



State of Wisconsin

Tony Evers, Governor

Ben Popp, Chair

**Wisconsin Council on Tourism Minutes
Monday, May 23, 2022
Wisconsin Department of Tourism
3319 W Beltline Hwy, Madison WI**

I. Roll Call

PRESENT: Secretary-designee Anne Sayers, Senator Joan Ballweg, Darren Bush, Dr. Natalie Chin, Dr. Robert Davis, Representative Sheila Stubbs, Michelle Martin, Mary McPhetridge, Ben Popp, Denise Stillman, Missy Tracy, Christian Overland, George Tzougros

EXCUSED: Genyne Edwards, A.J. Frels, Deb Carey, Representative Travis Tranel, Senator Jeff Smith, Krystal Westfahl, Luke Zahm, Nathan Gordon

II. Call Meeting to Order and Welcome

Ben Popp called the meeting to order at 10:30am.

III. Approval of March 15, 2022 Minutes

Missy Tracy made a motion to approve the March 15, 2022 minutes. Michelle Martin seconded the motion. No further discussion. Motion carried unanimously.

IV. Election of Marketing Committee Members

The floor was opened for nominations to be elected to the Marketing Committee. Michelle Martin nominated Mary McPhetridge. Ben Popp nominated Missy Tracy and Darren Bush. Nominations were accepted by candidates; there were no further nominations. Roll call votes were taken for the three nominees. Darren Bush, Missy Tracy, and Mary McPhetridge each received votes from all 13 members present at the meeting, and were elected to the Marketing Committee.

V. Election of Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Committee Members

Council members were presented with nine applicants recommended by Council Chair Ben Popp for election to the Joint Effort Marketing Committee, with the recommendation to move the slate of nine applicants forward.

Christian Overland motioned to approve the slate of applicants to the Joint Effort Marketing (JEM) Committee. Denise Stillman seconded the motion. Roll call votes were taken for the slate of nine applicants. The nine applicants moved forward with 11 votes and were elected to the JEM Committee.

VI. State of the Arts: Presentation and discussion



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George Tzougros provided an overview and update from the Wisconsin Arts Board. Due to the pandemic, the arts were among the first industries to close and remain the last to reopen. The arts are also facing a lack of volunteers statewide.

The Wisconsin Arts Board looks forward to 2023 and beyond, while knowing we need to pay attention to the great assets we have in our state to drive arts and art tourism. Council members were encouraged to get help support the arts by getting the word out about Wisconsin Arts News, a free email serve.

VII. “Here’s to Those Who Wisconsin” Industry Toolkit: Review and discussion

Council members were presented with an industry toolkit to enable them to be spokespersons in their community by leveraging Wisconsin’s shared brand promise, which was an imperative of the 2019 strategic plan. Shane Brossard walked through the toolkit highlighting the importance of consistency in marketing and messaging, which will lift the image of the state.

The “Here’s to those who Wisconsin” brand idea can be uniquely modified using the toolkit to create personalized statements for destinations that align with the Department’s messaging. Council members were also reminded of the travelwisconsin.com resource and the importance of maintaining accurate listings with strong imagery and descriptions.

VIII. Secretary-designee’s Report

Secretary-designee Anne Sayers provided an update from the Department, highlighting key updates in the following areas:

Kickoff to the summer tourism season: We are starting to see some competitor’s ads across our state. It is a competitive marketing environment with pressures around gas prices and the pandemic, but marketing continues to be our answer. 89% of Americans plan to travel in the next 6 months with gas prices having low impact on decisions to travel. This renewed interest in road trips can be capitalized on through our marketing efforts.

Summer campaign: The summer campaign was launched on April 6th; an earlier launch date than previously seen. We are also seeing longer lead times in terms of how people are planning, and this earlier launch date will put us ahead of visitor planning and more in line with our competitors. On 5/24 an events focused layer to our campaign is launching. We feel this is the summer to bring back events and we want to renew our focus there.

Event listings: The Department has recently had a big push to get more events listed on our website, which have dropped off in recent years due to the pandemic. The Department is also reviving ‘fest or fiction’ and creating an events widget that DMO’s can drop into their website and guide them to event listings on travelwisconsin.com. An “Events this Weekend” headline



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will also be created on the front of the website after noticing it was a highly googled search term.

Content capturing: Secretary-designee Sayers shared a list of the numerous locations where we have made it a priority in to capture new assets in the themes of culinary, outdoor recreation, water activities, arts and culture, fall color, etc.

Economic Impact number: 2021 Economic Impact numbers will be released on June 8. Ahead of this release date we continue to have outpaced the national average in terms of recovery.

IX. Next Meeting

Ben Popp announced that the next meeting of the Wisconsin Council on Tourism will be held in October 2022. This meeting will be hosted at a Wisconsin Historical Society Site. Christian Overland suggested the Wade House in Sheboygan.

X. Adjournment

George Tzougros made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Denise Stillman. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 11:58am.

Respectfully Submitted by Mary McPhetridge, Secretary
Approved by Ben Popp, Chair