

**Tourism Council
Wednesday
September 10, 2025
2:00 PM
Mattatuck Museum
144 W Main St.
Waterbury, CT 06702
and
Virtual TEAMS**

Present: Amanda Arling, Jeff Brown, Charles Bunnell, Elizabeth Craig, Becky Critchley, Gregg Dancho, Scott Dolch, Irene Dixon, Koray Gurz, Ginny Kozlowski, Robert Kret, Paul Mayer, Michael Price and Robin Rifkin,

Absent: Karen Bachofner, Don Devivo, Matt Fleury, Jason Guyot, Jeff Hamilton, Scott Laurence, Carol Lugar, Larry McHugh, Tony Sheridan, Dexter Singleton and Stephen Tagliatela

Staff: Anthony Anthony, Rob Damroth, Brie Larson, Rachel Lenda, DECD; Jeff Shaw, DEEP

Guests: Felicia Lindau, Eric Adams & Knight; Sue Henrique Bob Murdock, Gisele Musumano, Connecticut Conventions & Sports Bureau

I. Call to Order / Roll Call – Rachel Lenda

Rachel called the meeting to order at 2:06 pm. A role call was made, and all guests announced.

II. Approval of June 5, 2025, Tourism Council Minutes – Rachel Lenda

On a motion by Robin Rifkin and seconded by Becky Critchley, the Tourism Council approved June 5, 2025, meeting minutes as circulated. (Y-14, N- 0).

III. Welcome from the Mattatuck Museum

Tanya Labeck, the Marketing Director Shared some of the events and programs of the Museum.

IV. Updates from the State

1. Department of Environmental and Energy Protection- Jeff Shaw

- Deep will have a sizeable presence at the Big E

- Started promoting a new paddle craft rental service in four state parks that came online this summer
- Looking to explore and evaluate what types of new services, outdoor recreation experiences and amenities we can bring to our state parks.

2. Department of Transportation-Eric Scogo

- Eric is new to the Council.
- DOT just announced and released their Strategic Plan
- DOT released a tech road map as well as a capital plan road map both on their website
- DOT also had a presence at the Big E

V. Presentation Strategic Marketing Plan

- Resources down but the office is set to outpace PR impressions for this calendar and fiscal year
- On track to exceed last year's hits to CT visit and potentially exceed 2023 which put CT visit in the top five visited tourism websites in the country
- Digging deep into core strategies and core areas of opportunity, while trying to make more with less
- One of the biggest pieces of the plan is the new reward program we plan to incentivize members of the public to engage and use word of mouth to talk about all the great things to do around Connecticut, which replaces the office's inability to spend on advertising
- Participating in the rewards program allows residents to go online and use the reward points for merchandise, places to stay and restaurants.
- Also, extremely cool curated experiences that are uniquely Connecticut
- Pulled back on marketing and concentrated on spring, summer and fall, the seasons that get the most people in
- Planning on raising money through sponsorships, and have the money go directly in the statewide marketing fund

A question-and-answer discussion followed.

V. .Approval – FY26 Strategic Marketing Plan

A motion was made by Paul Maher, seconded by Scott Dolch to enter a vote on the Strategic Marketing Plan. The plan was unanimously passed. (Y-14, N-0)

VI. Adjournment

A motion was made and so moved to adjourn the meeting. The next meeting of the Tourism Council is scheduled for Thursday, November 20, 2025, at 2pm, location TBD.

Respectfully submitted,
Jennifer Haag
Connecticut Office of Tourism, DECD

