



Sturbridge Tourist Association

A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge

Regular Meeting Agenda

13 November 2019, 6:00pm

Center Office Building, 301 Main Street, Second Floor Meeting Room

1. Call to Order
2. Review of Previous Minutes – 9 October 2019
3. Treasurers Report
4. New Business
 - a. Business of the Year Award Discussion
 - b. Restaurant Week Discussion
5. Old Business
 - a. Update on Branding & Marketing Project
6. EDTC Report
7. Next Meeting – December 11th
8. Adjourn

The items listed which may be discussed at the meeting are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for Meeting to the extent permitted by law.

Page Break



Sturbridge Tourist Association

A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge

Meeting Minutes

9 October 2019, 6:00pm

Center Office Building, 301 Main Street, Second Floor Meeting Room

Members Present: Brian Amedy, Chair (BA); Thomas Chamberland, Vice-Chair (TC); Jeff Ardis (JA); Dawn Merriman (DM)

Members Absent: Nick Salvador (NS)

Staff Present: Kevin Filchak, Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator (EDTC), (KF); Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator, (JB)

Guests: Maxine Carter-Lome, Weathervane Enterprises (MCL); Jeff Lome, Weathervane Enterprises (JL); Christina Pappas, Open the Door (CP); Stephanie Ramey, Discover Central MA (SR)

1. **Call to Order** – BA called the meeting to order at 6:03pm with a quorum being present.
2. **Review of Previous Minutes – 11 September 2019** – *TC MOVED to approve the minutes. DM seconded. APPROVED (4 – 0).*
3. **Treasurer's Report** – KF provided update, noting that the Town was now evenly splitting the EDTC salary between the STA and Town budgets. *BA MOVED to approve the treasurer's report as written. TC seconded. APPROVED (4 – 0).*
4. **New Business**
 - a. **Funding Application – Weathervane Enterprises** – MCL spoke for the application. She noted that the event is working to have sixty antique dealers from the New England region fill seventy spaces at the Host Hotel for this event. MCL said that she is hearing from vendors that they remember the previous iteration of the show fondly and are excited to have it come back. MCL noted that they have managed to recruit approximately eighty percent of the previous show's vendors to come back. Their goal is to have 750 to 1,000 participants at the event and to reach that number they are conducting digital and print campaigns. MCL said they are working with Discover Central MA for said promotion. BA noted that MCL had come before the STA in the spring and it had shown enthusiasm for the event. MCL noted that the request is to cover the cost of the contract fees at the Host Hotel. TC asked that MCL provide a copy of the agreement with the Host, leading to a general discussion on the hotel. JA asked about exhibit fees, MCL explained the vendor fees as well as the entry fees for patrons (\$8 advanced, \$10 day of). MCL noted that she had a food commitment with the Host Hotel. JA asked about previous attendance levels and MCL said that their 750 – 1,000 person goal was in line

with previous attendance levels. General discussion amongst members on overnight stays. TC asked about STA recognition in advertisements, MCL said that with updated branding it would be in print and digital adverts. TC asked that a budget be provided in the post event evaluation for this event. General discussion on data collected from the event and where the adverts are being posted. JL asked if the STA would like information on the dealers as well and the members agreed that would be helpful. General discussion on the value of the show and its long term value. *TC MOVED to allocate \$4,000 from the Community Support line item to support Weathervane Enterprises' 2020 Antique Show at the Host Hotel. JA seconded. APPROVED (4 – 0).*

- b. **Introductory Meeting – Open the Door, Inc.** – CP represented. BA provided introduction and notes that he and KF had recently met with CP to go over the project. Members had a general discussion on stakeholders for CP to contact for project. Members made general introductions. CP noted that her first step is to meet with key stakeholders with the goal of identifying common threads amongst them of what is working/is not working in town. General discussion on Open the Door's (OTD) process for the project, with CP noting some of her company's work with other Commonwealth communities. JA asked about OTD's work with the Publick House and CP explained that project. CP explained her background and her interest in the central Massachusetts region. JA noted that he was interested in having OTD build a consumer database, CP said that it could be done, then using that database for year on year growth and planning. JA asked for an overview of the next sixty days. CP said that she will begin conducting research and will start scheduling calls with stakeholders. She is getting a timeline from her consumer researcher for the project and finally will begin secondary research. She explained that after the next sixty days, the design and planning phase begins. CP noted that her team is meant to be an extension of town staff. Members had a general discussion on the coordination of efforts and on the list of stakeholders. TC asked if the list of stakeholders should be limited to Sturbridge businesses, or businesses that services Sturbridge. Members felt that the current stakeholder list was good for the time being. KF asked if CP had any questions for the committee, CP had none.
- c. **Marketing Campaign Update – Discover Central Massachusetts (DCM)** – SR represented. SR reviewed their efforts with Sturbridge sponsored content on their website and in *Yankee Magazine*. SR went over the page views for the content, and said that between the two sponsored content pieces the campaign has seen 55,000 views with 1,500 clicks. SR noted that the STA is included in the 40,000 visitor guides published in the fall. SR said that Sturbridge does really well in the Yankee publication and another campaign is forthcoming, which will require discussion. SR noted that a photographer is coming out over the Columbus Day weekend to document the fall foliage and to visit some businesses. SR reminded members that, as per the contract, they are able to give away a few memberships to DCM. KF reminded the committee of its previous work to tie a business of the year award to the free membership and suggested putting that as an agenda item next month. SR explained that she will be hosting a Small Business Saturday program in the near term and asked that the STA help with promotion of it. TC asked for a list of businesses that would not be able to qualify for DCM membership

