

Tourism Council
Wednesday, March 13, 2024
2:00 PM
CT Beardsley Zoo
and
Virtual TEAMS
Draft

Present & Teams: Karen Bachofner, Jeff Brown, Charles Bunnell, Becky Critchley, Gregg Dancho, Irene Dixon, Scott Dolch, Ginny Kozlowski, Robert Kret, Paul Mayer, Larry McHugh, Robin Rifkin and Stephen Tagliatela

Absent: Amanda Arling, Peter Armstrong, Rebekah Beaulieu, Elizabeth Craig, Don Devivo, Matt Fleury, Jason Guyot, Jeff Hamilton, Scott Laurence, Carol Lugar, Michael Price, Tony Sheridan, Dexter Singleton and Stephen Tagliatela

Staff: Anthony Anthony, Rachel Lenda, Ellen Woolf, and Rob Damroth

Other: Carlo Leone, DOT

Guest: Felicia Lindau, Adams & Knight; Andrea Manning, Eastern Region; Bob Murdock, Taia Lionetti, Gisele Musumano from Connecticut Conventions & Sports Bureau

1. Call to Order – Anthony Anthony

Rachel called the meeting to order at 2:10pm. A role call was made, and all guests announced.

II. Approval of December 20, 2023, Minutes – Rachel Lenda

On a motion by Ginny Koslowski and seconded by Paul Mayer, the Tourism Council approved the December 20, 2023, meeting minutes as circulated. (Y-13, N-0)

III. Update from State- Anthony Anthony

- We are seeing population growth in the State
- People recognizing CT is a great place to work and live
- The upcoming Tourism Conference “Conn Con” is on Wednesday, March 27th at the Bushnell in Hartford
- Working to make sure the marketing efforts of “live work & play” is integrated throughout all platforms reinforcing one singular cohesive message from the State
- Studies show young people consider CT for the quality of life, for being a great place to live, work and play.
- 16 year high in job growth in CT with 1.7 million payroll jobs

- The STWM budget is currently at 4.5 million, but the Governor has increased that amount to 5.5 million
- Legislators should come out with their budget by early April

IV. Update from Tourism Director – Rachel Lenda

- Rachel introduced herself and gave a brief bio.
- Her efforts are focused on strategic operations, making sure that tourism's systems have procedures and protocols, and work on how the agency can elevate our communications with our constituents
- The Tourism Office is growing, with a new Creative Director, along with a Digital Marketing Associate and a Community Engagement Specialist
- The vision of the Tourism Office is to cultivate public private partnerships, fostering collaboration between small and large businesses
- Curating unparalleled experiences and embrace our top tier talent
- Working on how to increase lodging revenues with Ginny Kozlowski of the CT Lodging Society
- Urging our partners to fully engage with CTVist.com with images and robust listings and events that we can bolster
- PR impressions have skyrocketed
- 1.8 million spend on Spring/Summer campaign
- The measurable components of the media buy saw a 98% increase in site visitations to CTmeetings.org from 2018
- We are hiring seasonal staff for the welcome centers
- Looking for partnerships with businesses for the Big E this year
- New logos are out and available in DECD.org
- Lastly the Oyster Trail and documentary will be rolled out in mid-April

A brief discussion followed.

V. Adjournment

A motion was made and so moved to adjourn the meeting. The next meeting of the Tourism Council is scheduled for Wednesday, June 12th location TBD.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Haag
Connecticut Office of Tourism, DECD