



# Sturbridge Tourist Association

*A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge*

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## Regular Meeting

*15 August 2018 | 6pm*

*Town Hall | 308 Main Street | 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room*

Members Present: Brian Amedy (BA), Chair; Tom Chamberland (TC), Vice-Chair; Nick Salvador (NS); Jeff Ardis (JA)

Staff Present: Kevin Filchak (KF), Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator

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1. **Call to Order** | BA called the meeting to order at 6:00 and a quorum was present. BA noted that there is still a vacancy on the STA.
2. **Approval of Previous Minutes - 20 June 2018** | Members reviewed minutes. *TC MOVED to approve as printed, BA seconded APPROVED (4-0-0).*
3. **Treasurers Report**
  - a. **FY 2018** | KF provided update on the end of FY 2018. *TC MOVED to accept FY 2018 Treasurers Report as presented. BA seconded. APPROVED (4-0-0).*
  - b. **FY 2019** | KF provided update regarding the FY 2019 budget. KF explained the challenges that were encountered with the encumbrances of FY2018 funds and why they were not approved. General discussion on encumbrances. *BA MOVED to approve FY2019 budget as prepared, NS seconded. APPROVED (4-0-0).*
4. **New Business**
  - a. **Funding Request | Sturbridge Business Advocacy Group (B.A.G.)** – BA abstained as he is an active member of the B.A.G., and yielded duties of the Chair to TC. KF provided overview of the *Sturbridge Express* and explained why there almost was a delay in launch. Also explained the purpose of the request for marketing purposes. *NS MOVED to allocate from the Marketing line item the amount of \$2,000 to support the Business Advocacy Groups' marketing of the Sturbridge*

*Express. TC seconded. 3-0-1.* General discussion on the shuttle. TC yielded the duties of Chair back to BA.

- b. **Review of STA Funding Policies** | KF begins to go over aspects of the proposed policy changes. Members discussed in depth the question of funding events located inside and outside of the borders of Sturbridge; members discussed and added language to that end, noting that events should be located in Town but the STA reserves the right to exempt this clause. KF continued review; JA asked about applicants attending first meeting and what their participation at that meeting could be or how it could be restricted. General discussion on applicants who may be rejected and their appeals process. BA talked about having KF give thorough reviews of applications before they are presented to the STA. NS asked about applications that may require expedited approval, or should a provision be allowed for unexpected opportunities. KF and group made suggestion of adding language to provide for such cases. KF continued and the group had questions as to how purchases of over \$10,000 should be documented in the policy; KF will check with finance department regarding such language.

Members continued on to discuss the proposed rubric. TC talked about rubrics and public documents and suggested it be called a worksheet to allow for STA members to have a more frank opinion in their reviews. Discussion on whether or not the document should public or private; conversation about changing the rubric to the STA Evaluation Worksheet and questions about should the worksheet be published. JA talked about including a basic summary of the rubric but not including the whole worksheet; discussed developing criteria and providing context and giving general points to applicants. TC asked how to weight applications for a nonprofit vs. private venue and questions of revenue gained from an event. KF asked committee to consider the question of revenues in the worksheet. General discussion on the question of revenue collection and how the STA collects revenue via the Hotel Tax. BA suggested using this policy and worksheet as a starting point and see how this system works. TC brought up the example of someone asking for funding small funding amount. Extensive discussion about setting a cap for small funding amounts that can be fast tracked for approval. TC suggested under a \$1,000 can be reviewed at one meeting, anything between \$1k and \$2500 can be fast tracked at the discretion of the STA, and over \$2500 goes through the newly developed policy process. KF to make

changes on both policy and worksheet and return for STA consideration at September STA meeting.

- c. **STA Goals and Mission** | TC said the points addressed tonight handled much of this discussion, but concerned that many of the nonprofits coming to the STA raises some questions. BA talked about concerns of having too many applicants coming before the STA in quick succession, continued to talk about objectives of STA as bringing room revenues being number one, and community support as number two. JA raised question of the room revenues associated with the Harvest Festival. General discussion of nonprofits dynamics, length of events, etc. JA raised the question not judging an event by the length of the event but by the return of investment. JA asked about who is reinvesting the money for events v. pocketing it. General conversation about human element and needing to consider finer points of each application.

## 5. Old Business

### a. FY 2019 Encumbered Funds Request

- i. **Trail Guides** | TC recused himself as he is a member of the trails committee.. Members reviewed of application. *BA MOVED to allocate \$3,000 from Market for the printing of 1500 copies of the Sturbridge Trail Guide. NS seconded. APPROVED (3-0-1).*
- ii. **MassCor** | *TC MOVED to allocate \$794.35 from the Community Support line item for the purchase of padfolios and shirts from MassCor. JA seconded. APPROVED (4-0-0).*

- 6. **Sturbridge Farmers Market Update** | KF provide summary on the Farmers Market. JA talked about food vendors. Discussion on sales of products and revolving funds. KF explained the funding request from the Market. *TC MOVED to appropriate \$450 out of community support to address the request of the farmers market committee. NS Seconded. APPROVED (4-0-0).*

## 7. EDTC Report

- a. **Discover Central MA | Membership Renewal**
- b. **First Impressions Program**
- c. **Newsletters**
- d. ***Sturbridge Express***

- e. Route 15 Study
- f. Special Events Committee
- g. STR Report | Quarter 2
- h. Worcester Magazine

*TC MOVED to allocate \$100 from the Community Support line item to purchase a one year membership to Discover Central Massachusetts. BA seconded APPROVED (4-0-0).*

KF provided updates on each of the above listed items. The Committee discussed at length the STR report. BA discussed the local hotel industry. Members talked about what the local draws were to local hotels. Conversation about participating in marketing with Discover Central MA. BA talked about his tenure as chair of the STA being limited and that the Committee should begin considering transition at some point.

- 8. **Next Meeting** | Members determined the next meeting should be held on 12 September.
- 9. **Adjourn** | BA moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:10pm. JA seconded. APPROVED (4-0-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

Kevin Filchak, M.P.A.  
Economic Development / Tourism Coordinator (EDTC)