

WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION
Meeting: Tuesday, August 28, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.
Town Manager's Conference Room
MINUTES

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Charlie Forsdick.

Roll Call/Attendance: Members in attendance: Charlie Forsdick, Chair, Charles Ford, Carol Hall, Gerry Munroe, Elaine St. Onge, Katie Sullivan and Chris Traczyk. Also in attendance: Paul Montinieri, Town Council Liaison; and Peter Gillespie, Town Planner/Economic Development Manager.

Members absent: Anne Kuckro

Public Comments: None

Approval of Minutes: [July 31, 2007](#) - Charlie Forsdick asked if there were corrections needed for the draft minutes, and none were requested. Elaine St. Onge made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, Gerry Munroe seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.

Announcements/ Introductions:

- Charlie Forsdick introduced Carol Hall as a new Commission member starting that night, filling the At-Large position formerly held by Joan Hughes.
- Charles Ford announced that the Scarecrow Festival is going to be held one week earlier than usual, from September 22nd to October 20th. He said that a letter is usually written to the Police Chief to request that the police help to watch for vandalism of the scarecrows.

Reports: (Note: item taken out of order to accommodate Mr. Milicki's schedule.)

- **Schedule and Routes for Fall Festival Trolley-Bus:** Charlie Forsdick recognized Martin Malicki as present with a proposed route and schedule for the trolley-bus. Mr. Forsdick said that he made arrangements with Double AA Transportation for the trolley-bus on Sunday, October 7th, and is trying to arrange to have it on Saturday, too. He was also trying to arrange for the bus to pick-up conventioners at the Hartford Convention Center, and bring them to Wethersfield. However, the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association would not allow additional buses near enough for boarding, apparently due to the high bus congestion from their very large convention that weekend. Mr. Forsdick was also unsuccessful in getting a schedule from the AOPA so he could try to make arrangements for boarding some distance from the Convention Center. Elaine St. Onge said that she felt it was more important to have the bus do runs to the Center on Saturday, and questioned the benefit of having a bus only on Sunday. Gerry Munroe said she believes that the AOPA conventioners would not be interested in things not related to aviation. Mr. Forsdick said since the AOPA organizers were not being supportive, the Commission was fighting an uphill battle. Mr. Forsdick asked whether the members thought it was worth the money for the bus service, and the consensus was no. Peter Gillespie said that no vote was needed for or against to make a decision on the bus service. Charlie Forsdick then said that the Commission would cancel its plans to hire a bus to bring AOPA conventioners in from Hartford.

Charlie Forsdick then shifted the discussion to hiring bus service within the town for the same weekend, which includes the Historical Society's Craft Fair and the Scarecrows on Main Street. Charlie Forsdick called on Martin Malicki, and he summarized a proposed loop route with the following stops: Silas Robbins House, Main Street, Old Academy, Cove Warehouse, Cove / Craft fair, Comstock and Vicinity, and back to Silas Robbins House. Elaine St. Onge suggested starting at the Keeney Center so there is parking for the passengers. She also asked if the purpose of the tour would be mostly for transportation (i.e. faster pace and little or no tour), or mostly for a tour (i.e. slower pace and tour information). The consensus of the members was to have

the bus provide tours Saturday and Sunday to give passengers an introduction to the town that would encourage them to come back again. Martin Malicki said the route would take about 3 minutes per stop, or 25 minutes on Saturday, and 22 minutes on Sunday (no Craft Fair stop). Charlie Forsdick said that Anne Kuckro had offered to write a script for the tours, if he could enlist people to be the tour guides on the bus.

Elaine St. Onge said that the Craft Fair runs from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturday. Charlie Forsdick then recommended that the bus be hired 11:00 AM - 5:00 PM that day. The hours needed on Sunday were uncertain, but would not be more than Saturday's hours. That would mean a proposed maximum cost of \$660 for the two days (12 hours @ \$55 per hour). Elaine St. Onge said that the Historical Society would likely sponsor 1/2 of the cost for Saturday, the day of the Craft Fair. Charlie Forsdick suggested that 5 other groups split the remaining cost, and recommended that they meet separately to discuss: Tourism Commission, Historical Society, Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association, Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, and Keene Foundation. Carol Hall asked what is the seating capacity of the bus. Charlie Forsdick said the trolley holds 34 passengers, and the trolley-bus holds 22. He said he would check to see if there is a price difference between the two. The consensus of the members was that the trolley is preferred because it would be more appealing to the visitors. Charlie Forsdick asked Martin Mielicki to write-up the final route and schedule. He also asked Paul Montinieri to convey to the Town Council the lack of support the Commission is getting from the AOPA.

Old Business: (Note: item taken out of order to accommodate Mr. Ramirez's schedule.)

