



**CONNECTICUT'S COUNTRYSIDE
STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
MEETING AGENDA**

February 15, 2023, 2PM-3PM

Zoom log in:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81927541709?pwd=SUxIQmJlVnJDV1BTcHlZdEZlUzdoQT09> - Meeting ID: 819 2754 1709 - Passcode: 403841

Zoom call in:

1 929 205 6099

Meeting ID: 819 2754 1709 - Passcode: 403841

Welcome!

- Summit Recap
- Post Summit Next Steps
- Budget Discussions FY 23/24
- Eastern Regional Tourism Marketing Grant 2023
- Earth Day 2023 update
- DKA Brochure
- Nichols College – web development update
- Update - 4 town intern - Josh Hull
- 4 Town Talk

Next Meeting – March 15, 2023 – 2pm via Zoom, agenda item suggestions?

Adjournment

Welcome!

- Quick Introduction
 - Cathy, the owner of the Daniel Rust House Bed and Breakfast
- Quick thanks for everyone that was able to attend the summit last month
 - Richard said that it was a great presentation and that it was well received

Summit Recap

- The summit was well received, there were suggestions to have a microphone as well as a podium for the next one.
- Goal was to give an update and to listen to people about the plan and the actions that have been undertaken by Connecticut's Countryside.
- The different breakout groups have given several different ideas and suggestions that have been recorded. These will provide guidance and assistance in the next steps that should be taken by staff. Staff will look at the results and will sort out the suggestions and pick the next projects.
- Patrice staffed the agriculture table
 - The table had several different ideas such as creating a regional committee. Creating a committee will be one of the first steps, and the goal is to have them help implement the plan.
- David staffed outdoor recreation
 - There are several areas for collaboration between the towns and shared resources. A regional conservation commission was talked about that could meet quarterly, potential to include park and recreation to have some regional cooperation as well that could expand services.
 - This will help with open space planning and other projects.
 - Cara had a question concerning Stacey Streans, and whether to invite her to the steering committee. Several tasks that are being done concerning agriculture are part of Stacey's job and could help with.
- Cynthia
 - Arts talked about collaboration, though there was no talk about a regional group. It was touching slightly but was not the focus of the discussion of the group. Wendy will be leaving Cultural Coalition and will help for as long as she is at the organization. Eric asked whether the 4-town regional committee be helpful? Wendy said that this will greatly help since it will remove duplication between the towns and have one collaborative strategy. We should expand collaboration, and Wendy then asked whether this could expand to the other towns? Patrice said that it could. Wendy then discussed that Cultural Coalition has had a meeting with Last Green Valley and seeking furthering the partnership between the two organizations.
- Josh
 - Higher Education talked about transportation issues, and the on-campus presence.

- Cara mentioned the greater university chapter of Alumni association, alumni are great way of explaining the region to people. This would communicate how many alums are in this area.
- Eric
 - Business had the two chambers of commerce, Tolland and Windham. Each Chamber has its own approach and style so using both is to the benefit of the communities. Eric mentioned the workshops that were conducted with Tim Liptrap and the success.
- Summit recap was attached to the packet

Post Summit Next Steps

- Committee formation is one of the next steps. Last week we had a meeting and agreed that there was energy towards forming committees in Agriculture, Arts, and Outdoor Recreation. Having three is a good start and later there could be committees set up for the other themes as well.
- Any thoughts on this
 - Cara mentioned that she was just in the focus area
 - There was a discussion on Park and Rec and sharing resources between the towns. Equipment sharing was one that was discussed, and this could be brought to the 4-towns.
- We will create a list of next projects, and priorities. This will guide us in grants and other steps that should be taken. Patrice mentioned that it would be great to kick off all six, but it is more manageable to kick off three first and use them as a test run.
- We also talked about having a yearly summit, which would then rotate between the towns and be the reflection point. This will allow us to see if our projects are on point and keep the public in as much as possible.

Budget Discussions

- As everyone has seen previously, a budget memo was created and sent over to the different town managers and administrators. Eric mentioned that Coventry's EDC has voted and included the budget in their request. Bolton has included the budget as an item and will go to the finance board. Both Mansfield and Tolland have been included in the budget conversations.
- Ryan Aylesworth mentioned the park and recreation plan and how Connecticut's Countryside was brought up at the meeting. There is a lot of excitement at the meeting.

Eastern Regional Tourism District

- Connecticut's Countryside submitted a grant application for 8,000 dollars with an 8,000 dollar match. This money will be used in a video production project, and these videos would be included on the website that is being created by Nichols College. These videos would be thirty to sixty seconds, which would be included on social media, websites, and regional organizations. This project will be done by DKA as a continuation of the

contract and will be completed by June 30. Waiting to hear back from the Tourism District on approval, most likely by the end of March.

- Eric asked what Wendy thought, and she responded that there were multiple uses of videos. She will follow up.

Earth Day

- Bolton had a meeting with Bike Walk Bolton, and they are still planning their event.
- Mansfield, they had a meeting, and they are trying to figure out the potential events that could be held that weekend.
- Coventry, there was a conversation with the conservation commission about guided tours of the trails. There was also an idea concerning Coventry Lake and potential ideas. There have been volunteers to perform music at one of the events.
- Tolland, still no movement.

DKA Brochure

- There have been conversations concerning edits to the first draft that was released by DKA.
- Cara
 - There was comment from the summit concerning the logo and how people might be able to find the four towns from Connecticut's Countryside. Have we talked to DKA about this issue.
 - Eric responded that there has not been any discussion yet, but we will talk with DKA and find out what they think.
 - Richard said that Logos are logos, and they are not the only way to show the region.

Nichols College

- Tim was not able to attend the meeting but was able to provide an update to Eric. The class started the project and will start to show results. Eric mentioned that members of the steering committee should attend the class one day to provide the students with what the committee is looking for on a website and to answer any questions the students may have.

Update Josh

- Updating Business lists which will be included in a potential online interactive. This information will also be included on the website as well.

4-Town Talk

- Coventry has a new restaurant, called Woke. There was a ribbon cutting ceremony this week and two weeks ago there was a ribbon cutting for a new boxing business.
- Mansfield taste2towns will be starting on Monday, please check out the website to seek the menus that have been put up. Please stop by our restaurants. Nancy mentioned that her business will be having smoked meat during the event.

- Tolland, right now in the process of moving their farmer's market back onto the town green
- Bolton, annual townwide tag sale (partnering with Coventry). There will be the annual egg hunt in April as well so please come. Starting construction on a trail that will run to the center of town.
- Cara has no new things to report for UConn.

Next Meeting is March 15,