

**WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION**  
**Meeting: Tuesday, July 29, 2008 at 5:30 p.m.**  
**Town Hall Conference Room #1**  
**MINUTES**

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m. by Chair Charlie Forsdick.

**Roll Call/Attendance:** Members in attendance: Charlie Forsdick, Chair; Jenna Delay, Charles Ford, Carol Hall, Tony Homicki, Geraldine Munroe, Elaine St. Onge, and Chris Traczyk. Also in attendance: Paul Montinieri, Town Council liaison; and Peter Gillespie, Town Planner/Economic Development Manager.

Members absent: Katie Sullivan.

**Public Comments:** None

**Approval of Minutes:** June 24, 2008 - Charlie Forsdick asked if there were corrections needed for the draft minutes. One correction was requested to reflect the appointment of Jenna Delay as a member of the Commission. Chris Traczyk made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as amended, Geraldine Munroe seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.

**Announcements/ Introductions:**

- Staff support: Charlie Forsdick asked the members to help him absorb as many support tasks as possible that would otherwise be done by Peter Gillespie. The idea is to free-up as much time as possible for Mr. Gillespie to concentrate on his core planning and economic development work.

**Reports:**

- Central CT Culture & Tourism Commission – Geraldine Munroe: Ms. Munroe said she has an e-mail update of next year’s calendar, and will forward it to Mr. Forsdick.
- Economic Development and Improvement Commission – Mr. Gillespie said that \$200,000 of façade improvement funding was accepted for use in Old Wethersfield and along the Berlin Turnpike.
  - GHC&VB, Potential Events - Carol Hall said she has arranged for getting notices of events from both the GHCVB and the Convention Center.
  - Grant Funding

- *Preserve America* – Status: Peter Gillespie said that the final report is due to go before the Town Council on August. 18<sup>th</sup>. Charlie Forsdick encouraged the members to attend.
  - CCCT Marketing - Status: Peter Gillespie said that the Historical Society had received the check, and a contract had been signed. It is hoped there will be a contract with a consultant in place in September.
  - Way-finding & Gateway signage – Peter Gillespie said that the Preserve America plan made the same wayfinding recommendations as had been discussed. He said that Preserve America did make a \$90,000 grant available for wayfinding signs, but this is less than what was planned with the Greater Hartford Arts Council. Mr. Gillespie said that the plan is for the Town to process the grant in the fall, put the work out to bid over the winter, and begin construction in the spring or summer. Mr. Gillespie noted that the Preserve America grant funds are not for the new gateway signage off the Marsh Street Exit #26 (to cost \$155,000).
- 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee – Chris Traczyk distributed copies of a list of activities planned for this 2009 anniversary. She said that the Committee is trying to have at least one event per month, and that the parade and fireworks are the main activities not already a regular event in Town. She noted that the budget for the Committee is \$15,000, which would barely cover the cost of the parade. Peter Gillespie said that Keilor Associates had provided some ideas for 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo.
  - Budget Status, 2008 – 09: Peter Gillespie said that the funds for the 2009 budget are now available, and that the Commission had not yet expended any of the funds.
  - Event Calendar – Update: Jenna Delay said that she had posted several events to the calendar, and is waiting for the 375<sup>th</sup> Anniversary calendar to be firmer so she can post that, too.
  - Monthly Report – Data collection: Charlie Forsdick distributed copies of a draft annual report for 2007-2008 for comments from the members. He said that he had recently made a presentation about the draft report to the Historic Wethersfield stakeholders and it was well received. Mr. Forsdick said that the monthly data for July 2008 may not include the whole month, but it will for August.

### **Old Business:**

- Brochure – Reprinting: Peter Gillespie said that he is prepared to go to bid for reprinting of the brochures, but there currently are no funds available. Elaine St. Onge volunteered to proof-read it. Mr. Gillespie said that \$12,000 - \$15,000 is needed for the 100,000 copies needed, and that Rae Anne Palmer is looking for grant funding. Charlie Forsdick said that he

would check with the Central CT Culture & Tourism Commission about the availability of grant funds.

- Farmers Market – Jenna Delay said that she is working on getting vendors for a farmers market at the Cornfest, and is finding it difficult to get them interested. Many are already booked for other locations on that date, and others are objecting to the fees needed to pay for the booth. The members discussed the possibility of the vendors sharing a tent to reduce costs.
- Greeter Book – Update: Kate Sullivan was not present to report.
- Horse & Carriage Ride Schedule: Peter Gillespie said that the Historic Wethersfield stakeholders group agreed that the best dates were all Saturdays and Sundays starting with the Cornfest on September 13<sup>th</sup>, and continuing through October. The rides would resume after Thanksgiving, and continue through the holidays as funds permitted. The start of the route will likely move back to the Keeney Center. Jenna Delay said that she would get flyers to the schools for distribution
- Visitor Survey – Improved distribution & collection: Peter Gillespie said that the results are coming in, but not yet available. He will distribute a list of the stakeholders collecting data. Chris Traczyk said that she will build an e-mail distribution list. The list would be used to send monthly updates to the stakeholders in the future to keep them updated about events.
- Tourism DVD – Footage and still collection: Charlie Forsdick, asked, and Chris Traczyk agreed to help with finishing the DVD. Geraldine Munroe said that she had left a message with Paul Mayer, but had not received a reply.

### **New Business:**

- Events – Forsdick/Gillespie/Sullivan/St.Onge/Ford: Peter Gillespie said that quarterly events were discussed at the Historic District stakeholders meeting.
  - Fall Weekend: The members discussed an antique car show or a scavenger hunt as possible events for the weekend of October 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. Chris Traczyk said that town resident Elaine Speranza had run a scavenger hunt once, and volunteered to contact her.
  - Winter Holiday: Elaine St.Onge said that the Historical Society cannot sponsor the floral showcase this year, due to the absence of their director. Charlie Forsdick said that he would contact Dick Prentice of the Village Improvement Association about possibly spearheading the door decorating event.

- Stakeholder Meeting – Peter Gillespie said that the meeting was very productive, and that these meetings will occur regularly in the future, possibly bi-monthly or quarterly.

**Completed Items/Tasks:**

- Follow-up item: Charlie Forsdick asked the members to get comments to him within 2 days on the draft annual report he will e-mail to everyone.

**Miscellaneous:**

- Staycation Campaign update: Charlie Forsdick said that he understands from the State of Massachusetts tourism department that they have received numerous requests for information about Wethersfield. He has not yet received feedback from the State of Connecticut.

**Correspondence:** None.

**Next Meeting Date:** August 26, 2008 at 5:30 PM, Town Hall Conference Room #1.

**Call to Adjourn:** Elaine St. Onge motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:34 p.m., Chris Traczyk seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan  
Commission Recording Secretary