

Tourism Council
Wednesday
June 5, 2024
2:00 PM
Old Saybrook Inn & Spa
TEAMS

Present: Karen Bachofner, Jeff Brown, Becky Critchley, Irene Dixon, Matt Fleury, Koray Gurz, Ginny Kozlowski, Robert Kret, Paul Mayer, Larry McHugh, Robin Rifkin, Tony Sheridan, Dexter Singleton, and Stephen Tagliatela

Absent: Amanda Arling, Peter Armstrong, Charles Bunnell, Elizabeth Craig, Gregg Dancho, Don Devivo, Scott Dolch, Jason Guyot, Jeff Hamilton, Scott Laurence, Carol Lugar and Michael Price,

Staff: Anthony Anthony, Rob Damroth, Rachel Lenda, Ellen Wolf, DECD; Laura Baum, DOT

Guests: Felicia Lindau, Adams & Knight; Frank Burns, Tourism Coalition; Bob Murdock, Sue Henrique, Gisele Musumano from Connecticut Conventions & Sports Bureau

1. Call to Order / Roll Call – Rachel Lenda

Rachel called the meeting to order at 2:08 pm. A role call was made, and all guests announced.

II. Approval of December 11, 2024, Tourism Council Minutes – Rachel Lenda

On a motion by Stephen Tagliatela and seconded by Larry McHugh, the Tourism Council approved the February 26, 2024, meeting minutes as circulated. (Y-13, N- 0).

III. Update from State of Connecticut

1. Department of Agriculture – Laura Baum

- Working heavily on CT Grown campaign and entering their big season with farmers markets and farm to table dinners
- Making sure the wineries are ready for business on the vineyard trail.

2. Department of Environmental and Energy Protection

Rachel reported for DEEP

- Doing their Parks connect program
- Working on their state park initiatives for no kid left inside all summer
- All events are posted on their website

- Gearing up for Campgrounds in state parks
- CT Trails weekend coming up with over 200 events

IV. Update DEEP – Jeff Shaw

- Jeff has just been hired as a new senior advisor for outdoor industry and experience
- Jeff will be working in private public partnerships in the State parks
- Some ideas, concession agreements, long term leases, DEEP received over 30 submissions to this new public private partnership

V. Update Department of Economic & Community Development-Rachel Lenda

- The Office of Statewide Marketing and Tourism is finding it easier to work the DEEP & DOAG and a positive synergy is growing.
- Next Saturday is Open House Day, over 160 properties statewide are participating
- All our welcome centers are up and running except Darien which does not have a counter anymore and logistically can't handle a welcome center.
- New commercials have been loaded on their kiosks and solicitations have gone out for businesses to bring their brochures
- STWM budget landed at 4.5 million
- Federal funds are all spent
- Exploring public/private partnerships
- Sponsorships on CT.visit, sponsorship articles on CT.visit as well as private advertising in the CT building at the Big E
- Changes to the district contracts this year. We need more metrics; we want to be able to measure the return on investments of the districts.
- We want enthusiastic CT Ambassadors promoting their own state
- Our strategic plan will be presented at the next council meeting

A lengthy discussion followed regarding the budget and what the council members could do to encourage more funding for statewide marketing and tourism through the government or private/public partnerships, or paid sponsorships.

VI. Adjournment

A motion was made and so moved to adjourn the meeting. The next meeting of the Tourism Council is scheduled for Wednesday, February 26th, at 2pm, location TBD.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Haag
Connecticut Office of Tourism, DECD

