

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**  
**Businesses and Tourism: Promoting New Hartford Presentation Notes**  
**MONDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2017 – 5:00PM**  
**NEW HARTFORD TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT:** See Sign-in Sheet

Chairman Mark Russo welcomed everyone, explained that the Economic Development Commission and New Hartford Business Council have arranged for today's presentation by the State of Connecticut Department of Tourism. He noted that with budget constraints, municipalities need careful planning to capitalize on tourism. CTVisit is a robust website that can offer opportunities to businesses that meet their criteria.

He asked all to welcome Rosemary Bove and Rob Danroth. Ms. Bove thanked Mary Ann and Peggy for their tour of New Hartford. She noted that part of her role is working with travel writers and bloggers and she would like to get contacts from her tour to be able to share her New Hartford contacts.

Ms. Bove mentioned that Anita Barden had shared with her that their farm was voted Second Best Farm in Connecticut and that is something that they would really like to promote. She shared that a recent program is the Regional Tourism Marketing Program which enables them to come out to speak with us today. Additionally, if anyone would like to meet with them one on one, they are willing to schedule an appointment. She has found this program to be an interesting endeavor as the State has never reached out to Councils of Government or Municipalities before. Despite the budget, the digital version of the Visitor Guide is available, but print copies have not been made.

CTVisit would like to encourage collaboration to promote additional areas beyond the well-known tourism areas and events. They can offer workshops on how to prepare and market itineraries to bring visitors for more than one event and encourage them to stay. All their programs are offered at no cost beyond the investment of time.

Ms. Bove shared that they have seasonal promotions and a digital mailing list where they solicit input for upcoming topics to include as many events and participants as possible. She suggests that participants peruse the site and identify areas where they would like to be included.

The State Office of Tourism also offers many networking opportunities by attending their workshops and conferences. She shared Connecticut Open House Day which is scheduled for Saturday, June 9, 2018. Participating businesses offer discounts and deals for Connecticut residents on this day so that when they have out of town visitors they are aware of local attractions that might interest their visitors and keep those tourism dollars in the State.

Ms. Bove discussed how their partners have been promoted in media and articles over the past year. The greatest determining factor of getting featured is by having appealing photos on your listing page. The CTVisit website is very image driven.

Ms. Bove introduced Rob Danroth. He shared statistics on the results since the CTVisit website was reformatted in April/May of 2016. One of the reasons that the site was reformatted was because Google indicated they would not list the site if it was not formatted for viewing on a mobile device or tablet.

Mr. Danroth then shared some of the enhancements since the launch of the new site including the What's New page, a seasonal switch, promotion of the e-newsletter, social media feed options on the listing pages, and improved effectiveness of the on-site search function.

Mr. Danroth also highlighted some of the new CTVisit features for the Town pages with a specific listings page template. It is critical to keep the events information up to date. He then shared a promotional video ad which featured a few shots of New Hartford.

Mr. Danroth then loaded the CTVisit site to show the seasonal changes and loaded the Ski Sundown page currently on the site. Each listing has 2 photos that go with it a square image and a banner type image.

Suzie Larson asked about the businesses taking advantage of the website and Mr. Danroth indicated that the categories she mentioned are those that meet the website criteria. Ms. Bove noted that a Real Estate business could be listed on the town's website and then included in articles perhaps about summer rentals or something along those lines.

Mary Ann Gunning commented that Brewery Legitimus has just gotten added to the website and his page links to hers and she has linked to his page on hers.

Chris Sayer asked what percentage of the traffic to the website is out of state. Mr. Danroth indicated that with the budget cuts they are left with digital marketing. Ms. Bove noted that currently about 80% of the traffic is out of state.

Mr. Danroth highlighted some of the features on the business listing for Ski Sundown noting the picture editing tools and the scroll bar which can be linked to Instagram. Below that on the page there is an "In the Neighborhood" Section with links to other businesses in the area. Shelley Lloyd commented that it is in our best interest to get all our restaurants listed on the website so that this neighborhood section features our restaurants on the Ski Sundown or Chapin Park listings. Chris Sayer then questioned if all the New Hartford restaurants had listings if all would appear in that section.

Ms. Bove noted that it is imperative that we notify her office if any of the information we find is outdated or inaccurate as they do want to try to have the most current information on the website. Any business who wishes to be added to the website can go to the bottom of any page in the blue area and select "Become a Partner" to get a username/password to create a page.

Ms. Lloyd asked for the speakers to review the criteria for who can have a page on the site. Ms. Bove noted that she has handouts with those criteria. Ms. Lloyd noted that some businesses could be cross-promoted.

EDC Chairman Mark Russo noted that we are a small town with many small businesses and as the Economic Development Commission has been discussing our businesses need to talk to each other and network with each other to make it a cooperative effort. Peggy Budny added that businesses can attend the Business Council events and network. Chris Sayer commented that New Hartford is in a very unique position where we could be a destination town for many types of activities if we could just promote it.

Ms. Bove commented that they would be willing to come back to do a day long workshop for New Hartford businesses and perhaps surrounding towns on how to partner and create deals and packages. John Burdick questioned who usually facilitates such an event on a local level. Ms. Bove indicated that this is not something that has been done as yet, but this could be a regional opportunity.

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Debbie Ventre  
Commission Secretary**