



Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board (BoQ RMB)

**Staff Report 001-2017 re: Organizational Purpose**

Circulated to Board of Directors: January 11, 2017

Approved: January 18, 2017

**Project/Item:**

This staff report sets out to inform the board of directors of the recommended organizational purpose of the Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board

**Objective:**

Vote on a purpose that will guide the new organization whose role now encompasses the marketing of both tourism and resident attraction. Staff recommend that the purpose of BoQ RMB is to drive economic activity in the region by supporting the marketing interests of, acting in a facilitation role for, and connecting partners and stakeholders (with the brand as a secondary element).

**Background:**

In May 2016, the Bay of Quinte Tourist Council (BQTC) and Bay of Quinte Living Council (BQLC) voted to create an interim organization, the Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board (BoQ RMB). This organization fulfills the role of the two previous organizations, marketing both tourism and resident attraction. The proposed board of directors beginning April 1, 2017 is comprised individuals from paying partners from the previous BQTC and BQLC boards, including:

- City of Belleville
- City of Quinte West
- Hastings County
- Prince Edward County
- Quinte Accommodations and Attractions Association
- Quinte Home Builders Association
- Quinte Restaurant Association
- Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory



**Recommendation:**

Much has changed with the Tourist and Living Councils forming the Regional Marketing Board; a new organization, with new partners, and new initiatives. Despite these changes, the daily efforts of our staff remain the same – regional marketing with the goal of driving economic activity.

At this juncture, BoQ RMB has a unique opportunity to be more relevant than ever within the regional landscape; our new focus on both tourism and resident attraction and the current proposed partnership are strong assets. With this in mind, staff recommend that the purpose of the new organization be more formally defined as we begin planning for 2017-18.

Why is the work we do important?

There are fundamentals at the core of our organization that make the Bay of Quinte Regional Marketing Board relevant and unique within this region as we work to drive the regional economy. These fundamentals define and guide our daily work flow and are central to project planning. They include:

- Regional marketing: tourism and resident attraction
- Connecting the shared economy of our region
- Acting in a supporting role for other organizations
- Facilitating regional partnerships
- Government relations

Considering the above principles and how they define the work of this organization, we feel that our purpose is to drive economic activity in the region by supporting the marketing interests of, acting in a facilitation role for, and connecting partners and stakeholders.

The following includes a high-level breakdown with examples of each of the above principles:

- Regional marketing: tourism and resident attraction
  - Our philosophy continues to be that we have more to offer in tourism and resident attraction as a region. From infrastructure, to activities, and other assets, together the pan-regional offering competes with any other destination in the province or country.



With our regional mandate, we bring a dynamic approach to this value proposition in terms of our knowledge of these assets, the people, and the systems involved across municipalities and organizations.

- Case Study: For our 30 second television spots in 2015 and 2016, we wanted to feature a selection of our strongest attractions in order to best showcase the area and we went across the region to collect them. These spots were played to over 10 million viewers in 2015 and 2016 on CTV and Global.
  
- Connecting the shared economy of our region
  - This region is unique to Ontario in that the size and proximity of our municipalities facilitates cross-municipal movement by both residents and visitors. Residents live in Tweed, but work in Belleville; visitors stay at the Trent Port Marina, but shop in Stirling. As such, we share a regional economy. Our organization is one of few in the region that works in an effort to understand this every day. However, we need to do more work to understand how people move around the region and how we can support our partners to benefit from this movement.
  - Case Study: the trend of people staying in major brand hotels in Belleville and Quinte West, visiting Prince Edward County for the day, and returning to their accommodations in the evening. There are roughly 300,000 room nights per year at the major brand hotels in Belleville and Quinte West and if we work to coordinate the collection of data around who is staying and how they move about the region, it will be beneficial to all of our partners and help inform marketing efforts. We are currently partnering with QAAA partners to deploy interactive touchscreen kiosks that will facilitate data tracking as a first step in this process.
  
- Acting in a supporting role for other organizations
  - Because of the nature of our organization, we are in a unique position to be able to support partners and stakeholders in multiple ways in order to enhance their efforts and are approached weekly to do so. Whether through physical dollars from our budget helping to offset costs; utilizing our social media channels and following of over 37,000 for in-kind marketing; in-kind staff time and expertise to develop ideas or work on projects; facilitating early-stage event



planning; or providing our sector knowledge in the project brainstorm phase, we regularly offer a host of important services to partners and stakeholders.

