

Tourism Council
Wednesday, December
11, 2024
2:00 PM
DECD
450 Columbus
Blvd.
Hearing Room J
and
Virtual Teams

Present & Teams: Karen Bachofner, Elizabeth Craig, Becky Critchley, Gregg Dancho, Irene Dixon, Scott Dolch, Jason Guyot, Ginny Kozlowski, Paul Mayer, Larry McHugh, Robin Rifkin and Dexter Singleton and Stephen Tagliatela

Absent: Amanda Arling, Peter Armstrong, Rebekah Beaulieu, Jeff Brown, Charles Bunnell, Don Devivo, Matt Fleury, Koray Gurz, Jeff Hamilton, Robert Kret, Scott Laurence, Carol Lugar, Michael Price and Tony Sheridan

Staff: Anthony Anthony, Rob Damroth, Rachel Lenda, Jill Larsen, Morgan Nyrick, Al Strong and Ellen Woolf

Guest: Felicia Lindau; Adams & Knight; Bob Murdock, Taia Lionetti, Gisele Musumano from Connecticut Conventions & Sports Bureau; Mike Johnson, Sullivan & Leshane

1. Call to Order – Rachel Lenda

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

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

On a motion by Ginny Koslowski and seconded by Scott Dolch, the Tourism Council approved the September 11, 2024, meeting minutes as circulated. (Y-11, N- 0).

III. Update from State- Anthony Anthony

- No one from DEEP or DOT was in attendance to give an update
- Right now, the STWM budget is flat at 4.5 million
- Asking For more STWM funds in the new Biennium budget
- They have not approved or disapproved at this point in time, but they did set realistic expectations that they don't expect
- We won't know probably till the end of this month

- Not only STWM funds but all the other line items in the Tourism Fund may expect a hair cut
- If our budget does not increase, we will not be able to fund the Connecticut Convention & Sports Bureau (CTCSB)
- If CTCSB does not continue, we will take on as much internally to make sure those events take place
- It's been a very tough discussion to have, and we do recognize the value for large events to come to the State.
- More to come on this.

IV. Review and Discuss: Strategic Marketing Plan – Rachel Lenda

- Rachel presented the Strategic Marketing Plan in a PowerPoint
- Objectives of plan are to align the *Connecticut* and *Connecticut Visit* brands under the *Make It Here* which we did this year.
- In FY24 we created a unified cohesive messaging across all our metrics and measurements that we do in Tourism, Economic Development and State Departments.
- Transform the perception of Connecticut by showcasing its diversity, energy and rich offerings.
- Strengthening collaboration between the Office of Statewide Marketing and Tourism and regional Tourism Districts for greater synergy and effectiveness.
- Use data and research to drive strategic informed decision making.
- Our drive market focus is still Connecticut, New York, Rhode Island and Massachusetts.
- For thematic we are targeting foodies, arts, culture, entertainment, outdoors, history, families, LGBT plus, green sustainability, wellness and relaxation.
- We will continue the *Make it Here* as the primary message in our creativity.
- The PR and Social Media strategy is where we have really been shining with upwards of 15 billion impressions total for this year.
- Our concierge services at the welcome centers and the Big E renovation had a spectacular year.
- We are trying to keep the welcome centers open longer, it's tough to get seasonal help.

A brief discussion followed.

V. Vote Strategic Market Plan

A vote was made, and the plan was unanimously approved.

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

