

Vermont Travel & Recreation Council Meeting

October 3, 2019

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

**Location: Calvin Coolidge Conference Room
One National Life Drive, 6th Floor
Montpelier VT 05620**

Members Present:

Jody Fried – VT Creative Network - Chair
Matt Harrington – TRC Chair, Bennington/Manchester Chamber Exec. Director
Molly Mahar Kerr – VT Ski Areas Association - President
Heather Pelham – Acting Commissioner, Dept. of Tourism & Marketing & CMO
Amy Spear – Vermont Chamber of Commerce - Tourism Vice President
Vicky Tebbetts – Owner, VT Marketing & Communications

Others Present:

Megan Bullard – VT Chamber of Commerce
Caleigh Cross – VDTM Digital Content Coordinator
Sara DeFilippi – VDTM Sales and Marketing Specialist
Nate Formalarie – VDTM Communications Director
Eric Friedman – Mad River Chamber
Jerri Lamson – VDTM Financial Administrator
Jeff Lawson – Vermont Convention Bureau
Lauren Masseria – VAAFMM Council Rep
Laura Parette – Revitalizing Waterbury
Sara Pushee – Cohase Chamber of Commerce
Chris Sluicer – Hearst Television/Digital
Carrie Simmons – Stowe Area Association
Rachel Vandenberg – Owner/Partner, Sun & Ski Inn & Suites

**Actions Items from Meeting:
Meeting Summary:**

ISSUE	OWNER	DEADLINE	ACTION
Priorities for the TRC	Matt & Heather	Next TRC Mtg in November	They will bring priorities back to the group.
Word Doc with all the post its and buckets from TRC exercise	Matt Harrington	Before November 21st	<u>Matt will send word document to all members. DONE</u> Members not in attendance encouraged to get their thoughts to Matt to be included in revised version.
ACCD Overview	Heather Pelham		A brief overview of the Agency
Vermont Creative Networks	Jody Fried		Will share a one-page document he is sharing with Vermont Creative Networks
Data set from Charlie Kimball working with couple of economists	Amy Spear		Will share with the group
Two marketing studies wrapping up	Lauren Masseria		Once ready will share with the group
Nate Formalarie, Communications Director, has set up an ImageRelay page where tourism businesses can share photography. Also seeking video content.	Vermont Tourism Industry	Ongoing	See Agency of Commerce " Promote Your Business " page.
Canadian Discounts Offered	VT Business	Ongoing	Let Sara know at Sara.DeFilippi@vermont.gov .

Meeting Summary:

1. Welcome – Matt Harrington

- Matt asked for a consensus to the agenda, was everyone comfortable with it? Will ask this at every meeting, welcomes discussion or dissention. There will be nothing on future agendas without an outcome or purpose.
- Approval of July 2019 meeting summary. Motion made by Molly Mahar Kerr to approve minutes as presented, seconded by Vicky Tebbetts. Motion passed unanimously.

2. Creating a TRC Vision – All Council Members

All Council members took some time to re-imagine the TRC and what this board would look like to be and do in the next few years.

- What does the group want out of the TRC meetings?
- Role and accountability to tourism and recreation
- Takeaways

Those that attended did a Post-It exercise jotting down many different ideas and then put them up on the board. Second, the group categorized the ideas into 5 main buckets: Policy, Strategy, Content, Information Sharing, and Trends/Data. This work is to design a strategic plan for the TRC. What are the goals for the next couple of years and the steps to get to those goals?

Matt and Heather will work on the priorities and bring them back to the council.

Some ideas from the discussion:

- Use the TRC as a sounding board to be sure we are activating through all our channels i.e. funding for the Department.
- Travel trend discussion and data review; have this be a creative discussion.
- Overall marketing plan review and data discussion done seasonally.
- Tourism funding advocacy can support and go beyond what VDTM can do.
- Increasing legislator's knowledge of tourism and the importance in Vermont.
- Repeat Tourism Day; be sure we are speaking with one voice.
- Tourism Policy.

- Focus geographic/industry input to what is happening out there to the Department.
- Assist VDTM with strategy.
- Share information and data that creates a common understanding, including industry trends.
- Shared message and story clearly establishing the TRC's role.
- Prioritization of resource allocation; identify resources we can bring.
- Integrating our respective stakeholders, biofeedback loop.
- Rally industry around other things and not just legislation. We don't do much with the industry.
- Digital content sharing.
- Do something different to try to increase legislative funding. Been discussing it for about 20 years. Think about the next new thing that will really change the conversation.
- Engage on long-term state travel and recreation plan. In statute. Review data and trends.
- Hearing more from others around the state. That sharing portion is important. Having attendees report back on meetings they've had in their regions.
- Share insights in the field. Some meetings focus on lodging, cultural arts, would give more time to dive into the topics.
- Industry affect on policy and education is valuable.
- DMOs in other regions working on marketing. Interesting to have a statewide DMO conference, getting together to share best practices.
- Library of content for DMO use, photography or written. Are there ways for a chamber or DMO could use a template to increase content? Could board members create a content library?
- Podcast of Vermont or quick Facebook live at the end of this. Podcast about data and rural marketing, monthly or semi-monthly.
- Have TRC panel at the Tourism Conference. Full board, with Heather facilitating on general tourism questions.
- Three policy asks – very direct and very deliberate asks that we have for this group of legislators.
- Releasing white papers and studies on tourism in Vermont. Use it to share with members, with your logo on it. White paper in the works for DMOs. Insuring the TRC is promoting and focusing efforts statewide and across all topics. Some oversight needed to be sure all topics covered.

- Communicating to stakeholders across your communities what is happening at these meetings but coming to the meeting with their complaints, concerns or compliments.
 - Presentations and updates from TRC members and members of the public. Site visits.
 - Talk about state marketing strategy, campaigns and potential partnerships.
 - Request funding from legislature and how this group could help.
 - Policy discussions.
 - Exciting media tours and how others could assist or leverage.
 - What can this body bring to the Governor? Important that the TRC supports ACCD so the Agency doesn't look to VDTM for funding cuts. Would be beneficial to get an overview of ACCD.
3. Commissioner's & VDTM Staff Report- New Director of Creative Services, Jason Pelletier, starting on October 14th. Web designer position posted again. Let Heather know if you know anyone.

Short update on short-term rentals, Inntopia contract underway. Report will be completed before start of the legislative session.

Stay-to-Stay has strong numbers this Fall, with Burlington registered attendee numbers up to 178. Intent is to turn visitors into residents.

Caleigh Cross, new Digital Content Coordinator, had a great first month.

4. Heard Around the State – All Council Members
5. Meeting Closure – Matt Harrington

Meeting adjourned at 11:53 AM.