Sturbridge Tourist Association

*A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge*

**Regular Monthly Meeting**

Wednesday, November 10, 2021 – 6:30 P.M.

**Members Present**:
Brian Amedy, Chair
Tom Chamberland, Vice Chair (Until 7pm)

Dawn Merriman

Sandra Gibson-Quigley

**Absent:**

Nick Salvadore

**Guests:**

In attendance by Zoom:

Mike Sperling, Sperling Interactive

Chris Pappas, Open the Door

**Staff Present**:

Terry Masterson, Economic Development/Tourism Coordinator

**Meeting Open**

Chair Amedy opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

**Web Site Review**

Mike Sperling presented the web site and walked through the chapters and sections. Which comprised Events, Request A Guide, Itineraries and Accommodations. Other sections included:

* Hotels and nearby attractions
* Dining now categorized by meal times – Breakfast – Lunch – Dinner
* Events
* News
* History
* Contact

Brian and Dawn expressed their appreciation for the site. Sandra noted that the home page photo of the new hotel wing at the Publick House may not be an easily recognizable Sturbridge location. Mike responded that all the images were easy to add or delete. Sandra also noted that the Cohasse Golf Club was posted first on one page. Mike replied that all postings

Tom, Brian and Jeff had a conversation about making sure that all venues are promoted and that the web site contain photographs that reflect all Sturbridge businesses. Tom raised the potential of selling promotional space on the web site. Mike Sperling replied that many visitor attraction sites do accept premium advertising. Jeff asked Mike where the web site server will be housed and Mike replied that it will be with Amazon in the US.

Brian raised the steps to be taken towards promoting the introduction of the web site. Brian and Tom suggested some forms of public outreach which may include an informational meeting. Chris Pappas suggested that she would speak with Terry to work on some ideas.

**Approval of Minutes**

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| **Motion:** | Approve October 13, 2021 Minutes |
|  | BY: T Chamberland SECOND: S Gibson-Quigley |
| **Vote Record:** | **Yes:** Amedy, Chamberland, Gibson-Quigley **Abstain:** Merriman |
| **Outcome:** | Approved 3-0 |

The STA carried on discussion on the following topics:

 **Potential State Tourism Funding**

Jeff agreed to reach out to Rep. Smolla to explore accessing the Massachusetts Marketing Partnership fund for a potential grant.

**Regional Tourism Promotion of Sturbridge**

 There was continued general conversation carried over from prior months about how the State and DCM promotes Sturbridge, our region and the State locally, regionally and beyond. Brian suggested that Monique Messier the Director of DCM be invited to the December meeting for a discussion. Dawn noted that the STA may have to consider what the value of the regional membership is.

**Winter Months Promotion of Sturbridge**

Brian raised the goal of finding ways to promote Sturbridge in the mid-winter months. Sandra noted the value of citing and promoting local events.. Dawn also affirmed this message. Brian suggested ordering a prominent ad in the Hometown Shopper for the current holiday season.

**Budgetary Motion:** To Fund Advertising: Up to $450.00 from M&A Account

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| **Motion:** | To approve up to $450.00 for an ad in the Sturbridge Hometown Shopper to be drawn from the Marketing/Advertising Account.  |
|  | BY: B Amedy SECOND: D Merriman |
| **Vote Record:** | **Yes:** Amedy, Gibson-Quigley, Merriman **Absent:** Salvadore, Chamberland |
| **Outcome:** | Approved 3-0 |

**Budgetary Motion:** To Fund a Winter Itinerary Narrative: Up to $2,000.00 from M&A Account

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| **Motion:** | To approve up to $2,000.00 for the writing of a Winter Visitor Itinerary for posting on the Tourism Website. to be drawn from the Marketing/Advertising Account.  |
|  | BY: B Amedy SECOND: S Gibson-Quigley |
| **Vote Record:** | **Yes:** Amedy, Gibson-Quigley, Merriman **Absent:** Salvadore, Chamberland |
| **Outcome:** | Approved 3-0 |

**Budgetary Motion:** To Transfer $4,000 from Artisans Craft Show to Business of the Year Program

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| **Motion:** | To transfer $4,000 originally earmarked for the Artisans Craft Show to the fund for the Business of the Year Award program. To be drawn from the Marketing/Advertising Account.  |
|  | BY: B Amedy SECOND: S Gibson-Quigley |
| **Vote Record:** | **Yes:** Amedy, Gibson-Quigley, Merriman **Absent:** Salvadore, Chamberland |
| **Outcome:** | Approved 3-0 |

**STA Outreach Events**

Brian expressed the benefits of hosting events to inform and engage the business community. Terry noted that there would be an Annual Economic Review meeting in February similar too what many communities do such as Trumbull, Ct. Brian suggested several manufacturing firms as a location for the annual meeting.

**Rack Card Creation**

Terry suggested that an effort be made to explore creating a rack card for Sturbridge. Brian suggested consulting with Maxine Carter Lome at Weathervane Publishing.

**Shopping Bags**

There was continued discussion of adopting an inexpensive give away for use at special events. There was consensus that re-usable shopping bags might be affordable and an item people would use.

**Big E**

Terry raised the potential of exploring what promotional efforts Sturbridge could use during the Summer Big E events. Terry will contact the Big E for information.

**Ice Sculptures**

Terry commented on the yearly popularity of ice sculptures in Northampton and Amherst. Tom commented that there will be ice sculpture on the Trails this Winter.

 **Guests for Future STA Meetings**

There was conversation about inviting a guest to each monthly meeting with suggested future guests being Parlin DeSai of the Comfort Inn and Mike Harrington of the Publick House.

**Walking Map**

Terry reported that he has been able to identify 4 artists but is not sure their styles are as traditional as one would desire. Lauren with Sperling noted that they may have an artist to suggest.

**Next Meeting**

BA noted that the next meeting will be Wednesday, December 8, 2021.at 6:30pm

**Adjournment**

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| **Motion:** | Adjourn Meeting |
|  | BY: B Amedy SECOND: D Merriman  |
| **Vote Record:** | Yes: Amedy, Gibson Quigley, Merriman Absent: Chamberland, Salvadore  |
| **Outcome:** | Approved 4-0 |