the ferry representative is very important and we need to make sure all of the VIC surplus is made available. He suggested we talk to Marilyn LeBlanc about this. Chair Saskia Geerts reminded us that Bay Ferries is working closely with DATA on this.

- **Executive Committee:** no meetings held.

**Marketing Committee:** Vice-Chair Greg Turner gave the highlights on Saltscapes and the great success it was along with pictures of the crowds. There will be some tweaking if we do the show next year (April 22, 23, 24, 2016). Our booth was the only booth manned entirely by volunteers and it was agreed our booth stood out and we were definitely in competition for having the best and most enthusiastic booth at the show. We had 3 draws on Friday and Saturday and 4 draws on Sunday. Artist Bee Stanton joined us at our booth and was a big draw; Victoria Graham showcased her hooking skills and she also brought a baby lamb which was very popular with all ages; and, Rob Hersey did a great job of cooking Digby Scallops on both Friday and Saturday.

Everyone at DATA is very thankful for the hard work of Greg Turner, Rob Hersey, Annah Boucher who were the booth organizers and each and every volunteer who turned up in Halifax to promote Digby and Area. Many thanks from around the table.

**Education Committee:** Chair Saskia Geerts gave an update on Tourism InnovationNS Days which was held in Yarmouth. NSTA is changing its focus so there will be less money in Atlantic Canada because there is not a high return and is now a lot more do it yourself tourism in the area. All of NSTA presentations for this are on-line under NSTA “innovation days.”

Vice-Chair Greg Turner worked with NSCC on a “ready to work” program training for those interested in the tourism industry.

There is also a strategy in the works to make it easier for people from China and elsewhere to travel to our area and all of Canada. The province will be investing in air travel so again a reminder of how important social media is. We need everyone to use (hashtags) #visitnovascotia and #novascotiaeats, etc., posting and replying and liking.

**Product Development Committee:** There was an update on the Biosphere 1-8-3 Loop, including maps and itineraries. Greg Turner brought the map on screen for members to view what a success it can be. Still a lot of work to do plus marketing. The difference between a web app and a phone app – web app is 100% based on time accessing the app on-line with no downloading where the phone app is for downloading to smart phone, laptop, etc.

This is a large project with a volunteer board at the Southwest Nova Biosphere. It will focus on Route 1, 8 & 3 – not 101 or 103 – so marketing and itineraries will be for around the loop. Chair Saskia Geerts attends meetings (held at various venues in the loop). Greg Turner presented the map to everyone on screen. This group has very good representation from all around the loop; i.e., Parks Canada, Bay Ferries, etc.

**Membership Committee (attached):** Mary Tibbetts reviewed the attached report and hopefully answered all questions. The types of membership are now split by category to make it easier for potential members. These new category fees are prorated for the first half of 2015. A certificate is being prepared for all members to hang proudly at their entrance. Five honorary certificates were giving out with DATA’s thanks for scallop donations, accounting and advertising.

Diane Theriault asked if there is a link to the Digby Neck ferries on the web site; this will be investigated. Also, visitors should be informed that the island ferries do not take credit cards.

**Finance Committee (see Treasurer's report):** Referred to Treasurer's Report.

Chair Saskia Geerts reported on our requests to the town and municipality and that we have been approved by the town for \$2,500; we have still not received the municipality's response although our municipal Representative, George Manzer, says we should hear soon.

Ian Barnes asked if we could use grant money to apply for matching fund grants from the province. Yes we should be able to do that but unfortunately it is too late this year; most grant deadlines are prior to March 31.

Regarding the \$4,000 promised for Tiverton Sewer monies, David Tudor is working on a program at this time. If the money is not used does it revert back to DATA? It does not. The province gave this money for the purpose and may only be used for said purpose; i.e., a washroom in Tiverton.

- **ByLaw Changes:**

- i. membership type changes.** Brought before the meeting in the membership committee report.

*Diane Theriault made a motion to approve the changes in membership types.  
Seconded by Greg Turner. All aye. Motion carried.*

- ii. change "ordinary mail" to "in writing" so we can use email.**

Member Bill Schrank made the suggestion of changing the wording to "ordinary or email" rather than "in writing" as this would be more explicit.

*Bill Schrank made a motion to approve the re-wording to "ordinary or email."  
Seconded by Linda Graham. All aye. Motion carried.*

- **Election of 2015-2016 Board Members**

Chair Saskia Geerts indicated that there are two positions open. We need a representative from the Barton/Brighton/Doucetville and one from the Weymouth & Area. Hopefully these positions will get filled.

The nominations are attached. Three times Chair Saskia Geerts asked if there were any other nominations and there were none.

*Past Chair Ian Barnes made a motion to cease nominations.  
Seconded by Bernice Schrank. All aye. Motion carried.*

*Bernice Schrank made a motion for formal approval of the 2015-2016 Board of Directors.  
Seconded by Diane Theriault. All aye. Motion carried.*

Chair Saskia Geerts thanked everyone for attending the Annual General Meeting for the Digby Area Tourism Association.

- **Adjournment:** Vice-Chair Greg Turner called for adjournment at 3:40pm.