

Eastern Regional Tourism District Interim Executive Committee Meeting

February 6, 2020

Colchester Town Hall, Colchester

In attendance: James Bellano; Robert Boissevain; Jill Fritzsche; Stephen Gencarella; Tracey Hanson; Gina Kunst; Bruce MacDonald; Tyra Penn-Gesek; Chris Regan

Other attendees: Francesca Kefalas (Assistant Director, Last Green Valley); Carly Myers (SECOG); Mike Sobol (ERTD Coventry)

Call to Order at 9:06 a.m.

Jim Bellano noted the official recognition by the state of the cure of the breach.

A motion was made to amend the agenda to include two additional items: (1) nomination and election of officers; (2) Item 5 (review of the contract). The motion passes unanimously.

The following officers were nominated and elected by unanimous vote to serve until the June Annual Meeting:

- Chair: Jim Bellano
- Vice Chair: Tracey Hanson
- Secretary: Steve Gencarella
- Treasurer: Jill Fritzsche

Item 1 (action plan for the balance of funds from FY2019)

Jim Bellano reminded the committee of outstanding payments for Ed Dombroskas and the audit; he further confirmed receipt of invoices from both. Following an agreement between the Interim committee and the state, the remainder of the funds is to be directed to brochure distribution and a digital media buy.

A discussion ensued concerning the brochure distribution with the intent of securing a contract from CTM (via Laura Capshaw) for approval at the Full Board meeting on February 13, 2020. The committee reviewed the five existing brochures (Ice Cream Trail, Foodie Finds Trail, Pet Friendly Trail, Mystic Pizza Trail, and the Antique Trail). Some discrepancies were identified due to normal changes of business. The committee decided to proceed with three of the five brochures (Ice Cream Trail, Foodie Finds Trail, and the Antique Trail) with appropriate edits.

- The committee agreed to make suggestions for edits in the immediate future.
- The committee agreed that new brochures with new routes, etc. should be a priority of the Marketing Committee in the future.
- Steve Gencarella offered to inquire if there are any costs to modifying the brochures at this date.

- Chris Regan inquired whether businesses advertised on the existing brochures had paid or otherwise contributed to be on them; Steve Gencarella replied that he did not believe such to be the case but would clarify.
- Bruce MacDonald advised that the Marketing Committee track information on the success of brochure distribution to secure visitors; the Interim committee agreed to the utility of this request.
- Various members noted that the brochures are available on CTVisit.com and need to be updated there.
- Various members noted the need to keep a percentage of the brochures for distribution to the state welcome centers, the Big E, and other locations not served by CTM.
- Gina Kunst and Chris Regan volunteered to be the contact representative with CTM.

A motion was made to expend \$30,000 in a contract with CTM for the distribution of the three updated brochures. The motion passed unanimously.

A discussion ensued concerning the digital marketing buy. Jim Bellano confirmed that the state approved ERTD's request to move funds in the FY2019 budget for regional marketing partnerships (@ \$32,000) to digital marketing buy. The committee reviewed the contract offered by Makiaris Media.

- Various members noted the importance of gauging effectiveness and completing a content analysis of the digital media buy; the committee agreed this should be an early task of the Marketing Committee.

A discussion ensued concerning the location of the funds, the process of payments for invoices through the NDCD bookkeeper, and whether there would be any remaining administrative costs. Jill Fritzsche reviewed the issue of remaining furniture and other leases and offered to follow up.

A motion was made to expend any remaining funds from the FY2019 contract (following outstanding payments and any remaining administrative costs) for a digital media buy with Makiaris Media. The motion passed unanimously.

Chris Regan advised for the creation of parameters for matching fund programs and distributed demographic information on Connecticut tourists; Jill Fritzsche advised for the creation of parameters for non-matching funding partners; Gina Kunst recommended the encouragement of businesses in partnership to create synergistic deals. The committee agreed to the utility of all three.