leading to a general discussion. SR suggested to the STA that it develop an editorial calendar for promotion, and reviewed the DCM event calendar. She continued by explaining that DCM is going to be working with Break The Ice Media (BTI) to help improve DCM's public relation efforts; she detailed the goals of BTI in this process. SR explained that DCM's widget has approximately 25,000 users and has been helping planners. She is encouraging towns to build their profiles on the widget. She explained that DCM has been working to develop itineraries for groups and branding them. SR noted that website traffic for DCM is hitting 100,000 page views, up seventy-three percent with new users comprising over 80% of that increase. SR continued with an overview on online articles noting that Sturbridge is well represented. SR provided overview of DCM's social media. She explained that they will be doing a push for meeting planners in the near term. BA raised 508 International leading to a general discussion on that business. General discussion on the Town's hotel occupancy rates. SR explained the new organizational chart for DCM. BA noted to CP that the Town is not only trying to get people to visit Worcester, but to have Worcester people come to Sturbridge. General discussion on the regional approach to tourism. SR asked that the STA survey where there are gaps in their photo library.

- d. **Funding Request – Trails Committee**
- i. **Trail Guide** – TC provided a brief overview of the project, and noted that not enough money had been encumbered the previous year to cover the costs of the project. *BA MOVED to allocate \$40 from the marketing line item to cover the difference for the purchase of the new Trail Guides. JA seconded. APPROVED (3 – 0 – 1 [TC abstained]).*
 - ii. **MassCor** – TC said that the trail committee is participating in more events and would like to purchase shirts they can wear to help promote the town as said events. *BA MOVED to allocate \$220 from Community Support to fund the Trail Committee's purchase of polo shirts. DM seconded. APPROVED (3 – 0 – 1 [TC abstained]).*

KF noted that with DM being a new member of the STA, she had not received an STA polo and that the committee should consider allocating funds to make that purchase. *BA MOVED to approve \$15 from Community Support for an STA shirt. TC seconded. APPROVED (4 – 0).*
5. **Old Business** – BA noted that there will be a meeting with Break the Ice (OSV's media consultant) on November 14th to discuss the Village's bus tours project previously approved by the STA. BA said members are invited to participate in said discussion.
6. **EDTC Report** – KF provided members with a brief update on his work since the previous STA meeting.

7. **Next Meeting – November 13th** – Members asked that the next meeting feature a discussion of a 'Business of the Year' award. General discussion on said award.
8. **Adjourn** – *BA MOVED to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:40pm. TC seconded. APPROVED (4 – 0).*

*Respectfully Submitted:
Kevin Filchak, M.P.A.*

DRAFT

Page Break

Sturbridge Tourist Association | Fiscal Year 2020 Budget

Account	Account #	Original Total	Revenue Adjustments	Revised Total	Expenditure	Current Total Balance
Community Support	24400 56552	\$ 40,359.00	\$ -	\$ 40,359.00	\$ 12,981.25	\$ 27,377.75
Marketing and Advertising	24400 56551	\$ 109,974.00	\$ 5,285.00	\$ 115,259.00	\$ 10,922.50	\$ 104,336.50
Benefits	24400 51210	\$ 13,734.00	\$ -	\$ 13,734.00	\$ 3,479.39	\$ 10,254.61
Salaries / Wages	24400 51130	\$ 19,223.00	\$ -	\$ 19,223.00	\$ 4,384.80	\$ 14,838.20
Tourism	58618	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Total		\$ 183,290.00	\$ 5,285.00	\$ 188,575.00	\$ 31,767.94	\$ 156,807.06

FY 2019 Encumbered Funds*	24400 56551	\$ 5,285.00	\$ -	\$ 5,285.00	\$ 5,325.00	\$ (40.00)
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EDTC Update

Date	Item	Cost
10/25/2019	Hamilton Rod and Gun Club	\$ 5,446.00
10/30/2019	Sturbridge Herbfest	\$ 270.00
10/30/2019	Sturbridge Herbfest	\$ 828.75
10/30/2019	Sturbridge Herbfest	\$ 325.00
10/10/2019	Trail Guides	\$ 5,325.00

Community Support Allocations	
Approved by STA	\$ 23,132.00
Spent by Recipients	\$ 12,981.25
Unspent Approved Funds	\$ 10,150.75
Unassigned Funds	\$ 17,227.00
Funds Returned to STA	\$ 21.00
Total Available Funds	\$ 17,248.00

Spent
32%
Assigned
57%
Unassigned
43%

Item	Allocated	Spent	Remaining	Date Approved
Jaguar Association of New England	\$ 3,095.00	\$ 3,095.00	\$ -	4/17/2019
Concerts on the Commons	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	4/17/2019
Geofest 2021	\$ 500.00	\$ 16.50	\$ 483.50	6/12/2019
Harvest Festival 2019	\$ 4,460.00	\$ -	\$ 4,460.00	6/12/2019
Herbfest	\$ 2,375.00	\$ 1,423.75	\$ 951.25	7/10/2019
The Big MOE	\$ 5,467.00	\$ 5,446.00	\$ 21.00	8/14/2019
Antiques Show	\$ 4,000.00	\$ -	\$ 4,000.00	10/9/2019
Trail Shirts	\$ 220.00	\$ -	\$ 220.00	10/9/2019
STA Member Shirt	\$ 15.00	\$ -	\$ 15.00	10/9/2019
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Document Guide