- **Proposed T-Shirt Sales:** Daniel Ramirez was present as a follow-up from last month's meeting in which he proposed to sell T-shirts using the official town logo and the wording "Old Wethersfield". Last month the Commission said that it would not sanction something unless the wording was "Historic Wethersfield". Mr. Ramirez passed out a new proposed design. It was a bag with the Historic Wethersfield wording on it, into which he wanted to place the "Old Wethersfield" T-shirts upon being sold. He also preferred to use a different onion and a different font than on the town logo. The consensus of the Commission was that Mr. Ramirez could use a different onion and font, but needed to use "Historic Wethersfield". Charlie Forsdick asked Mr. Ramirez to return a revised design to the Commission. Mr. Ramirez asked if some kind of vote could be taken that night because he was about to go back to college. Peter Gillespie suggested that the Commission vote conditionally that night. Chris Traczyk made a motion to accept the design using Mr. Ramirez' onion and font, with the wording "Historic Wethersfield", pending Commission approval following a vote on a revised design that Mr. Ramirez would submit via e-mail. Charlie Forsdick seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.

Reports:

- **375th Anniversary Committee:** Charlie Forsdick said that formation of a committee was approved by the Town Council.
- **Tourism DVD:** Gerry Monroe volunteered to work with Paul Montinieri on the next steps.
- **"Welcome Bags" for AOPA Convention:** Charlie Forsdick showed the members some example "tip-ins" designed by Keiler and Associates. The cost for the tip-ins would be approximately \$3,000 for design and production of 5,000 packets (\$2,000 for design and \$1,000 for production). The content of the packet was recognized to have been reused from existing materials, so the members felt that Keiler and Associates should better justify the design cost and/or lower the price. The intention was to have the packets ready for the AOPA convention so the Commission would have to act quickly. Elaine St. Onge said that the current events brochure is ready to go into the packets whenever they are ready.

***** Temporary Adjournment at 6:50 PM:** the Town Manager's conference room was scheduled to be used at 7:00 PM for another meeting, so the Commission adjourned, relocated to a basement conference room, and resumed the meeting.

Reports (continued):

- **Meeting Planner's Guide Ad:** Gerry Munroe recommended not placing an ad in the meeting planner's guide. She said that meeting planners pick out places to go and activities based on what the meeting attendees are interested in, and few meetings are going to involve a theme that would generate interest in visiting Wethersfield. She said that a visitor's guide would go to a broader audience looking for things to do outside a meeting or a theme, so they would be more likely to be interested in visiting Wethersfield. Chris Traczyk made a motion to not place an ad in the meeting planner's guide, Charlie Forsdick seconded, and the vote showed all members in favor.
- **Visitor's Guide Ad:** Chris Traczyk noted that the cost for the ad in the visitor's guide was \$1,638 last year for a 1/4 page ad. The consensus of the members was that the content from last years' ad was still adequate. Gerry Munroe recommended that future ads include picture(s) to catch the reader's eye with a distinct attraction in town - maybe a picture of the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum houses. Chris Traczyk made a motion to place an ad in the visitor's guide, Elaine St. Onge seconded, and the vote showed all members in favor.
- **Guest Guide Ad:** Peter Gillespie reviewed a price quote of \$3,850 for a redesigned ad. The redesign was requested by the Economic Development and Improvement Commission. The consensus of the Tourism Commission members was that the redesign cost was too high. Charlie Forsdick asked Mr. Gillespie if permission could be granted to use a less expensive consultant. Mr. Gillespie said that he would check with the Finance Department. Chris Traczyk made a motion to recommend to the EDIC that they consider using a slightly modified version of last year's ad, to save time and money. Carol Hall seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor, with one abstention (Joan Hughes abstained as liaison to the EDIC).
- **Promo Packet:** Charlie Forsdick distributed copies of the new packet, and noted that change is needed in the cover letter from Mayor Adil.
- **Event Calendar:** Chris Traczyk volunteered to work with Peter Gillespie and the webmaster, with input from the Commission, to approve changes to be made to the website.

Old Business:

- **Horse and Carriage Ride Grant:** Peter Gillespie distributed copies of information for the members from the website of the Carriage Operators of North America. Mr. Gillespie reported that there was zero response to the Request for Proposal for the carriage ride. He said that three letters from operators were submitted instead. Two of the letters said that their event calendars were full, and the third said they were wary of negative publicity. Mr. Gillespie said that the town may need to readvertise the RFP. Chris Traczyk asked if a different process could work, such as soliciting letters of interest to negotiate. Peter Gillespie said that he would check with the Finance Department on whether readvertisement is needed or if other options are available.

New Business:

- **GHCVB Liaison:** Charlie Forsdick circulated a list so members could sign-up for the rotating schedule for attending GHCVB meetings.
- **Official Logo:** After the members reviewed the content of the logo, Katie Sullivan made a motion to reaffirm adoption of the official logo for the Tourism Commission as: using an onion with lines drawn in for detail, as seen in the "Stop, Look and Linger" ad in the GHCVB Visitor's Guide 2007; and using the wording "Historic Wethersfield" with the font used on the Town of Wethersfield website.

Completed Items/Tasks: No items raised or discussed.

Correspondence: None.

Next Meeting Date: September 25, 2007 at 5:30 PM, Town Manager's conference room.

Call to Adjourn: Charlie Forsdick said that all remaining items on the agenda would be tabled until the next regular meeting. Elaine St. Onge motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:42 PM, Chris Traczyk seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan
Commission Recording Secretary