

WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION
Meeting: Tuesday, June 28, 2005 5:30 PM
Town Manager's Conference Room
MINUTES

Call To Order Chairman Forsdick called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

Attendance: Chairman Charles Forsdick, Charlie Ford, Elaine St. Onge, Carol Bruce, Ellen Goldberg, Paul Montinieri, Peter Patel and Anne Kuckro

Also in attendance: Peter Gillespie - Economic Development Manager/Town Planner, Carmela Moore - President Chamber of Commerce, RaeAnn Palmer - Assistant to the Town Manager and Lois Clarke.

Public Comments: There was no one from the public present.

Minutes: Elaine St. Onge motioned to approve [the minutes of the May 31 Regular Meeting](#) and [the June 14 Special Meeting](#), Charlie Ford seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.

Announcements/Introductions:

Carol Bruce passed out a copy of the July Connecticut Magazine ad found on page 28 and questioned the grammar of the ad. Mr. Forsdick will speak to Brian Magee.

Chairman Forsdick reported that George Bottini has resigned from the Chamber of Commerce due to relocation to a Norwich Hotel and therefore cannot represent the Chamber on the Tourism Commission. Mr. Forsdick thanked him for all of his efforts on the Marketing Committee and his work on the promo packets.

Chairman Forsdick welcomed Lois Clarke to the Commission and reported that she has a proposal for the Commission to consider. Mrs. Clarke stated that she has a library of digital photographs of Wethersfield that she would like to develop into a 10-12 minute digital slide show to promote the Town. Mrs. Clarke has other volunteers with technical expertise willing to help with voice over and other skills. Mr. Forsdick supported the offer and suggested a CD could be developed and included in the Promo Packets. Mrs. Clarke requested some guidance from the Commission as the CD is developed. Carol Bruce motioned to refer the proposal to the Marketing Committee, Ellen Goldberg seconded the motion and the vote showed all in favor.

Reports:

Marketing and Publicity Committee

Brochure Revision and Printing - Elaine St. Onge reported that all of the comments and corrections have been made to the brochure and sent to Magee Marketing. Jennifer Eifreg, Director of W-D-S Museum, has asked to have one more look at the changes and once she has reviewed them production can start. Mr. Forsdick reported that Magee Marketing has quoted \$2,340 for their design work and the printing quotes are \$9,635 for 80,000 and \$11,780 for 100,000 copies. Mr. Forsdick thanked those members who have helped with the brochure and stated the changes are a great improvement.

Promotion Packet Distribution - New folder design - Elaine St. Onge reported that there has been little progress since George Bottini was working on the new folder design. Carol Bruce will get the printers name and the Committee will report back to the Tourism Commission at the next meeting.

Hotel Guest Guide - Chair Forsdick reported that a contract has been signed with Pita Communications to produce this full page ad at a cost of \$600.

GHC&VB Orientation - Chair Forsdick reported that on July 7 at 9 am an additional orientation

session will be held on Pratt Street all are invited. The Commission is being invited to various events as members of the organization and Mr. Forsdick will keep all members informed.

Web Site - Ellen Goldberg reported that the site is getting about 40 hits per day which is about a 40% increase from last year.

Grant Funding

CT Commission on Culture and Tourism Application - Mr. Forsdick reported that the official notice on the grant requests has not yet been received.

Potential grants - RaeAnn Palmer - Chair Forsdick introduced Rae Ann Palmer, Assistant to the Town Manager. Ms. Palmer reported that she has researched some potential tourism grant opportunities and Foundations and has not come across many that are specific to tourism. The most suitable opportunity appears to be the Preserve America program which is a White House Initiative that was created 2 years ago. Designated communities are eligible for grants. Ms. Palmer distributed the information on the program and stated that Wethersfield would be a likely candidate. Additionally, Ms. Palmer distributed information on the We The People program through the National Endowment for the Humanities which will be announced in the Fall or Winter. Ms. Palmer advised that the Town is considering employing a grant writing service that could identify other leads. Mr. Gillespie reported that the Preserve America program does not have any designated Connecticut municipalities yet. Elaine St Onge motioned to request that Rae Ann Palmer prepare an Application for the Preserve America Program and request that the Town Council adopt the required resolution authorizing the application, Anne Kuckro seconded the motion and the vote showed all in favor.