Approved by STA = Sum of all items listed in the "Allocated" column

Spent by Recipients = Sum of all items listed in the "Spent" column

Unspent Approved Funds = Sum of all items listed in the "Remaining" column

Unassigned Funds = "Current Total Balance" (found on cover page) - "Approved by STA"

Funds Returned to STA = Sum of "Remaining" column for those items that have closed

Total Available Funds = Sum of "Unassigned Funds" and "Funds Returned to STA"

Item = Project approved by the STA

Allocated = Amount approved by the STA

Spent - Amount spent by the recipient

Remaining = "Allocated" - "Spent"

Date Approved = The date the STA approved the project

Allocated Comparisons | FY 19 Budget

Community Support	FY 2020	FY2019	FY2018	FY2017
July	49%	94%	33%	36%
August	69%	96%	33%	36%
September	69%	97%	33%	36%
October	84%	97%	35%	41%
November		101%	36%	56%
December		101%	36%	56%
January		101%	73%	56%
February		101%	88%	73%
March		104%	97%	73%
April		107%	97%	73%
May		107%	98%	92%
June		107%	98%	98%
Marketing	FY 2020	FY2019	FY2018	FY2017
July	18%	81%	54%	30%
August	75%	83%	55%	30%
September	89%	83%	62%	43%
October	89%	83%	72%	50%
November		87%	82%	53%
December		87%	82%	53%
January		89%	93%	62%
February		97%	99%	65%
March		104%	81%	95%
April		105%	93%	95%
May		105%	101%	101%
June		105%	101%	101%

Spending Totals / Comparisons

Community Support	FY2020	FY2019	FY2018	FY2017
July	11%	5%	13%	7%
August	11%	18%	15%	9%
September	22%	43%	15%	9%
October	47%	68%	15%	9%
November		84%	27%	21%
December		85%	28%	21%
January		85%	28%	27%
February		85%	60%	37%
March		87%	79%	58%
April		91%	80%	59%
May		95%	86%	59%
June		99%	96%	86%
Marketing	FY2020	FY2019	FY2018	FY2017
July	0%	1%	3%	0%
August	5%	11%	6%	2%
September	5%	19%	7%	5%
October	10%	32%	45%	5%
November		49%	54%	25%
December		70%	54%	29%
January		72%	60%	32%
February		72%	48%	34%
March		78%	48%	35%
April		81%	49%	37%

May		84%	71%	45%
June		93%	93%	88%

Remaining Totals / Comparisons

Community Support	FY2020	FY2019	FY2018	FY2017
July	89%	95%	87%	93%
August	89%	82%	85%	91%
September	78%	57%	85%	91%
October	53%	32%	85%	91%
November		16%	73%	79%
December		15%	72%	79%
January		15%	72%	73%
February		15%	40%	63%
March		13%	21%	42%
April		9%	20%	41%
May		5%	14%	41%
June		1%	4%	14%
Marketing	FY2020	FY2019	FY2018	FY2017
July	100%	99%	97%	100%
August	95%	89%	94%	98%
September	95%	81%	93%	95%
October	90%	68%	55%	95%
November		51%	46%	75%
December		30%	46%	71%
January		28%	40%	68%
February		28%	52%	66%
March		22%	52%	65%
April		19%	51%	63%
May		16%	29%	55%
June		7%	7%	12%

*Anything approved before the fiscal year is accounted for in July.

**FY 2016 only has data for end of the year at this time; in addition "Special Events" and "Community Support" are combined in this total as both accounts have since been combined.

% Spent = the amount spent at the end of that calendar month divided by the total allocated
% Remaining = the amount of funds remaining in the account at the end of that calendar month divided by the total allocated
% Allocated = the amount of fund allocated for certain events as was approved by the STA divided by the total allocated

Community Support - 56552	
Original Total	\$ 40,359.00
Spent	\$ 12,981.25
Revised Total	\$ 27,377.75

Date	Item	Expenditure	Details
7/3/2019	John L. Lampson	\$ 1,500.00	Concerts on the Common
7/3/2019	Southern	\$ 1,500.00	Concerts on the Common
7/30/2019	Chamber of Commerce	\$ 16.50	Geofest - Center of Hope, "Non Taxable-Vivid"
9/9/2019	JANE	\$ 3,095.00	Tent rental for Annual Event
10/25/2019	Hamilton Rod and Gun Club	\$ 5,446.00	The Big MOE insurance
10/30/2019	Sturbridge Herbfest	\$ 270.00	Rob Barnes's Toilets
10/30/2019	Sturbridge Herbfest	\$ 828.75	Antiques and Collectibles - Tents, etc.
10/30/2019	Sturbridge Herbfest	\$ 325.00	Al's Rubbish

EDTC Salary - 51130	
Original Total	\$ 19,223.00
Spent	\$ 4,384.80
Revised Total	\$ 14,838.20

Date	Item	Expenditure	Details
7/31/2019	EDTC Salary		-
8/31/2019	EDTC Salary		-
*9/30/2019	EDTC Salary	\$ 4,384.80	

Finance Director split billing between STA / Town

EDTC Benefits - 51210*	
Original Total	\$ 13,734.00
Spent	\$ 3,479.39
Revised Total	\$ 10,254.61

*Billed Quarterly

Date	Item	Expenditure	Details
7/30/2019	Employee Benefits	\$ -	-
8/31/2019	Employee Benefits	\$ -	
9/30/2019	Employee Benefits	\$ 3,479.39	

**Sturbridge Tourist Association
Definitions**

Community Support

This line item shall be for the sponsorship of events, the procurement of goods and services for an event, payment or installation of equipment and/or any other purchase, unrelated to marketing, that supports tourism in the town of Sturbridge.

