



Sturbridge Tourist Association

A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge

Regular Meeting

20 May 2020, 6:30pm

Remote Meeting – Go to Meeting

Members Present:

Brian Amedy, Chair

Tom Chamberland, Vice-Chair

Nick Salvador

Dawn Merriman

Jeff Ardis

Staff Present:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator

Chair Amedy went over the agenda items.

Mr. Bridges read the following statement: *Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting law, G.L. c. 30A Section 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Sturbridge Tourist Association will be conducted via remote participation to the greatest extent possible. Specific information and the general guidelines for remote participation can be found on the Town's website at <https://www.sturbridge.gov/town-administrator/pages/how-access-virtual-meeting>. For this meeting, members of the public who wish to listen and or watch the meeting either online via the Town's on demand video broadcast, on cable television on channel 191, or dial into the meeting at 774-304-1455, enter 1428# for the meeting number and 12345 for the access code. (This phone number is only active for the public during public meetings). No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, but every effort will be made to ensure that the public can adequately access the proceedings in real time, via technological means. In the event that we are unable to do so, despite best efforts, we will post of the Town's website an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive record of the proceedings as soon as possible after the meeting.

Approval of Minutes from May 6 2020 meeting

Motion: To approve the minutes from May 6, 2020 By: Tom Chamberland

2nd: Dawn Merriman

Roll Call Vote: Brian Amedy: YES, Dawn Merriman: YES, Nick Salvadore: YES, Jeff Ardis: YES, Tom Chamberland: YES

Vote: All in Favor (5-0)

Treasurers Report

Mr. Chamberland stated that no money has been spent since they last talked about the Treasurers Report at their last meeting, but they did get a bill for the Geo Fest and it exceeds the allocated funds that they had appropriated. He stated that he did additional research because the Army Core of Engineers have not yet opened Westville Park due to Covid-19, so he inquired if they would be allowed to hold the event there, which is when he discovered that Geo Fest had not yet applied to hold their event at the Park so they do not have a permit for it. The committee went over that the bill was from the Chamber for Geo Coins and it exceeds \$500.00 from the original proposal they received for \$250.00. Chair Amedy said he could email and tell them they are going to hold this bill until they get some better clarification. The committee discussed reaching out to the Chair of the Chamber to get their questions answered.

Chair Amedy informed the committee that the Colonial Muster had been canceled so the \$500.00 for that event had gone back into the account.

Presentation of Marketing & Branding - Christina Pappas of Open the Door

Christina Pappas, from Open the Door, came before the Sturbridge Tourist Association remotely. She presented the committee with an overall vision of what Open the Door would provide the Town of Sturbridge with as far as marketing and branding. She began her presentation by highlighting the goals of this project. The goals included: establishing a cohesive brand that resonates with the public, positions Sturbridge as a hub of entertainment, small business, and outdoor adventure, and highlighted the convenience of Sturbridge to ease visitors traveling from the Northeast Corridor. Ms. Pappas informed the committee of the programs target audience, travel aspirations, and different costs and qualitative research that had been done, and different trends that effect travel. She also went over strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities that the program can provide. She stated that they had looked into other surrounding towns to see how they are promoting and advertising themselves. Ms. Pappas went over the Brand document, mentioning incorporating the weathervane. She went over several different leisure market, group market, and community relations strategies and tactics. The committee received the presentation well.

Chair Amedy asked Mr. Bridges if it would be possible to present this plan to the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Bridges stated that he is going to allow Todd Miller, the new Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator, time to get settled into the position, and comfortable with the plan, enough to go before the Board of Selectmen and answer any of their questions on the actionable items.

Tourism Update

Chair Amedy informed the committee about some changes at Discover Central Massachusetts, such as employees having to be laid off. He also mentioned that Rapsallion is having some issues with the leasing arrangement they have at their present location, and they are exploring the possibility of manufacturing in Spencer, but they are still interested in staying in Sturbridge. Chair Amedy stated he reached out to the owner of Rapsallion to let him know if there is anything the Sturbridge Tourist Association can do, to let him know.

The committee discussed the opening phases in reference to Covid-19, and when lodging would possibly be able to open.

Chair Amedy informed the Board that their budget was approved by the Finance Committee.

Todd Miller, the new Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator, stated he is very excited to begin working for Sturbridge. The committee welcomed him.

Next meeting

The Board discussed their next meeting date to be June 17th.

Adjourn

Motion: To adjourn at 8:36pm By: Vice Chair Chamberland

2nd: Dawn Merriman

Roll Call Vote: Brian Amedy: YES, Dawn Merriman: YES, Nick Salvadore: YES, Jeff Ardis: YES, Tom Chamberland: YES

All in Favor 5-0

Adjourned at 8:36pm

Minutes Prepared By: Andrea Mensen

Clerk of the Board: _____ Date signed: _____