Sturbridge Tourist Association

*A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge*

 **Regular Monthly Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, December 14 2022 – 6:30 P.M.

**Members Present**:
Jasmine Bell
Chris Tieri

Pete Champagne

Nick Salvadore

**Absent:**

Sandra Gibson Quigley

**Staff Present**:

Terry Masterson, Economic Development/Tourism Coordinator

**Meeting Open**

Nick opened the meeting at 6:35 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes : November 9, 2022**

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| **Motion:** | Approve: November 9, 2022 STA Minutes |
|  | BY: C Tieri SECOND: J Bell |
| **Vote Record:** | **Yes:** Bell, Champagne, Tieri  |
| **Outcome:** | Approved 3-0 |

**Discussion of Selecting A Chair and Vice Chair**

There was general discussion of selecting a Chair and Vice Chair. Nick opined that his time is limited but that hopefully Sandy would be amenable to serving. There was consensus to vote on Sandy to be Chair subject to her agreement.

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| **Motion:** | Approve Sandy Gibson Quigley as Chair subject to her acceptance |
|  | BY: J Bell SECOND: C Tieri |
| **Vote Record:** | **Yes:** Bell, Champagne, Tieri, Salvadore  |
| **Outcome:** | Approved 4-0 |

**Discussion of RFP/RFQ for Digital Marketing Service**

There was detailed discussion in reviewing a DRAFT RFP to recruit a digital marketing firm with an agreement that Chris would continue to edit the ongoing draft along with input from the STA along with procurement advice from TA Grimm.

**Discussion of DRAFT RFQ for Short Term Digital Services**

There was discussion in reviewing a DRAFT RFQ to direct the effort to hire a digital firm to manage digital messaging for the next few months until a more permanent firm is retained. Changes and edits were made with Terry agreeing to share the working draft with TA Grimm and then proceed to request or 3 quotes for consideration.

**Discussion of Marketing Campaign for 2023**

Terry raised the question of what level of marketing campaigns should the STA undertake for the upcoming Spring, Summer and Fall seasons of 2023. Chris responded that there would be time to discuss this in April.

**2023 Sturbridge Tour Guide**

There was discussion of the 2023 Tour Guide. Sample tour guides from several communities had been shared at the November STA meeting. There was consensus to ask the Chamber and Weathervane Publishing to attend the January meeting to discuss what potential services they could provide to create a 2023 Guide. Chris raised the idea of creating a Guide that includes regional town attractions but keeps the focus on Sturbridge.

**Restaurant Week**

There was discussion about communicating a Restaurant Week message to the public this Winter. Nick suggested that this type of event deserves to be scripted and programed with food, drink and dessert messaging as well as coordinating these menu offerings with local venues to share or “wrap” their dishes and offerings in a unified manner. Nick also suggested that a theme be established. Pete noted that Putnam CT offered a Restaurant Week but that it faltered. There was consensus to plan for a Restaurant Week in September 2023.

**Business of the Year Award 2023**

Terry reviewed plans to promote a 2023 Business of the Year Award program this Winter. And that more details such as the time for the voting will be finalized in the January meeting. It is anticipated that the contest would run in February with awards announced in March and presentation during a BOS meeting in late March or April.

**State Legislative Marketing Grant**

Terry updated the Board on the State Legislature’s $50,000 Marketing Grant and that he has been in touch with the Town Administrator’s office to be ready to s tart work on accessing the grant when it arrives.

**Recruiting Merchant Participation with Web Site**

There was discussion on the value of contacting tourism related businesses in Sturbridge to become more engaged with the new tourism web site. Jasmine had submitted a DRAFT form for businesses to complete that would be a way to start conversations with businesses. Terry noted that he had placed the “Merchant Background” form on the Town web site and that he would be sending this form to all tourism related businesses.

**Adjournment**

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| **Motion:** | Adjourn Meeting |
|  | BY: C Tieri SECOND: N Salvadore  |
| **Vote Record:** | Yes: Tieri, Champagne, Bell, Salvadore  |
| **Outcome:** | Approved 4-0 |