The purpose of this fund is to support the local tourism industry though, in certain circumstances, the STA may allocate these dollars to support community events if they believe there is an inherent benefit to tourism and/or tourist related businesses in town through the funding of said activity.

This line item shall also go toward the funding of reports and studies necessary for the advancement of tourism in the community. However this does not apply to reports that focus on marketing as those are funded by the Marketing line item.

Marketing

This line item shall support efforts to publish, promote and distribute media campaigns about Sturbridge for the purpose of attracting visitors to the community across all media platforms.

These campaigns can range from general adverts about the community to targeted ads highlighting a specific item and/or event.

This line item shall also provide funding for any/all marketing related studies the STA may undertake. If the scope is beyond that of marketing, the study shall be covered under Community Support.

Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator Salary

This line item shall cover the annual salary of the Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator (EDTC). The specific responsibilities and duties of the EDTC are detailed in their position description.

Note, the STA and the Town of Sturbridge evenly split the salary and benefits costs for the EDTC each fiscal year.

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TOWN OF STURBRIDGE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM COORDINATOR

KEVIN FILCHAK, M.P.A. 

Date: 20 May 2019
To: Sturbridge Tourist Association
CC: Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator
Subject: Business Recognition Program

An economic development goal for this calendar year is to develop a business recognition program in Sturbridge. This program would highlight those businesses that are positively impacting the local community and supporting the growth of the Sturbridge economy. As the STA's mandate to support tourism has led the group to undertake new initiatives in recent years, I propose that the STA consider the creation of a business recognition program as their next initiative. This would recognize and reward businesses for their hard work and effort in Sturbridge and serve as a way to help further promote the town to new audiences.

For the committee's consideration, I have prepared a general outline for how the program could be formatted. It is recommended that the topic be discussed further over the next few months.

CATEGORIES FOR RECOGNITION

In order to help this program succeed, it is recommended that the STA allow *all* Sturbridge businesses to be eligible for the award. The reason that this award should not be restricted to only tourism businesses is twofold. First, defining a tourism business is challenging because while we normally associate tourism with merchants, restaurants and hotels, other types of businesses bring in clients who stay in our hotels, eat in our restaurants and shop in our stores. It would be wrong to ignore this indirect business tourism. Secondly, their success in Sturbridge only adds to our local economy and improves our overall standing. Successful (and diverse) businesses and a good quality of life can draw businesses to our area thus growing our local economy. For these reasons it is important to consider all businesses.

Businesses should be considered in one of two categories: those with fewer than 25 employees and those with greater than 25 employees.¹ In this way smaller businesses are not being unfairly compared to larger ones or vice-a-versa. To be considered for this recognition, a general application should be developed to highlight each business's contribution to our community. The STA could also nominate businesses on their own in the event there are not enough applications. The following could be areas of consideration when discussing nominees:

¹ This number could be greater or smaller, but for the initial discussion I chose this as a starting point.

- Business supports and encourages visitorship to Sturbridge
- Business promotes Sturbridge as a destination
- Business has launched a successful new initiative
- Business hosts events that draw large and diverse crowds
- Business has added new jobs or has expanded their operation
- Business has been a community partner by supporting local groups, organizations, etc.
- Business receives regional, statewide or national recognition for their work

As businesses in Sturbridge are vastly different, the STA should take a holistic look at each nominee and judge them based on the sum of their application.

AWARDS / RECOGNITION

In total it is recommended that there be eight quarterly awards and two annual awards issued every year. This is done to (A) keep awareness of the awards and their value, and (B) highlight all that Sturbridge has to offer potential visitors and residents.

QUARTERLY AWARDS

It is recommended that the quarterly award recipients receive the following:

- Formal recognition from the STA and the Board of Selectmen and the presentation of a certificate
- Recognition in the town's newsletters
- A \$250 grant for marketing their business

ANNUAL AWARD

It is recommended that the annual award recipient receive the following:

- Formal recognition from the STA and the Board of Selectmen and the presentation of a plaque
- Recognition in the town's newsletters
- A \$1,000 grant for marketing their business
- A complementary one year membership to DCM (only if not already a member)

COSTS

Based on the numbers above, the cost for this program would be approximately \$4,150. Broken down, for each quarter the cost would be \$500 with a total annual cost of the quarterly awards being \$2,000. For the two annual award recipients, that would add an additional \$2,000 to the budget. I would estimate that for the cost of the annual plaques that could also add an additional \$100 - \$150.

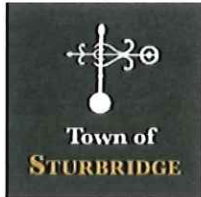
If this amount is too high, an option may be to reduce the award amounts to \$100 per business per quarter and a \$500 annual prize. This would reduce the total annual costs to approximately \$1,950.

In either case, these amount allocated should be viewed as another marketing campaign for the town in the upcoming fiscal year.

