

Eastern Regional Tourism District Draft Meeting Minutes
04-02-2020
Zoom Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Jill Fritzsche, Tracey Hanson, Jim Bellano, Tyra Penn-Gesek, Gina Kunst, Christopher Regan, Stephen Gencarella, Bruce MacDonald

Guests: Courtney Assad, Tony Sheridan, Peggy Roberts, Carly Myers (SCCOG))

1. Call to Order 12:02pm
2. Discussion of FY20 State Contract

Fluid Review is in process which needs to be completed for the Fiscal 20 contract. Some outstanding items are the certificate of legal existence, 990 return, marketing plan and budget. The narrative has been completed.

The committee discussed the marketing plan and possible ways to move forward with marketing in the current climate. They agreed it would be a good idea to prepare outdoor and summer marketing for a May start.

Chris asked if the towns have money to be used for promotion to get the word out when it is safe to travel again. This could work for a matching grant program with the district.

3. Transition

Tony has spoken with Ed Dombroskas about transitioning files who stated Larry Yakaitis has access. Peggy tracked down Larry who has stated he will look for the information, but it may be in Rita Rivera's possession and get back to us by the end of the week. The COG offices are currently closed so we won't be able to access the assets until after the Coronavirus restrictions are lifted. Jill stated there are some assets in their office at NCDC which can remain during the restrictions. The administrative files will be needed as well.

4. Discussion of RFQ for Digital Media

The committee discussed bringing more clarity to the production of creative and social media plan. The deadline will be Friday April 17, 2020 at close of business.

Bruce moved to approve the RFP as amended for distribution, seconded by Tyra, all in favor 8-0, motion approved.

5. Discussion on Impact of COVID-19 on Tourism

The committee discussed timing and status of state advertising. The beginning is unclear, but now is the time to plan for the season ahead as best we can. Tony recommended bringing together some of the advertising executives from the major attractions for a virtual summit. Tyra recommended focusing on narrative and storytelling in this interim. The committee agreed on a focus on content marketing and inspiring people to choose this as a destination when it is safe again.

6. State of CT Update

State has pulled all digital advertising and is focusing on in state social media and out of state social that speaks to dreaming of CT. In state focuses on what is still available and outdoor opportunities. Randy advised the district to do the same. The state will be working on a plan for recovery. Randy encouraged the committee to complete their contract process using Central as a model. Randy discussed the state website and getting updates for the region to reflect the current situation better. Chris asked about leads for the region, Randy said he will work with Rob Damroth in their office.

7. Adjournment 1:21pm.