- Case Study: Andrew Twigg of Cruising Canoes came to us early in his business planning cycle for guidance on marketing, potential partners, business development and activity development. His business began as a part-time endeavour in 2016. He is now working full-time as a four-season outdoor activity operator, with multiple trip itineraries and types, partnered with organizations like Batawa Ski Hill and The Boathouse Restaurant, and is already taking bookings into summer 2017.
- Facilitating regional partnerships
  - BoQ RMB is unique in that it has a regional mandate. This is different from many of our partners whose focus tends to be more on their organization alone (such as associations or municipalities, for example). We have seen that our knowledge of assets from around the region has been beneficial to our partners in this respect. Further, we are considering asset mapping across the entire region as an important project for 2017-18, in an effort to increase awareness to all partners of who is doing what.
  - Case Study: We have facilitated over 40 partnerships between restaurants, farmers, growers, wineries, craft breweries and cider houses as part of Quintelicious and Quinte Craft. Setting up an Industry Day, where we invite producers from across the region to sample their products to the chefs and owners of QRA restaurants has been an excellent way to facilitate these transactions. These events have enabled producers to get in front of multiple restaurants at the same time and through a trusted source, saving them from having to approach them each individually or from having to create a relationship without an introduction. The result has been over \$80,000 in local procurement, and food & beverage partnerships that continue to thrive since the first event in 2015.
- Government relations
  - We work regularly across different levels of government depending on project and intent. On the resident attraction side, we recently worked with the province of Ontario and our local municipal government on the Bay of Quinte Immigration Portal. As part of the



tourism sector, we are in the unique position of working with two Regional Tourism Organizations (RTOs), The Great Waterway and Ontario's Highlands, both of which regularly boost our marketing efforts and provide financial support for marketing and administration. We have also partnered with the Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership on initiatives like Golf in Ontario, the first international marketing campaign for Ontario's first-class golf offering, and to provide visual assets for their recent Where Am I? campaign. On the federal side, we have facilitated two regional roundtables with MP Blake Richards of the tourism caucus, which were attended by municipal and private sector staff, and we have also met with the Minister Bardish Chagger of Tourism & Small Business to discuss the successes of our region, destination marketing and its impact on the economy.

- Case Study: In 2016-17, we have been part of three RTO 9 partnership fund marketing projects where \$60,000 was doubled to \$120,000. This is 126% growth from the previous year when \$47,500 was doubled to \$95,000.

## Brand Position

All of the above considered, the Bay of Quinte brand plays a less prominent role in our day to day and its use is dependent on the initiative. While our interests continue to support the existence of a cohesive region and we don't want to diminish our brand as part of that, this notion is not a departure from current practice. We tell the stories of the faces, places and spaces of this region and over two years ago identified in our messaging policy that it would flow from person -> business/organization -> municipality, and include Bay of Quinte only if relevant or space permitted.

In today's digital marketing landscape, organizations are no longer required to cast the same wide net that was required to generate attention in years past. We are now able to target our marketing on the internet to such a degree that focusing on specific assets is often a more strategic approach and can be tied more closely to data and inform future projects.



Case study:

We are currently involved in a partnership on a guided ice fishing package with QAAA partner the Drake Devonshire, along with Rapala Canada, on Weller's Bay in Prince Edward County. We coordinated the initiative and facilitated Rapala's involvement. We are not featuring our branding as part of this marketing project. Too many brands can deter from the creative and confuse the consumer. In this case, Drake and Rapala are two very established brands nationally, so logistically it makes sense for their brands to drive the marketing. Our goal is to coordinate the partnership and the initiatives associated with it, help develop the creative, and provide in-kind marketing to contribute to promotion – all in an effort to drive economic activity to the region. We feel that we are accomplishing all of these as a behind the scenes partner, without the need to promote the Bay of Quinte brand.

The Great Waterway (TGW) experienced a similar trajectory, where they were focused on marketing their brand at their inception, but found that it didn't resonate with consumers who were already aware of destinations like Kingston, Belleville, or Prince Edward County, but did not recognize The Great Waterway as a destination. When TGW updated its approach and began to focus more on the brands of each of its destinations, it found greater success. They currently function as more of an umbrella brand, acting as a support mechanism and coordination organization among the destinations, similar to what we envision for BoQ RMB. From a staff point of view, we feel BoQ RMB benefits more from The Great Waterway now that they have undertaken this new approach.

On the tourism side, the timing is well-aligned to focus more on the brands of each of our region's destinations; Belleville is finishing downtown revitalization and has gained major assets like the Casino and the AHL Senators, Hastings County has strong rural, water and downtown assets across the entire county that support a coherent brand, Prince Edward County has a well-established brand that denotes its own sense of place, Quinte West has completed its marina and developed other water-based activity and outdoor assets, and Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory has a brand that speaks of culture, tradition and history. We see BoQ RMB as an excellent platform to support each of these brands. More importantly, because of our knowledge of destination marketing and the regional landscape, we also see ourselves as an asset in helping to further develop and promote the brands of, and businesses within, the municipalities that are emerging. We have already seen support from members in this regard during



preliminary discussions with Belleville and Quinte West with respect to working with them to cultivate their brands in the upcoming year.

Ultimately, all of our public and private partner's interests will be different and we will work with each one in 2017-18 to determine how our partnership can best support them through our business and marketing plan. These details will be further developed in individual MOUs.

Staff recommend that the purpose of BoQ RMB is to drive economic activity in the region by supporting the marketing interests of, acting in a facilitation role for, and connecting partners and stakeholders. If approved, the practice of this purpose will be further developed accordingly in the upcoming 2017-18 business plan. As well, the purpose will establish a foundation for building the mission, vision and values of the organization with the new Board of Directors.

**Resources/Reference:**

- May 2016 Bay of Quinte board of directors meeting minutes
- Partner meeting and discussion notes
- Internal staff meeting notes