

WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION
Regular Meeting Minutes: Tuesday, March 28, 2006
5:30 PM
Town Manager's Conference Room

Call To Order - Chairman Forsdick called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

Attendance - Members in attendance- Chair Charlie Forsdick (by phone), Vice Chair Chris Traczyk, Phil Santopietro, Paul Montinieri, Charlie Ford, Elaine St. Onge, Anne Kuckro, Carol Bruce. Also in attendance - peter Gillespie - Town Planner/Economic Development Manager.

Public Comments - Noone present to speak.

Approval of [Minutes February Meeting](#) - Elaine St. Onge motioned to approve the minutes as submitted, Anne Kuckro seconded the motion and all members voted in favor.

Announcements/Introductions: No announcements to make.

Action items from last month

Visitor Demographics Survey - Peter Gillespie distributed a final revised copy of the survey which included the revisions suggested by Doug Shipman and Amy Webb. The survey would be printed on a series of 5" x 7" stock cards. Anne Kuckro agreed to coordinate with Webb Deane Stevens and Charlie Ford will work with the Shopkeepers to conduct the survey. A mid April start on the survey is planned.

Budget 2006-2007 - A copy of the Town Manager's budget was submitted and it was noted that on April 10 at 5:30 in the evening the Council budget session will be held. Chris Traczyk stated that she will attend. The Tourism budget includes:

\$13,667 Preserve America Grant match

2,000 Promo Kit

2,000 Wayfinding signs

500 GHCVB membership

100 Brochure racks

8,000 Ads

6,000 Brochure service

\$32,267

Display Board - Paul Montinieri stated that the final version is nearing completion with some minor changes planned such as web site address. Charlie Forsdick stated that he did not like the proposed leaves. Carol Bruce was concerned that there were no Silas Deane Highway sites/businesses promoted. Peter Gillespie stated that EDIC will design their own display.

Reports:

Grant Funding - Preserve America - Chris Traczyk congratulated everyone involved in the Preserve America grant. Chris also expressed concerns regarding how the planning will conflict with the work of the National Trust and Amy Webb. Charlie Forsdick suggested that an additional wish list of the work that Amy Webb could do should be developed. Chris Traczyk inquired about the details of the grant award and briefly reviewed the grant. Peter Gillespie will mail copies of the final grant to all members. Peter Gillespie reported that a stakeholders committee will be formed through the Town Manager's office. Anne Kuckro suggested that

some type of hotel analysis and a review of potential uses of the DMV site should be included. Chris Traczyk and Phil Santopietro agreed to review any scope of work that might be developed.

Marketing and Publicity Committee

Radio advertising - Elaine St. Onge reported that a contract with WFCR has been signed and the ad will appear May 9-17 and June 14-18. The WNPR ad will be sent to Peter Gillespie soon and will run May 15-19 and June 19-23. The same message about Historic Wethersfield will be used.

Collateral for June exhibit booth - Elaine St. Onge distributed a sample packet including the new bags and magnets. A date will be set for volunteers to stuff the bags.

Strategic Plan Committee - Scope of Services - National Trust - Status - Chris Traczyk suggested tabling this item until the committee meets to review the scope of work for the Preserve America grant.

New Business:

Zoning in Old Wethersfield - Chris Traczyk suggested tabling this item until the end of the meeting.

Project List/Updates

Comprehensive list of tours available for individuals and/or groups - Chris Traczyk will contact Barb Bellas for an update.

Tourism DVD - No Report

2005/2006 Budget Status - Charlie Forsdick suggested that the Commission should make sure that available funds should be earmarked for spending before the end of the fiscal year.

RFQ Marketing and Public Relations Services - Status - Chris Traczyk reported that the Committee narrowed down the field to 2 firms Magee and Keiler and revised the scope for an additional submission.

Wayfinding Signage - Chris Traczyk explained that the committee has been meeting and has prepared a map with the location of destinations and key intersections. Additionally, 13 gateway locations will be included in the system. The next steps will include retaining a firm to prepare a conceptual sign style. Charlie Forsdick suggested that the State may help with funds and that the Preserve America grant might also be used for sign design.

Trolley/Bus Wrap - Paul Montinieri reported that AA transportation will be getting the bus soon and is interested in the bus wrap idea, however, work must be done on the design soon in order for it to be ready for the Memorial day parade. It was suggested that photos from McConnell could be used for the wrap.

Zoning in Old Wethersfield - Chris Traczyk stated that she has seen a recent trend that many commercial spaces in Old Wethersfield have been converted to non tourism type businesses such as office use and she wanted to discuss if the commission felt that something needs to be done. Peter Gillespie stated that several things could be done such as such as rewriting the zoning regulations to prohibit this type of businesses, provide some form of tax incentive for these businesses. Carol Bruce agreed that Old Wethersfield has lost a number of retailers. Charlie Ford stated that the Town needs "browser" retailers and that businesses tend to be market driven and more people need to be brought into the district. Chris Traczyk posed he question "Should the Tourism Commission recommend to the PZC and the EDIC to look at the zoning regulations to eliminate office users from the Village Business District Zone"? Charlie Ford disagreed with the question and suggested that other things such as getting more retailers in the area or fixing up some of the run down buildings such as the Grange Hall. Chris Traczyk suggested the issue should be included in the Master Plan.

Adjournment - Elaine St. Onge motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:49 p.m., Carol Bruce seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted

Peter D. Gillespie
Town Planner/Economic Development Manager