SUMMARY

The STA should consider instituting a business recognition program in FY2020 as the implementation of such a program could lead to increased marketing and awareness of Sturbridge's many diverse businesses. It is therefore recommended that the STA consider this program over the next few months so that it could be rolled out beginning in quarter three of this year with the first annual award issued in January 2020. This program could have many benefits to the community and therefore is worth the STA exploring and examining this upcoming fiscal year.

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Town of Sturbridge

Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator

Kevin Filchak, M.P.A.



Date: 31 October 2019
To: Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator; Sturbridge Tourist Association
CC: Jean Bubon, Town Planner
Subject: EDTC Monthly Report – October 2019

Below is the monthly update for October 2019. The items listed below are listed in no particular order. If additional information is requested, please contact me.

Annual License Renewal

The renewal process for Sturbridge businesses is continuing. On 10/31 I sent out a reminder to those businesses who have not responded to the license requests. Approximately fifty email reminders were sent out. Administrative staff has been working diligently to upload and check all of the documents to ensure their completeness and accuracy.

Branding and Marketing Strategy Development

At this time, our consultant Open the Door has been in talks with about fifty local stakeholders to discuss the Sturbridge brand. Her goal is to hear from a diverse cross-section of our community to understand what the town means to them. Based on some initial conversations it sounds as if she is getting good feedback from stakeholders. She has noted that some have raised concerns about some local properties and business/town relations. Please note I was not privy to those conversations so I'm not clear on the specifics and thus cannot comment on them beyond what I have written. Our consultant did state that she will share her findings with our economic development consultant as well as it may be relevant to their research. Finally our consultant has lined up the consumer research for this project and anticipates having it ready by December.

Business Visitations

Over the past month I have visited a few different businesses to talk operations with them and to foster continued positive relations with each. These have included: Host Hotel, NEXAMP, OFS and Crystalline Awaken.

Community Bonfire

It is unfortunate but due to the EEE warnings, staff was forced to cancel the bonfire. Given that it is unknown when the EEE warning would be lifted, it was decided to postpone the event until the spring.

Economic Development Strategy Development

At this time our consultant has developed and is currently conducting a resident survey on our local economy (see attached). The survey shall close on November 8th. Additionally, she is preparing a business survey that will be launched (likely) the week of the 12th. During this time she is also conducting

research on our community for the report. Finally she is coordinating some research with our branding consultant so that the two reports provide the most accurate viewpoint of Sturbridge.

Harvest Festival

On 10/19 and 10/20 I managed a booth at the Harvest Festival to promote the Town and to encourage patrons to take one of several surveys that the Town was running. The booth was a success as we had a few dozen visitors to the tent, many of whom took the survey's that we had. We also distributed the new trail guides and the town's visitor guide, in addition to other town documents.

I would like to thank Butch Jackson, Ken Lacey, Gina Piantoni, Trisha Valiton, Dawn Merriman, Annie Roscioli and Lynne Girouard for helping that weekend.

Home of the Brave 5k

The upcoming Home of the Brave 5k is growing rapidly to become an excellent inaugural year. We have a number of excellent staff and volunteers working to bring this event together. My focus has primarily been on the public safety aspects of the race, but I am providing other support as necessary.

MassDevelopment Roundtable

In an effort to help make local banks aware of the resources that the Commonwealth offers, I have arranged a roundtable with MassDevelopment on 11/13 at 09:30 in the Center Office Building. MassDevelopment frequently partners with local banking institutions to help foster business development in Massachusetts. As Sturbridge is looking to enhance its businesses over the next few years, I felt it prudent to make sure our local lenders are aware of all the resources available to them.

If you would like to join please let me know.

MMMA Boot Camp

On 10/2 I attended a leadership training for future managers presented by the Massachusetts Municipal Managers Association in Sharon. It was an excellent training.

Newsletters

Please follow the links below to view the newsletters for November 2019.

Business: www.sturbridge.gov/businesses/news/business-newsletter-november-2019

Event: www.sturbridge.gov/visitors/news/event-newsletter-november-2019

Special Events Committee (SEC)

The SEC has focused its efforts this past month on concluding the Farmers Market (ended on 10/6) and supporting the aforementioned road race. The members have been working to solicit donations from local businesses for this race and have been successful in raising funds for it. In addition, one of the surveys conducted at the Harvest Festival was to better understand what type of special events community members wanted to see in the coming year.

STR Report

Please see the attached STR report summary.

Sturbridge Tourist Association

Please see the attached minutes from the last meeting of the STA on 10/9/2019.

TIF – Sturbridge Metallurgical Services (SMS)

The first negotiations with SMS were held on 10/23 and we had a successful meeting. SMS is currently looking into the costs of a sewer line extension to their property. As there are still aspects of the negotiation that are unknown, the Massachusetts Office of Business Development (MOBD) has decided that it would be best to hold the application until the March meeting of the Economic Assistance Coordinating Council (EACC). I have spoken with both MOBD and SMS and everyone is pleased with this delay as it allows more time to develop the plans.

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2019 Sturbridge Residents Survey

This survey is part of the Town of Sturbridge's effort to understand the need for and role of economic development and business in our community. This survey will take approximately 6 to 10 minutes. Thank you for your time and help.

