

Speaker's Tourism Panel  
Organizational Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 05, 2018

**Members Present:**

Joe Aresimowicz, Don DeVivo, Larry McHugh, Gregg Dancho, Jeff Muthersbaugh, Johanna Bond, Ed Dresel, Deb Moore, Ed Dombroskas, David Skelly, Christine Castonguay

Speaker Aresimowicz convened meeting. Welcomed everyone involved. Mentioned Governor-Elect Lamont's tourism efforts, turned over to Don DeVivo

Don DeVivo spoke about game plan of the panel. Said he hopes to produce a document of recommendations. Said tourism is a revenue driver in the state. Spoke about his role at DATTCO. Opened the floor to introductions by other members

Larry McHugh spoke about his role at the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce

Gregg Dancho spoke about his role in numerous tourism councils as well as the Beardlsey Zoo

Jeff Muthersbaugh spoke about his role at the Nehemiah Brainard B&B as well as the CT Lodging Association. Thanked the Speaker for convening the panel.

Johanna Bond said she is the Executive Director of the Central Regional Tourism District as well as Vice President of the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce

Ed Dresel spoke about his role at Destinations Unlimited Inc. as well as the overall impact of tourism on the state

Deb Moore talked about her role at the Wadsworth Museum

Ed Dombroskas talked about his past work in the tourism industry in CT as well as the mission of the panel. Thanked the Speaker for forming the panel.

David Skelly spoke about his role at the Yale Peabody Museum and his love for CT

Don DeVivo mentioned the members who could not be present (Kevin Brown, Rodney Butler, Helen Higgins, Peter Rois and Rebekah Beaulieu). Spoke about the open nature of the panel and invited everyone to participate and contribute ideas. Asked the group about future meetings. Asked the Speaker about the timeline of the panels work

Speaker Aresimowicz recommended the panel report by beginning of March

Don DeVivo asked the panel about potential venues for meetings. Asked for written material from anyone who would like to contribute. Opened forum up to input from other members

Jeff Muthersbaugh emphasized importance of receiving written material from people who want to be involved. Spoke about holding of funds for tourism districts by OPM

Don DeVivo gave back story of the tourism district funding issues and spoke about collaboration of ideas to move tourism forward

Gregg Dancho reiterated the importance of funding the tourism districts

Jeff Muthersbaugh added that the administration has not funded the districts for the past three years. Talked about how expenditures were made but the funding was never provided

Ed Dombroskas asked about the source of the tourism funding and the organizational structure of tourism in the state

Don DeVivo spoke about the format of the report the panel will create

Gregg Dancho asked about how many groups are currently working on tourism initiatives

Speaker Aresimowicz mentioned that he has been in contact with Governor-Elect Lamont and that he is bringing everyone to the table and that we are not looking for a turf battle rather he plans to include everyone

Larry McHugh asked that the Sports and Convention Bureau be involved

Christine Castonguay talked about overall strategy of the panel and asked what the group will work off of

Don DeVivo asked Christine Castonguay to provide the panel with material to present to the group

Don DeVivo asked about future meetings

Gregg Dancho offered the Beardlsey Zoo

David Skelly offered the Yale Peabody Museum

Deb Moore offered the Wadsworth Mansion

Susan Halipan offered Foxwoods as a meeting location on behalf of Chairman Butler

Don DeVivo agreed on proposed meeting locations and asked about timing of meetings

Speaker Aresimowicz suggested meeting after the Holidays. A meeting a week in January and then two Hartford meetings in February to meet the time line

Larry McHugh agreed with the Speaker

Don DeVivo mentioned that January is a big month for travel for the tourism industry. Suggested an organizational meeting at Wadsworth for starters

Speaker Aresimowicz asked about Facebook and Twitter

Don DeVivo invited others present to participate in the panel

Speaker Aresimowicz invited lobbyists and clients to the panel

Don DeVivo adjourned the meeting