

Advisory Commission on Travel & Tourism: Quarterly Meeting

Monday, March 8, 2021

1:00pm - 2:00pm

Zoom Video Conference

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome and Introductions from Commission Chair and Vice Chair: Martha Sheridan and Nancy Gardella

- Discussion on the continued Massachusetts reopening process, as officials announced plan to transition to Step 1 of Phase IV on Monday, March 22.
- Commission Chair Martha Sheridan suggested getting more clarity on 100 person gathering limit and guidelines, and clarification on when hotel workers can be vaccinated.

2. MOTT Executive Director's Report: Keiko Matsudo Orrall

- Discussion on structure of MOTT- Engaging digital channels and adding businesses to visitma.com; Highlighting Historic Women Trailblazers digital brochure for Women's History Month; MA Film Office- Many ongoing productions across the Commonwealth and Diversity initiative.
- Restaurant Promotion Commission/Restaurant Recovery Commission- Continuing to meet two more times. Recommendations will be coming out soon.
- My Local MA is creating a movement for our residents to support local businesses. More people that join in and use the marketing assets the stronger the campaign will be; with the My Local MA Campaign and the pandemic- MOTT has seen great collaboration with over 300 partners having joined in.
- Travel and Tourism Recovery Grants- Applications are being reviewed and awards will be coming out at the end of March. New pilot program for competitive marketing grants.

3. Presentation from the Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC): Michael J. Bobbitt and Ricardo Guillaume

- Agency mission; Agency breakdown of MCC; Discussion on Community Initiatives- Local Cultural Council (LCC) program, Cultural District Initiative and The Festivals Program.

- Collaboration opportunities in the future- summits and meetings, connect LCCs and Cultural Districts to RTCs.
- Five Surveys of cultural organizations thus far throughout pandemic. Latest survey shows staggering losses over the last year. Cultural Organizations report \$588.3M in lost revenue, artists cite \$30.4M in lost income, and 30K cultural jobs impacted statewide. MCC pivoting to provide relief efforts.
- Diversity and equity work- racial equity listening sessions, Cultural Youth Development Council.

4. Review Annual Recommendations Report

- Highlights of the six recommendations made in the Annual Report to the legislature: Development and deployment of an additional economic recovery package which takes into consideration the nuances of the tourism sector; Consultation with appropriate representatives from the tourism sector to develop a comprehensive plan to lift restrictions on gathering limits within hotels and other meeting and event facilities; A review of the Tourism Trust Fund appropriation to take into consideration the new infusion of revenue from the short-term tax with a goal of increasing the annual investment in tourism promotion for MOTT and the RTCs, factoring in annual increases for sustainable growth; Development and deployment of a comprehensive tourism marketing plan by MOTT to allow the Commonwealth to compete for necessary tourism dollars as the nation begins to emerge from COVID travel restrictions; Release of the full report developed in conjunction with McKinsey on the strategic review of tourism promotion in the Commonwealth; Dedicated financial support for the Commonwealth's visitor information centers.

5. Regional Updates

- Southeastern MA
 - i. Provided an update on current dire status of businesses across SEMA, as well as resiliency and pivoting of facilities across the travel and tourism sector. See positives emerging, but believe it's going to be a long time.
- MetroWest
 - i. Provided an update on businesses across the MetroWest region- Many area restaurants have seen a large decrease in spending as major businesses that spend a lot of money at area restaurants have a number of employees that work from home.

- ii. Launch of mini grant program as an opportunity to have dialogue with members. Most of applicants have been arts organizations.
- iii. Project Envoy- partnership with local restaurants and local food pantries.

6. Other Business

7. Adjournment