Strategic Plan Committee - Update of Consultant's Progress - Chair Forsdick reported that a draft report has been received and the Committee has not yet had an opportunity to meet and discuss the report. A meeting will be held on June 30 to discuss the report.

Way-finding Signage - Peter Gillespie reported that a meeting with the Mayor and Town Manager is being scheduled in the next week or two to discuss the report before holding a larger meeting with the various stakeholders. Mr. Forsdick encouraged the participation of Mike Zaleski in this meeting.

Old Business:

Marketing & Publicity Committee Chairperson - Mr. Forsdick stressed the need for a Chairman for this important Committee.

Vacancy, Chamber of Commerce Representative - Carmela Moore stated that she will talk to the new manager of the Camelot Inn and see if he would like to be on the Commission to replace Mr. Bottini. Mrs. Moore also reported the manager of Carmen Anthony's restaurant may also be interested.

Fam Tour - Carol Bruce inquired about the resolution of the contract with Destinations Connecticut. Mr. Montinieri reported that several phone messages have been exchanged, however they have not had an opportunity to meet. Mr. Forsdick stated that he has been comforted that a 10% turnout is an expected result for a meeting like this. Ellen Goldberg reminded everyone that 50 attendees were promised and only 19 were present and we spent money assuming 50 meeting planners.

Magazine Articles - Anne Kuckro reported that 2 articles on Wethersfield have been written in the recent month; Group Tour Magazine and Destinations Magazine. Mr. Gillespie stated that the Commission should discuss which publications to place additional print ads and he has received quotes for Group Tour Magazine. Mr. Forsdick stated that the Marketing Committee should be making this type of decision. Carol Bruce stated that AAA seems to get the best results.

New Business:

Convention Center Open House - Mr. Forsdick reported that the open house was a great success and the facility is very impressive.

Meeting Time and Location - Chair Forsdick suggested that it may be appropriate to change the meeting start time to 7 or 7:30 pm to accommodate several members whose business commitments do not permit them to be available at 5:30. Carol Bruce state that the 5:30 start time works well for staff and Commission members. After a brief discussion it was agreed to stay with the 5:30 start time.

Commission Term Expirations - Chair Forsdick stated that there is some confusion on the present terms of several members and the correct expiration dates. The terms expire on June 30. Mrs. Kuckro reminded the Commission that the membership of the Commission was recently expanded by the Council and that may have created the confusion. Mr. Gillespie will contact the Town Clerk to get the correct membership terms. Mr. Forsdick thanked all members for their help on the Commission particularly those members whose terms are not being renewed.

Budget 2005-2006 - Mr. Forsdick distributed a spreadsheet of the proposed budget resources for the Commission and expressed his thanks to the Council for their support. Mr. Forsdick reported that additional funds will be needed for the production of the brochure, for display advertising and for the wayfinding signage program. After a lengthy discussion Mr. Forsdick asked the members to consider the proposed budget allocation for the next meeting. Mrs. Kuckro motioned to contract for the production of 100,000 new brochures at a cost of \$11,780, Elaine St. Onge seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor. Elaine St. Onge motioned to contract with Pita Communication for \$600 for the preparation of the Hotel Guide ad. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Kuckro and the vote showed all members in favor.

Connecticut Magazine - Mr. Ford reported that the ad placed in CT Magazine by the Commission allows readers to request additional information on Wethersfield and the Commission should discuss what type of information to mail out. Mr. Gillespie has received about 10 requests for information and has mailed out the Historic Wethersfield brochure. Mr. Forsdick stated the brochure was designed to be all inclusive with information on all of the things available in Town. Sending out additional information might be a waste of resources. Mr. Gillespie was asked to maintain a list of inquiries in a data base for future mailings.

Next Meeting: July 26, 2005, 5:30 PM Town Managers Conference Room

Adjournment - Mr. Forsdick adjourned the meeting at 7:15 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter D. Gillespie
Economic Development Manager/Town Planner