Item 2 (approval of the RFQ for a not-for-profit partner for the ERTD)

Jim Bellano proposed an amended bullet-point to the existing RFQ draft: "Providing supportive services such as office support, bookkeeping, communications and correspondence, board support, marketing, and other reporting requirements; sending agendas and announcements in accordance with proper notice requirements and taking minutes at ERTD meetings"

A proposal was made for amending the PURPOSE section of the RFQ to read: “The Eastern Connecticut Regional Tourism District (ERTD) is seeking a non-profit organization, located within the district, presently engaged...”

The committee agreed to advertising the RFQ at the CT Department of Administrative Services site and for Jim Bellano to send the RFQ directly to those entities named as potential examples in the redress of the breach document with the state: Northeastern CT Chamber of Commerce; Windham Regional Chamber of Commerce; Greater Norwich Chamber of Commerce; Eastern CT Chamber of Commerce; Greater Mystic Chamber of Commerce; Last Green Valley; Southeastern CT Cultural Coalition; Windham Arts.

A discussion regarding process ensued, including the potential need for an interview. The committee agreed on a due date of February 28, 2020 for RFQ proposals (to be sent to Jim Bellano’s office), with the intention of reviewing by the March 5 Interim Committee meeting and approval at the March 13 Full Board meeting.

A motion was made to accept the RFQ with stated amendments. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 3 (Restructuring of ERTD committees)

A discussion ensued concerning the current standing committees identified by the By-Laws (Executive, Nominating, Marketing, Long Range Planning, and Sales) and the needs for contemporizing ERTD. Several iterations and proposals for improvements were made. At the conclusion of the discussion, the committee agreed to propose the establishment of the following:

- Executive Committee, consisting of all elected officers and chairs of all committees
- By-Laws Committee
- Nominating / Membership Committee
- Marketing Committee (including the duties of Sales and Fundraising)
- Budget Committee, as per the FY2020 contract with the state
- Legislative Affairs Committee

The Interim committee agreed that language constituting the By-Laws, Nominating / Membership, Marketing, Budget, and Legislative Affairs Committees must require geographically diverse membership.

The Interim committee agreed that language constituting the aforementioned committees must require no fewer than three members but need not be limited in maximum numbers; that is, “a floor but not a ceiling.”

In response to Bruce MacDonald’s proposal for a Communications Committee, the Interim committee agreed that the proposed duties must be undertaken by the Nominating / Marketing Committee and by the non-profit partner. The committee further agreed to return to this recommendation in the future.

A discussion ensued concerning whether officers of the Executive Committee could also serve as chairs of other Committees. As a temporary solution until review by the By-Laws Committee and the June

Annual Meeting, the Interim committee recommended such be allowed and further recommended a co-chair.

Tracey Hanson and Steve Gencarella agreed to draft language concerning the basic duties of each committee for discussion and approval at the February 13 Full Board meeting.

A motion was made to recommend the new committee structure of the ERTD: (1) the creation of six standing committees, namely Executive, By-Laws, Nominating / Membership, Marketing, Budget, and Legislative Affairs Committees; (2) that membership of committees require broad geographic representation; (3) that the committees consist of no fewer than three members. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 4 (update on Board membership)

The committee reviewed the current status of the Full Board, including the list of municipalities and the potential industry representatives.

- Bob Boissevain specifically advised for the inclusion of campgrounds in future marketing campaigns and as a potential industry representative; the committee agreed to this recommendation. Other potential industries mentioned included (but were not limited to) breweries, fishing, trails, and the arts. After the conclusion of the meeting, Chris Regan further noted the wedding industry.
- The Interim committee reiterated the commitment to contact municipalities still lacking in representation or unconfirmed members.

Item 5 (review of the FY2019-2020 contract with the state)

The Interim committee reviewed the contract with the intention of conducting a detailed review in the immediate future. Specific attention and review was given to Part 2.

- The Interim committee agreed that the understanding of a quorum derived from one third of the number of municipalities; i.e., the necessity of fourteen members in attendance. The committee further agreed that industry members may satisfy the achievement of a quorum but do not raise its constituting conditions.
- It was noted that requests for a copy of the By-Laws and related documents by the Western and Central Regional Tourism Districts have yet to be fulfilled.

Meeting adjourned at 11:04

Next Interim Committee meeting: March 5, 2020, location TBD

Respectfully submitted, Stephen Olbrys Gencarella