

February 20, 2020

Minutes from Travel and Recreation Council meeting. Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home, Manchester, VT.

Council Members: Matt Harrington, Chair, Willie Docto, Bill Supple, Paula Maynard, Vicky Tebbetts (by conference call).

Staff in Attendance: Commissioner Heather Pelham, Amy Spears, Nate Formalarie, Sara DeFillippi

The Public: Wayne Granquist and Emily Schriebl (Weston Playhouse); Susan Groesbeck, Apricot Lane; Jonathan Cooper, BCRC ; Carol Lighthall, Okemo Regional C/C; John Burnham, Kimpton Taconic/MBA; Ron Mancini, Mother Myricks/MBA; Bill Drusic, Union Underground/MBA; Berta Maginniss, Wilson House; Shannon Barsottie, Town of Bennington; Chris Oldham, Park McCullough; Mikaela Lewis, Southwestern Vermont Chamber; Marc Plouffe, VT Chamber; Linda Benway, Casablanca Motel; Lucrecia Johnson, The Reluctant Panther; Lynn Green, Four Chimneys Inn; Tammie Reilly and Andrew McKeever,GNAT-TV; Tim Eggins, Shaftsbury SB.

Hildene President, Brian Keefe, welcomed attendees to Hildene.

TRC Chair, Matt Harrington, greeted the audience of approximately 30 attendees and council members and started the meeting with a reading of the Travel and Recreation Council's mission...

*"The Vermont Travel and Recreation Council (TRC) is an advisory council that is comprised of ten members from the private sector appointed by the Governor. This council shall advise the Secretary of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development, and the Secretary shall consult with the council on matters relating to state travel and recreation policy, state travel and recreation promotion programs, and other programs of the department of tourism and marketing and assist the secretary in the agency's preparation of a long-term comprehensive state travel and recreation plan."*

Matt noted that Hildene was hosting this meeting in the Southwestern Vermont Region due to a recent decision of the Council to bring some future TRC meetings into other Vermont regions, noting that some of the meetings will still be held in Montpelier. He then introduced the members of the TRC and others in the room.

VDTM Commissioner, Heather Pelham, delivered her report which included a summary of the recent Tourism Day in Montpelier with the legislature focused on funding. She mentioned great attendance, 150 or more, and applauded the testimonies of members of the tourism industry before Commerce and Economic Development in support of the \$1,000,000 ask and expected portion of \$500,000 towards tourism spending. Heather then shared budget numbers with the group. If the 4.5 million tourism money from the government is approved, it will still

place VT well below its neighbors NH at 10 million and Maine at 17.5. The department continues to consolidate its marketing, while expanding its reach beyond the drive market. Heather noted that the goal is to build brand awareness ... moving it to the top of the funnel. She introduced two people busy helping with the cause: Sales and Marketing Specialist, Sara DeFilippi and Communications Director, Nate Formalarie. Each explained their roles in marketing Vermont, internationally and domestically, giving an overview of both.

Vermont Chamber of Commerce Vice President of Tourism, Amy Spear, updated those in attendance on what is happening with the legislature, funding efforts and what the chamber is doing for the tourism industry at many levels.

True to the goal of getting the TRC out and around the state, local and regional presentations followed with a focus on the strategic vision process used in each case. Ron Mancini (Mother Myrick's) and John Burnham (Kimpton Taconic) represented the Manchester Business Association (MBA). Sharon Barsotti (Town of Bennington) and Lynn Green (Four Chimneys Inn) presented "Vermont Begins Here – Bennington." Matt Harrington, Executive Director of the Southwestern Vermont Chamber of Commerce, presented on The Shires of Vermont regional brand. The presentations were followed by a Q and A.

As with all TRC meetings, in an effort to build stronger state-wide relationships and increased knowledge of events etc., the council and attendees did a casual around the horn before the meeting was closed.