1. What is the zip code of where you live? _____

2. How long have you lived in Sturbridge?

Less than 2 years	<input type="radio"/>
2 to 5 years	<input type="radio"/>
6 to 10 years	<input type="radio"/>
11 to 19 years	<input type="radio"/>
20 years and longer	<input type="radio"/>

3. Do you own or rent the home where you live?

- Own
- Rent

4. Thinking about the last three years, how do you describe the change in the overall quality of life in our Town?

- Improved
- Remained the same
- Declined

5. What level of importance do you place on each of the following regarding businesses and industry in our Town?

	Very Important	Important	Useful	Unimportant
Employment Opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Source of Tax Revenue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strong Corporate Citizens – Active in Community Affairs and Supporting Sturbridge.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contribute positively to the identity and image of Sturbridge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sustainable, green businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2019 Sturbridge Residents Survey

6. Please rate the quality of the existing businesses and industry in Sturbridge for each of the following:

	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
Employment Opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Source of Tax Revenue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strong Corporate Citizens – Active in Community Affairs and Supporting Sturbridge.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contribute positively to the identity and image of Sturbridge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sustainable, green businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Please indicate to what extent that you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Sturbridge should have more development, such as commercial, office, industry, retail, mixed-use, hotels, housing, & entertainment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sturbridge should diversify its economy beyond tourism.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sturbridge should be selective about new development, with a focus on commercial (office, retail, hotels, entertainment).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sturbridge should be selective about new development, with a focus on housing and mixed-use.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Town should selectively consider using tax incentives to recruit beneficial businesses.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Aesthetics are important. The look of Sturbridge needs to be improved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Town should support arts and cultural programming to increase tourism and visitors to Sturbridge.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Any business is a good business. Sturbridge should welcome business development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small town atmosphere of Sturbridge should be preserved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Business expansion and growth in Sturbridge should be limited to the existing commercial areas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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2019 Sturbridge Residents Survey

8. Over the next ten years, what are the three (3) most critical issues facing Sturbridge? [Please check only your top 3 issues.]

- Revitalization of the Commercial Tourism District/ Route 20 area
- Water Improvements
- Sewer Issues
- Route 15/Haynes Street
- Town Facilities
- Controlling Commercial Growth
- Increasing Commercial/Business Development
- Strengthening Tourism to Sturbridge
- Diversifying Sturbridge's Economic Base
- Creating More Local Higher Paying Jobs
- Local Taxes
- Schools
- Preserving Open Space
- Facilities and Programs for Youth
- Services for Seniors
- Affordable Housing
- Traffic
- Addressing Climate Change
- Other, *please specify* _____

9. What gender do you identify as?

- Female
- Male
- Other

10. How old are you?

- Under 18 years of age
- 18 to 24 years of age
- 25 to 49 years of age
- 50 to 64 years of age
- 65 to 79 years of age
- 80 years and older

2019 Sturbridge Residents Survey

11. In the next 2 to 3 years, do you anticipate if you will be:

- Continuing to reside in the same home in Sturbridge
- Moving elsewhere in Sturbridge
- Moving beyond Sturbridge

12. Do you have any suggestions, comments or observations about business and economic development in Sturbridge?

13. Do you have any comments or suggestions on how to improve Sturbridge overall?

14. Are there any communities you have visited that are doing economic development right and may have interesting models or programs that could be adopted for Sturbridge?

Thank you for taking the time to share your opinions!

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Sturbridge Tourist Association

A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge

Meeting Minutes

9 October 2019, 6:00pm

Center Office Building, 301 Main Street, Second Floor Meeting Room

Members Present: Brian Amedy, Chair (BA); Thomas Chamberland, Vice-Chair (TC); Jeff Ardis (JA); Dawn Merriman (DM)

Members Absent: Nick Salvador (NS)

Staff Present: Kevin Filchak, Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator (EDTC), (KF); Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator, (JB)

Guests: Maxine Carter-Lome, Weathervane Enterprises (MCL); Jeff Lome, Weathervane Enterprises (JL); Christina Pappas, Open the Door (CP); Stephanie Ramey, Discover Central MA (SR)

1. **Call to Order** – BA called the meeting to order at 6:03pm with a quorum being present.
2. **Review of Previous Minutes – 11 September 2019** – *TC MOVED to approve the minutes. DM seconded. APPROVED (4 – 0).*
3. **Treasurer's Report** – KF provided update, noting that the Town was now evenly splitting the EDTC salary between the STA and Town budgets. *BA MOVED to approve the treasurer's report as written. TC seconded. APPROVED (4 – 0).*
4. **New Business**
 - a. **Funding Application – Weathervane Enterprises** – MCL spoke for the application. She noted that the event is working to have sixty antique dealers from the New England region fill seventy spaces at the Host Hotel for this event. MCL said that she is hearing from vendors that they remember the previous iteration of the show fondly and are excited to have it come back. MCL noted that they have managed to recruit approximately eighty percent of the previous show's vendors to come back. Their goal is to have 750 to 1,000 participants at the event and to reach that number they are conducting digital and print campaigns. MCL said they are working with Discover Central MA for said promotion. BA noted that MCL had come before the STA in the spring and it had shown enthusiasm for the event. MCL noted that the request is to cover the cost of the contract fees at the Host Hotel. TC asked that MCL provide a copy of the agreement with the Host, leading to a general discussion on the hotel. JA asked about exhibit fees, MCL explained the vendor fees as well as the entry fees for patrons (\$8 advanced, \$10 day of). MCL noted that she had a food commitment with the Host Hotel. JA asked about previous attendance levels and MCL said that their 750 – 1,000 person goal was in line

with previous attendance levels. General discussion amongst members on overnight stays. TC asked about STA recognition in advertisements, MCL said that with updated branding it would be in print and digital adverts. TC asked that a budget be provided in the post event evaluation for this event. General discussion on data collected from the event and where the adverts are being posted. JL asked if the STA would like information on the dealers as well and the members agreed that would be helpful. General discussion on the value of the show and its long term value. *TC MOVED to allocate \$4,000 from the Community Support line item to support Weathervane Enterprises' 2020 Antique Show at the Host Hotel. JA seconded. APPROVED (4 – 0).*

