

## **CENTRAL REGIONAL TOURISM DISTRICT BOARD MEETING**

April 27, 2021

The Board Meeting of the CRTD was held via Zoom.

The following were in attendance: Yetta Augur, Len Baginski, Bob Bell, Johanna Bond, Sheri Cote, Gerry Daley, Don DeVivo, Brenda Falusi, Ken Gribbon, Jaqueline Hubbard, Victoria Kolyvas, Ginny Kozlowski, Sierra Lopez, Irene Makiaris, Deb Mathiasen, Paul Mayer, Charlie Myers, Rose Ponte, Robyn Rifkin, and Amber Wakley.

Executive Director Johanna Bond opened the meeting at 4:00 p.m. and the following business was conducted: Johanna welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance and updated the board that she hopes the next CRTD Annual Board meeting will be in-person at Westbrook Inn on June 22, 2021.

### **FINANCIAL REPORT:**

Treasurer, Bob Bell gave the Financial Report. Please see attached copy of report.

### **REX DEVELOPMENT REPORT:**

Ginny Koslowski gave a brief REX Development Report and stated that two weeks ago she attended the America Bus Association Virtual Market Place with the Connecticut State Office of Tourism. She mentioned that the President of America Bus Association indicated that over 600 tour operators have been put out of business since the pandemic started. She asked the Board if they have any ideas to help tour operators discover what Connecticut has to offer, specifically something new and great. She then explained that some tour operators are planning on touring this Fall while others are planning to tour in 2022.

### **MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT:**

Marketing Chairman, Paul Mayer opened the Marketing & Public Relations Report and stated that the CRTD has been really trying to make an effort in marketing their successful collateral campaign to actual event marketing. He explained that they are updating a new Taco Trail Brochure that will be released on Cinco De Mayo. Paul also explained how the CRTD's BBQ Brochure has been updated and will be released on July 4<sup>th</sup>, which is also national BBQ Day, to gain some PR opportunities. Paul then mentioned that the CRTD Garden Brochure will be released at Elizabeth Rose Park in June when Elizabeth Rose Park is in full bloom. He then explained that Elizabeth Rose Park is also going to help the CRTD with garden brochure distribution through different gardening clubs. He also proudly announced that the CRTD got a grant from CTM to expand CRTD's geographical distribution of brochures. He then stated that the bookmarks are tied to a National Library Campaign, and encouraged board members to go to their town's Library to help distribute the bookmarks.

Paul then stated that they are working on the Haunted Happenings campaign for the Fall brochure, and just finished the final draft for the outdoor adventures brochure. He stressed the importance of this brochure because of COVID-19. Paul also explained that in May, the CRTD will conduct a “Let’s Make a Deal” event that will include a Brochure Swap. Lastly, he explained the CRTD continues to build their photo and video library that he shares with the Connecticut State Office of Tourism. He then thanked the Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce for their reLaunch campaign and MIX Tuesday Tips webinar series that continues to help our tourism partners.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**

Executive Director, Johanna Bond opened her Executive report by stating that Paul Mayer gave a lot of information on the CRTD events and hopes that the CRTD’s Representatives are sharing their events and email blast with their local tourism community, including City Hall and REX Development. She also told the board members that she hopes everyone shares and participates in the Tourism Partner Virtual Meetings from the Connecticut State Office of Tourism. Johanna then explained the purpose of the Middlesex Chamber’s reLaunch campaign, which is to gain resources to help struggling businesses relaunch their business during and post COVID-19. She also explained that the chamber’s MIX Tuesday Tips webinar series was brought on by MIX peer to peer groups, which feature discussions from individuals in each industry, and encouraged board members to share and participate in this free webinar series that can help struggling tourism organizations. Johanna mentioned that 21 videos have been created so far for Every Town Has a Story campaign and will be releasing those videos at the Annual Board meeting in June. She also stated that Every Town Has a Story videos will also be promoted on CTVisit.com and through the CRTD’s social media platforms. Johanna then stated that when they release the Garden Brochure at Elizabeth Rose Park, they will also be handing out some goodies and other marketing collateral as well. She also reminded the CRTD board members that June 12, 2021 is Connecticut Open House Day and invited everyone to attend a Brochure Swap on May 7, 2021 at the Courtyard by Marriot Hartford Cromwell from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

### **OPEN FLOOR DISCUSSION:**

The Floor was then open for questions and answers.

### **CHAIR REPORT:**

Chairman, Don DeVivo gave his report and stated that the American Rescue Plan has allocated 2 billion dollars to Connecticut with 25% designated to tourism. Don then stated that he is lobbying towards the money going towards tourism, marketing and advertising. He hopes that the American Rescue Plan will put more money into the tourism industry for marketing and advertising to help businesses stay afloat. He then explained that lodging and transportation has been greatly impacted because of the pandemic. Don also explained that the guidelines for this grant will not come out until May. He then mentioned that the CRTD will keep on pushing the legislatures to act on this grant. He then discussed the Gambling Bill that will be partially

designated to tourism. He stated that if we can use these funds to get to 2024, that would be a home-run for the tourism industry.

Executive Director, Johanna Bond adjourned the meeting at 4:35 p.m.