

ERTD Marketing Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 19, 2021

1. Meeting called to order
2. Approval of minutes from October 22, 2021. Jill motioned to approve minutes as presented. Stephen second – all in favor. Bruce MacDonald abstained.
3. Regional Partnership Funding
 - a. Jill asked if state funding arrived, Tony answered we were approved but that the money hasn't hit the bank account yet. Jill stated we could not promise money we did not have but we should start the process to give grant applicants enough time to prepare.
 - b. Jill stated she spoke with Cultural Coalition – looking to be an applicant. How many regions can we incorporate to leverage the funds the most.
 - c. Wendy Burry group – Cultural Coalition – Chris asked who they are. Apply to run a centralized calendar for media or in print, to focus on big events in the area, and their promotion. Their purpose is to harness that information and get it out there. Chris asked if they had any cultural funds. They wouldn't be the recipients of the money, but they would be harnessing the information.
 - d. Rose asked if this would throw in another layer of Admin? For discussion, it sounds like it adds another layer of admin between the State, Chamber, and now the Cultural Coalition. Rather than the event coming directly from the region grant. Jill replied that it was the effort to try to harness what is happening in the region. Rose Bove questioned and stated that it was the effort of the ERTD to be the promotor and bringing these major events to the region. Chris agreed with Rose. Chris sat through a meeting with how Wendy was presenting, but Chris felt it was a duplication of work.
 - e. Rose – look at the criteria that the program is to support small businesses directly – not to engage in organizations to administrate state funding. Rose said to ensure we are operating by our written guidelines.
 - f. Chris – what is our timeline for the RMPP? Tony stated that the COT turned it around quickly. Rose stated that she would check in with Jennifer Haag, her guess is another week – if that. Chris then asked when we wanted to start advertising to get applicants for the ERTD RMPP. Tony suggested that we start advertising now. We don't have to act until the money is in the bank. The effort should be to get the money on the street as soon as possible. Applications in hand would be helpful – as soon as possible. Chris agreed that we should start marketing.
 - g. Jill suggested making the announcement Dec 1. Applications due January 15, 2022 and then vet all applications before January 31st. Then launch it in February so that the recipients can execute and close out their documents before the FY ends. All agreed that was reasonable.
 - h. Dave Quinn – with the blessing of the group they would draft a press release and run it by Tony and Chris for approval. All agreed on that plan.
4. Groton New London Airport
 - a. Dave and Tony to take a ride over there to look at the space. Tony stated we could have as much space as we want. The question is what do we put up? Can Tony get the airport to supply a TV? Tony stated that thumb drives might be a

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challenge if the TV gets shut off. Tony suggested that volunteers would be necessary to keep the program up and running. TV is informative and more attractive long term. Chris thought the expectation of the customer would be satisfied with a TV.

- b. Jill – we talked about the points of entry the last meeting. Train station, colleges (opportunities for parents in the state), ferries, and to have a larger comprehensive strategy. Rose suggested this could be a co-op and on a menu of discussion to work on this FY. Rose put a thumb drive in the back of the TV at the Big E. It ran with 17 days without any problem. The loop video ran for approximately a minute. Tony will check the airport budget. Tony also mentioned that we are always competing with T.F. Green. Tony would check with Airport Authority to see if they would be willing to pay for a TV and video to promote the area. Tony will help to explore through the CAA.
 - c. Dave Quinn – responded to Jill’s statement. If we had a template a way-finding signage – if budget allowed. Multiple kiosks at all the points of entry that Jill mentioned. Monitor or map or both – that could be available in the market. CAA and Co-op.
 - d. Bruce MacDonald asked: does the state put these kinds of monitors in other places that draw what we are looking for? Rose – the short answer is no they are not in the colleges. Central Regional Tourism District is working with colleges and universities on tourism promotion.
 - e. Dave Quinn – using the state’s website to use it as a simplified model and use it to guide visitors to use their handheld devices.
 - f. Chris asked – what is the process for visitor centers- like North Stonington – a vendor who wants to put out a kiosk? Send them to Rose Bove – she welcomes the opportunity to discuss.
 - g. Bruce asked if we have a cost on the kiosk and could we as a district install them?
 - h. Tony – the challenge with kiosks is to keep them updated. A TV can use a thumb drive and more easily updated. He is going to talk with the Airport Authority and to see if the Groton New London Airport to see how it is successful it is.
5. Quinn & Hary Update
- a. Dave shared updated analytics of the website, programmatic marketing etc.
 - b. Sponsored content was explained – November 26 will pivot to winter and holiday theme.
 - c. Fall Imagery and sample posts that were included for the fall on Instagram and Facebook.
 - d. Chris asked: For the holiday season, how can we brand the region as the best for the holidays. I.e., top 6 places to go for the holidays and for future. Chris would like to see significant displays with holiday themed decorations, etc.
 - e. Bruce asked if we could take advantage of the Hallmark Channel movie filming.
 - f. Dave brought up how we can partner with Hallmark movies on why they choose Mystic Country to film in.

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- g. Niantic Christmas parade – Jill St. Clair discussed the high-tech floats for the parade. Putnam has the big, giant ornament and an ice carving festival. They also have a giant Santa sleigh over the falls. Norwich City hall is lit up and it's a big spectacular event, too!
 - h. Tony – shortage of stock and goods in stores; the Chamber is working on an announcement on where to shop where there is good shopping to be done. Museums, gift shops, etc. Tony will share the results on what the Chamber puts together.
- 6. Other Business
 - a. Tourism Coalition – the district does not belong to it, should ERTD belong to it? Full member is \$1,500 for a board seat. A membership is \$250. Dave is an Officer of the organization. Rose Bove – if we are allowed to be a part because of state funding. We may not be able to join as a tourism district because of being funded by state money.
 - b. Yes on meeting in December.
 - c. Bruce asked if we should approach past recipients? Tony brought up that Jim Bellano made announcements about the program in Northeastern CT.
 - d. Dave stated he would share the release with Chris and Tony.
 - e. Motion to approve to send the executive committee the RMPP program information, Stephen second. Press release – Dec 1 – soliciting applications. Receive by January 15 and then two weeks to decide. What are the increments? Up to \$10,000.
 - f. On the application – stress regional collaborative. – Jill St. Clair.
 - g. Tony – discussed certified letter to Diane Nadeau.
- 7. Motion to adjourn: Bruce motion, Jill seconded.