

WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 31, 2005

5:30 PM

Town Manager's Conference Room

Town Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT

Chair, Charlie Forsdick, Elaine St. Onge, Charles Ford, Anne Kuckro, Donna Hemmann, Ellen Goldberg, Carol Bruce, Peter Patel.

Also in attendance: Peter Gillespie, Economic Development Manager/Town Planner and Paul Gionfriddo.

Chair Forsdick called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Paul Gionfriddo, Main Street, addressed the Commission and offered any assistance he could to help with his creative abilities particularly as it relates to the Washington Rochambeau experience. Mr. Gionfriddo mentioned that he has recently come back to the Town after being away for several years. Mr. Gionfriddo has experience in the documentary field and suggested that the Town needs to emphasize the real history of the Town. Mr. Forsdick thanked Mr. Gionfriddo for his offer.

MINUTES

[The minutes of the April 2005 meeting](#) were reviewed. Mr. Ford suggested that on page 3 Mrs. Traczyk should be credited with the idea of the planning committee for the Fam Tour. Elaine St. Onge motioned to approve the minutes with the change to page 3. Carol Bruce seconded the motion and all voted in favor.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Forsdick noted that Cary Colangelo of Max Bibo's has agreed to join the Commission to represent the Silas Deane business community.

REPORTS

A. Grant Funding

Mr. Forsdick reported that he has heard that the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum received the \$3,000 grant for the brochure update and the VIA did not get the wayfinding sign grant. No official notice has been received, however, Mr. Forsdick will inquire as to why the wayfinding grant was not approved. Mr. Gillespie will forward a copy the brochure grant to Mrs. Kuckro. RaeAnn Palmer will search for grant sources and apply for grants as allowed by the Town Manager.

B. Marketing and Publicity

Fam Tour - Mrs. Kuckro reported that the Fam Tour was well received by those who attended in spite of the weather. Several members commented on the disappointing low turnout but were pleased with the event, particularly the food, the service and volunteer spirit of those who helped pull the event together. Paul Montinieri will contact Destination Connecticut to follow up with those who attended and those we expected to attend and determine how we can get more assistance from Dest. Connecticut to continue to market Historic

Wethersfield. There are a good number of promo packets available to distribute.

Mr. Forsdick thanked the Shopkeeper's, Webb Deane Steven's Museum, Historical Society and Chamber of Commerce for all of their help and efforts with the event. It was suggested that the event had significant value however, in the future it may be more cost effective to have it on a smaller scale.

Tour List - Anne Kuckro suggested the development of a list of all tours available in Wethersfield with a contact person and fee schedule. It was suggested that the Historical Society could book the tours.

Promo Packets - It was noted that the new folders are very attractive and much improved. Ellen Goldberg suggested that additional work must go into the packets. Paul Montinieri will identify how the remaining packets should be distributed to the event planners.

Hotel Guest Guide - Mr. Forsdick noted that the ad for this guide still needs to be developed and must be ready by September.

GHCVB Meetings - Mr. Forsdick thanked those who attended these meetings. It was noted that Wethersfield was well represented but attendance was low. Mr. Gillespie was directed to make sure the Commission is registered as a new member.

Chair - Mr. Forsdick stressed the need to elect a Chairperson for this Committee. Mr. Forsdick reported that Mr. Bottini will not be very available in the next few months due to a work commitment and therefore the meeting location needs to be changed. Ms. St. Onge suggested The Old Academy as an alternative.

C. Web Site

Ellen Goldberg reported that hits to the site are averaging 40 per day and over 1300 hits were recorded in May which is a new record. Mrs. Goldberg reported that the event calendar has very few events listed. Mr. Gillespie will follow up to see that the reminder letters were sent to the organizations.

D. Strategic Plan

Mr. James Murdy of R and R consulting was present to update the Commission on progress to complete the plan. He reported that a number of interviews had been conducted with just a few remaining. Mr. Murdy has not received any responses to the citizen survey recently mailed out. He had planned to complete the plan by June 10. A lengthy discussion ensued regarding the significance of the citizen responses and it was determined that Mr. Murdy should continue to review the surveys as they are received, but complete the plan on schedule. If the survey responses dramatically differ from the interview results the plan will be amended. The Town website and cable TV scroller can be used to assist in encouraging survey responses.

Donne Hemmann stated that the Town's Strategic Plan will be released shortly which will afford the opportunity to include the recommendations of the Tourism Plan.

E. Wayfinding Signage

Mr. Forsdick reported that Chris Traczyk will be scheduling a meeting in late June with Mike Zaleski and the various stakeholders to review the report and discuss a plan of action.

F. 2005/2006 Budget

Mr. Forsdick reported that the Commission can anticipate receiving the additional \$15,000 requested from The Council through re-allocation of some CIP funds.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Forsdick reported that all available brochures had been delivered to CTM, but to fulfill the 6 month contract we need to provide at least 10,000 more by the end of June. It was previously agreed that our next printing should include the most up to date revisions. Elaine St. Onge offered to accept recommended revisions from all members of The Commission and M&P Committee at The Old Academy, consolidate them and forward them to The M&P Committee the week of 6/5/05 for their review. The M&P Committee will promptly make recommendations to The Commission for their review and approval. (A special meeting may be required)

Mr. Forsdick explained the George and Laura Bush "Preserve America Community Program" and suggested that Historic Wethersfield would be an appropriate community. He noted that, if selected as a member community, it would provide eligibility for grants that will be funded as part of this program. All discussion was favorable and it was felt we would be "a good fit". Mr. Gillespie and Ms. Palmer were instructed to complete and submit the application for membership.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Anne Kuckro and seconded by Elaine St. Onge. The motion passed unanimously

Mr. Forsdick adjourned the meeting at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
Peter Gillespie
Economic Development Manager/Town Planner