

Vermont Travel & Recreation Council Conference Call

January 16, 2020
10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Location: CONFERENCE CALL

Members on the Call:

Willie Docto – Moose Meadow Lodge
Matt Harrington – TRC Chair, Bennington/Manchester Chamber Exec. Director
Molly Mahar Kerr – VT Ski Areas Association – President
Paula Maynard – Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home
Heather Pelham – Commissioner, Dept. of Tourism & Marketing
Amy Spear – Vermont Chamber of Commerce - Tourism Vice President
Vicky Tebbetts – Owner, VT Marketing & Communications
Steve Wright – Jay Peak General Manager & CMO
Jody Fried – Catamount Arts, Executive Director
Lauren Masseria – Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

Meeting Summary:

ISSUE	OWNER	DEADLINE	ACTION
TRC Goals and Strategies	Matt Harrington	After Conference Call	Will circulate key strategies, the objective and 5 goals, via Google Doc so group can edit in real time.
Inntopia Report	Heather Pelham	Before February Meeting if available	Share the report with TRC members
Document prepared for Tourism Day at State House	Amy Spear	After Conference Call	Will share document she provided on Tourism Day with the group
Group Present at Feb TRC Mtg?	Matt & Paula	After Conference Call	Group to present at start of TRC Meeting
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 Image Relay 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 .

Conference Call 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. Everyone on the call announced themselves.

2. Vermont Tourism Day Debrief – Heather Pelham

Heather thought it was successful, attendance great. Felt like we were speaking with one voice. A lot of excitement. She is talking with Chairman Marcotte, speaking with the House Commerce Committee following budget address. Also working with Heidi to give presentation to Tourism Caucus on Thursday morning. Swift action right away is the goal.

Amy – Nice to see everyone talking with same voice. Stuck to the talking points. Standing room only with visuals was great! Good job all around, great team effort. Nice to have everyone supporting the industry together.

Molly – Agrees that moving it up in the schedule was a good move, in that mix from the get go. Making our wishes known. The scheduling against homelessness advocacy was unfortunate. The day of press coverage that Tourism got wasn't huge because of both events happening. Very good, one voice and thought the turnout from industry was wonderful.

Paula – It was new but drove her crazy that she couldn't speak. Not a clear answer about what we needed to do with the \$500,000. Specifics need to be clear about.

That was by design, Heather will follow-up with the committee, and discuss the potential. Don't want to box us in with too much discussion, the department will decide how that money will be spent. But don't want it baked in legislation. That's why there wasn't one single answer.

Willie – Would have helped us if we had that answer that Heather just gave so they could say that the specifics are not up to the speakers, but up to the Department. Could have talked about process.

Amy – next year if testifying with industry to make it clear that we want to rely on the Department's expertise.

Steve – there is also the opportunity for us to send them questions for legislatures to ask while speakers are up there. To have those questions, like ask me what the range is, while speaking. The people that put this together did a ton of work, another thing to get people there, the marketing done behind the scenes done well. The day was marketed well!

Amy – A lot of legislators are unclear about marketing. In conversations with Marcotte would be a way to shed some light on it.

Heather – Marketing funnel will be present to the committee next week and the Department's part in that work. It's not the commerce committee where we have to change hearts and minds. But to give them enough information that they can persuade the appropriations committee. She will keep everyone posted. The money committees are the ones who have the power to implement.

Molly – She will be at tourism caucus, would be great to get those talking points, so that Molly and Amy can speak with the same voice.

Paula – when you are a non-profit looked at in a different way.

Jody – Had 20 conversations with legislators on workforce rural development, really resonated and that the idea that tourism and the investment in marketing is the critical first step of many of the issues facing our communities. Get talking points that drills down to this.

Willie – think could take all these talking points, could pick one or two talking points that would tie in all the speakers and that each of them touch on the points, 1 or 2, at the end the committee starts to see that tourism is a lot more.

Heather –Senator Sirotkin stated the tourism industry needs to come together on short-term rentals, a challenge we need to pay attention to. Big topic in the coming weeks and months, want to spend some time on how we can talk about that subject.

Inntopia study should be done at the end of the month. Should include insights into ownership patterns, was never designed to outline policy suggestions, will look at data. Will offer to committee and both sides of the chamber. Policy is one thing, but the broader perspective, short term rentals is a lodging option that visitors are looking for. Benefit to us that legislature is going to develop policy and we will have to implement. Can put it on them to sift through the data. But need to discuss what we feel comfortable saying. Heather will share before Feb if it's available.