- b. **Introductory Meeting – Open the Door, Inc.** – CP represented. BA provided introduction and notes that he and KF had recently met with CP to go over the project. Members had a general discussion on stakeholders for CP to contact for project. Members made general introductions. CP noted that her first step is to meet with key stakeholders with the goal of identifying common threads amongst them of what is working/is not working in town. General discussion on Open the Door's (OTD) process for the project, with CP noting some of her company's work with other Commonwealth communities. JA asked about OTD's work with the Publick House and CP explained that project. CP explained her background and her interest in the central Massachusetts region. JA noted that he was interested in having OTD build a consumer database, CP said that it could be done, then using that database for year on year growth and planning. JA asked for an overview of the next sixty days. CP said that she will begin conducting research and will start scheduling calls with stakeholders. She is getting a timeline from her consumer researcher for the project and finally will begin secondary research. She explained that after the next sixty days, the design and planning phase begins. CP noted that her team is meant to be an extension of town staff. Members had a general discussion on the coordination of efforts and on the list of stakeholders. TC asked if the list of stakeholders should be limited to Sturbridge businesses, or businesses that services Sturbridge. Members felt that the current stakeholder list was good for the time being. KF asked if CP had any questions for the committee, CP had none.
- c. **Marketing Campaign Update – Discover Central Massachusetts (DCM)** – SR represented. SR reviewed their efforts with Sturbridge sponsored content on their website and in *Yankee Magazine*. SR went over the page views for the content, and said that between the two sponsored content pieces the campaign has seen 55,000 views with 1,500 clicks. SR noted that the STA is included in the 40,000 visitor guides published in the fall. SR said that Sturbridge does really well in the Yankee publication and another campaign is forthcoming, which will require discussion. SR noted that a photographer is coming out over the Columbus Day weekend to document the fall foliage and to visit some businesses. SR reminded members that, as per the contract, they are able to give away a few memberships to DCM. KF reminded the committee of its previous work to tie a business of the year award to the free membership and suggested putting that as an agenda item next month. SR explained that she will be hosting a Small Business Saturday program in the near term and asked that the STA help with promotion of it. TC asked for a list of businesses that would not be able to qualify for DCM membership

leading to a general discussion. SR suggested to the STA that it develop an editorial calendar for promotion, and reviewed the DCM event calendar. She continued by explaining that DCM is going to be working with Break The Ice Media (BTI) to help improve DCM's public relation efforts; she detailed the goals of BTI in this process. SR explained that DCM's widget has approximately 25,000 users and has been helping planners. She is encouraging towns to build their profiles on the widget. She explained that DCM has been working to develop itineraries for groups and branding them. SR noted that website traffic for DCM is hitting 100,000 page views, up seventy-three percent with new users comprising over 80% of that increase. SR continued with an overview on online articles noting that Sturbridge is well represented. SR provided overview of DCM's social media. She explained that they will be doing a push for meeting planners in the near term. BA raised 508 International leading to a general discussion on that business. General discussion on the Town's hotel occupancy rates. SR explained the new organizational chart for DCM. BA noted to CP that the Town is not only trying to get people to visit Worcester, but to have Worcester people come to Sturbridge. General discussion on the regional approach to tourism. SR asked that the STA survey where there are gaps in their photo library.

d. **Funding Request – Trails Committee**

- i. **Trail Guide** – TC provided a brief overview of the project, and noted that not enough money had been encumbered the previous year to cover the costs of the project. *BA MOVED to allocate \$40 from the marketing line item to cover the difference for the purchase of the new Trail Guides. JA seconded. APPROVED (3 – 0 – 1 [TC abstained]).*
- ii. **MassCor** – TC said that the trail committee is participating in more events and would like to purchase shirts they can wear to help promote the town as said events. *BA MOVED to allocate \$220 from Community Support to fund the Trail Committee's purchase of polo shirts. DM seconded. APPROVED (3 – 0 – 1 [TC abstained]).*

KF noted that with DM being a new member of the STA, she had not received an STA polo and that the committee should consider allocating funds to make that purchase. *BA MOVED to approve \$15 from Community Support for an STA shirt. TC seconded. APPROVED (4 – 0).*

5. **Old Business** – BA noted that there will be a meeting with Break the Ice (OSV's media consultant) on November 14th to discuss the Village's bus tours project previously approved by the STA. BA said members are invited to participate in said discussion.
6. **EDTC Report** – KF provided members with a brief update on his work since the previous STA meeting.

7. **Next Meeting – November 13th** – Members asked that the next meeting feature a discussion of a 'Business of the Year' award. General discussion on said award.
8. **Adjourn** – *BA MOVED to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:40pm. TC seconded. APPROVED (4 – 0).*

*Respectfully Submitted:
Kevin Filchak, M.P.A.*

DRAFT

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STA - Post Event Evaluation

As a recipient of STA funding, you are required to complete the following post funding evaluation form. This is intended to provide the STA with perspective on your event and ensure that the STA funds were used in a manner that supported its intended mission.