3. February Roadshow Meeting in Manchester

Matt – as we do more road shows, not going to have the insulation of the ACCD conference room. We are a public group, open to the public. As long as we are ok talking about these things off the cuff.

Matt – February road show in Manchester, reserved the Hildene conference room for this group, public is welcome. Paula and Matt will raise the flag to get people to the meeting in the region. Variety of industry perspectives, then will open it back to the group to see, great veterans on this board. What should we be doing, what should be on the table and what should be off as we open up more to the public?

What do we want the road shows to be? To be out more than in at ACCD conference room. So we are picturing the remaining meetings be out in the community.

We are very insulated in this conference room, really should be as the people's TRC and get out to the people. Matt will be in touch with TRC to see if they could set up other venues. Heather thought Feb was a test, and then in April come back to the ACCD conference room to discuss. But in favor that we should be on the road more often, but let's give us time to develop the expectations. Wants to balance openness with option to discuss details.

Lauren – What the agenda items look like once we are out in the communities? Presentations at the locations we were at, having communities come, what is valuable for their time and ours. Every other meeting in the field, and then the next one in conf room.

Molly - if we are going to be out, we want to hear from them what their issues and get feedback from them, that needs to be built into those meetings.

Steve – whatever we come up with, should be some sort of way to measure what we are putting out there and the support we are getting. Should be able to talk about if the initiatives were successful or not. If we are putting our energy into something, should be able to measure.

4. Strategic Vision – Next Steps - Matt Harrington

Heather and he will bring a full proposal, they can do it by e-mail. Feel if we need to hop on a private call with the board, maybe a possibility. Want to craft this alone with the board, and when others are in the meeting, but the laundry list of things we need to put in place, the public won't come for that. They will come talking about travel and cultural.

Matt – Like that balance of every other meeting being out there, and listening, then coming to conference room and teamwork. Either by call or a meeting then going back there. Would it be helpful to be in the area for the day? Meet 10 – 12, then lunch

together, then Paul schedule 1 or 2 tracks everyone could participate in. Try to get the most out of your day. Put together a package day for the group.

Heather would be open to that, making additional site visits so forth. Capital for the day add on, additional part of the day optional if you want to join. But keep it optional for those who can give the additional time and those that can't.

Vicki – also look at your TRC budget, now paying people to go further, may be incurring some serious additional mileage.

Paula – at a practical level, concerned about doing this in the south in February and having to be closed for four days. Crazy winter, long drive, it's a lot. February is tough, realistically.

February 6th is reserved at Hildene. Make 20th backup date. Maybe a backup location. Will make the decision the day before if it's going to change due to weather.

Matt - Community members joining us, would there be a part of the agenda that would be interesting to them. Matt and Paula will go offline to see about a group that could present. Will have them present first, then we will go to legislative updates and department updates. Then Q&A? Maybe have regular TRC update first, staff, and then Molly, then back end with the group. Gives free time to do Q&A for casual coffee afterwards.

Lauren likes committee presentation at the end, let's them come for that part only if they is what they are interested in.

Matt will go with a draft agenda. Will go with VDTM staff update, legislative update, strategic part off the agenda by back and forth e-mails and call if needed. And lead into more of the regional updates and closure at 12:00. Kick off with a lunch somewhere, and Paula and Matt come up with activities.

Vicki – Look into Vermont Open Meeting laws. Really want to be sure we are following that law. Matt and Heather will go offline to be sure we are in compliance.

Matt - Will get agenda out to everyone with a snow date.

5. Strategic Vision – Next Steps – Matt Harrington

Following was sent to everyone thru e-mail.

- To propel the tourism sector forward as a key engine of economic growth and strength.
- To enhance the visibility of Vermont as a world-class tourist destination in traditional, emerging and new markets.

Willie – Appreciate the bullet points, gets number 2 and 3 but doesn't number 1. He doesn't get the vision. What is propelling this one? Understands what is being said.

Matt said could change up the wording. Is this a good vision? Willie was wondering what we were propelling. Matt circled that word, and asked for folks to send him their thoughts for other word? Matt asked that the group give feedback.

6. Heard Around the State

7. Call ended at 11:00 am.