Future funding opportunities are contingent upon you completed and returning this form to the Sturbridge Tourist Association. Depending upon the nature of your event, the STA may request that you or a member of your organization be present at an STA meeting to discuss your findings.

Email address *

sargreene@gmail.com

Organization Name: *

Alternatives For Health

Point of Contact (name, title, email, & phone number) *

Salli Greene

Name of project or event *

Sturbridge Herbfest

Event Information (location, date(s), time(s)) if applicable)

Sturbridge Senior Center

Total funds requested by applicant *

4480

Total funds allocated by STA *

3613.00 (I think more was allotted because you agreed on all but the police and insurance.

Total funds spent by applicant *

4133.71

Have all the bills been paid? *

Yes

No

Briefly describe your project or event

We feel it was very successful for the first year. Classes were well attended. The vendors were very happy and stated that there were people from several different NE states plus NY. the cop had some suggestions for parking next year.

How was the STA funding intended to help your project?

Advertising, tents, porta potties & trash

Please describe how you measured the success of your project? Did you meet those goals? Why or why not?

We had forms that we tried to get everyone to fill out and return. Need to be more proactive in getting them back next year.

Knowing what you know now, would you change how you approached your project or event next time? If so how?

No dumpster. Food vendors lined up now. Advertising was good but there should be a way to have signage in town before the event at least for a week. Several vendors commented on that.

How was your experience working with the STA? Is there anything that we can do differently to better serve your needs?

Fabulous. You guys were very supportive. I did notice that you advertised other events but not ours. Wondering about that.

Do you have any other comments or suggestions for the STA?

Just the signage issue.

Will you seek funding from the STA in the future? *

Yes

No

Maybe

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Page Break

Celebrating the Season in Sturbridge, Massachusetts

The folks in Sturbridge take the holiday season seriously — here's what they have going on in 2019.

By: Holly Sloane

Sponsored by [Discover Central Massachusetts](#)

As temperatures drop, wreaths are hung on front doors, and baked good warm our belly, we're met with both a sense of nostalgia and an excitement for what's to come. The embodiment of this feeling in New England is in Sturbridge, Massachusetts, where the holiday season offers ample opportunity to create new traditions and dust off some old ones. Whether you're interested in the humble celebrations of Puritans or finding a fresh new gift idea, there's something in Sturbridge for you. Read on to learn more about some of our favorite events and programs.

[Country Folk Art Craft Show](#)

NOVEMBER 29-30 (10:00 AM – 5:00 PM) & DECEMBER 1, 2019 (10:00 AM – 4:00 PM)

Escape the mall on Black Friday and find some exciting gifts at the 2019 Country Folk Art Craft Show in Sturbridge this Thanksgiving weekend! From handmade soaps and candles to farmhouse décor and more, this craft show has something for everyone on your list. Better yet, spruce up your own home for the holiday season with festive treasures around every corner.

\$7 Admission (\$6 with a [coupon](#))

[Christmas by Candlelight](#)

DECEMBER 6-8, 13-15, 20-23, 27-28, 2019

3:00 – 8:00 PM

This annual tradition is a can't miss New England event. With tasty treats, live performances, sleigh rides, bonfires, and more, Christmas By Candlelight is the perfect way to get in the holiday spirit. Once night falls, be sure to check out the all-new Christmas Tree Trail, which winds past a roaring bonfire and 50 sparkling trees before leading directly to the Christmas Wish Bridge! Sounds like the start of a magical family tradition, doesn't it? Round out the evening with a stop at either the Candlelight Buffet at the Bullard Tavern or the Holiday Buffet in the Garden View Room at the Oliver Wight Tavern; both offer delicious food in a historic atmosphere.

\$28/Adult \$14/Ages 4-17 (Children 3 and under are free)

Purchase your tickets before Thanksgiving and SAVE 15-50%!

[Gingerbread House Decorating](#)

DECEMBER 7 & 14, 2019

SEATINGS AT 9:00 AM, 11:00 AM & 1:00 PM

Relish the wonder in your children's eyes as they experience the magic of a 10' Gingerbread House at Publik House! Meticulously designed with frosting and cookies, this larger-than-life creation will inspire their own creativity as you help them create a 10" version of their own. Followed by fresh cookies and cider, this is a warm and festive gathering you won't want to miss out on.

\$35/Household

[Breakfast with Santa](#)

DECEMBER 7-8 & 14-15, 2019

SEATINGS FROM 8:30 – 10:45 AM

Santa's coming to Central Massachusetts, and he's made a special reservation at the Publik House! Come enjoy a breakfast buffet ranging from sweet to savory options and snap a photo as your kids meet Old Saint Nick himself and bend his ear with their Christmas list. Don't wait— this special guest may not be back in town until Christmas Eve!

\$12.95/Ages 3-10 \$19.95/Ages 11+ (Children 2 and under are free)

[The Antique Collectibles Show](#)

JANUARY 1, 2020

10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

What better way to ring in the New Year than with something new to you! Find the perfect antique for your home, or pick up a belated holiday gift, at the 2020 Antique Collectibles Show, hosted by the Journal of Antiques & Collectibles. This event is chock full of items that will take you back to a simpler time and inspire you to reminisce while also looking forward to the bright new year ahead.

\$10 Admission (\$8 if you buy online)