Sturbridge Tourist Association

*A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge*

**Regular Monthly Meeting**

Wednesday, March 15, 2023 – 6:30 P.M.

**Members Present**:   
Sandra Gibson-Quigley, Chair

Nick Salvadore

Jasmine Bell

Peter Champagne

**Guests:**

Sarah Martin, Break the Ice Media (BTI)

**Staff Present**:

Terry Masterson, Economic Development/Tourism Coordinator

**Meeting Open**

Sandy Gibson Quigley opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

**Minutes of February 8, 2023**

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| **Motion:** | To approve and accept the STA Minutes for February 8, 2 023 |
|  | BY N Salvadore SECOND: P Champagne |
| **Vote Record:** | **Yes:** Salvadore, Gibson Quigley, Champagne, Bell |
| **Outcome:** | Approved 4-0 |

**Awarding of Low Bid for Long Term Digital Marketing Services**

Terry briefed the STA on the results of contacting 3 firms for a price quote to offer long term digital marketing services. The results were as follows:

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| **Firm** | **Price** |
| Pannos | Pannos chose not to offer a bid |
| Exsel | $6200 per month |
| *Break the Ice Media* | *$3200 per month* |
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It was determined that BTI was the low bid and would be consulted for their interest in working on this ongoing service opportunity.

**Briefing on Current Digital Marketing Messaging**

Sarah Martin of BTI joined the STA meeting by TEAMS. Sarah noted that BTI is a 10 member firm and has been working for OSV as well. Sarah noted that 4 to 5 posts had been publicized and more planned for March.. Efforts were underway to build out the Calendar of Events. And a trip style itinerary. Sandy noted that the STA would continue to work with BTI under the terms of the “Short Term” contract until a contract for the “Long Term” had been offered, signed and then approved by the Board of Selectman. Jasmine inquired about the degree to which the web site and media posts were high enough to merit some value.

**Briefing on Messaging** – cont’d

Sarah noted that interacting with local businesses will be important towards building interactive collaborations that can generate media messaging. Sarah noted a positive conversation she had with Denis Morgan of Brush It Off Paint N Sip business. Sarah felt that as businesses are encouraged to participate then organic traffic will rise. Sarah offered the following comments:

1. Businesses may call her directly.
2. Photographic assets deserve to be strengthened
3. SEO needs constant content.
4. Future posts will be pre-scripted
5. STA should have a main point of contact with BTI.

Sandy suggested contacting the winners of the 2022 BOYA Awards as potential stories for stories and messaging. Sandy also noted that working to develop and maintain collaboration with OSV will be important.

**STA Discussion of Annual Summer Fall Advertising Campaign**

After the call with Sarah ended, the STA conversed about selecting a firm to script out and manage the annual ad campaign. Jasmine offered the view that BTI should be asked for reasons that included a desire to see that the advertising campaign be paralleled by the same firm doing the social media messaging. There was general conversation about considering Exsel if BTI declined any interest. Sandy expressed her view that BTI should be asked first as well.

**Appropriation of $25,000 for Summer Fall Ad Campaign**

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| **Motion:** | To allocate $25,000 from the STA Marketing Advertising Account towards the Summer Fall 2023 Ad Campaign. This amount to be co-mingled with $25,000 from the State Legislature’s marketing grant for a total of $50,000. |
|  | BY N Salvadore SECOND: J Bell |
| **Vote Record:** | **Yes:** Salvadore, Gibson Quigley, Champagne, Bell |
| **Outcome:** | Approved 4-0 |

Terry confirmed that the total funding for the Ad Campaign would be $50,000 from two separate funding sources. The ad campaign would include the traditional 20% advertising placement commission to the managing firm.

**Exsel**

There was positive conversation about the thoughtful proposal that Exsel made and Nick suggested that they be asked to attend a future meeting for more background conversation.

**Magazine Proposal**

There was general conversation about the potential creation of a promotional Sturbridge magazine. The STA asked Terry to contact Maxine and repeat their interest in hearing of any thoughts, suggestions or proposals that Weathervane may have.

**Harvest Festival**

There was consensus that there would be value to contacting Alex McNitt at the Chamber to see if there are supportive and collaborative measures that can be taken to enhance the Festival. Sandy suggested that Pete, Jasmine, Terry and Annie Roscioli meet with Alex to have a “Blue Sky” meeting.

**STA Meeting Time Change**

There was general discussion of changing the hour of STA meetings in order to keep the adjournment time earlier. Terry suggested 6pm. Sandy offered 5pm and there was consensus for that with an agreement that the April 12th meeting would be at 5pm.

**Adjournment**

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| **Motion:** | To Adjourn |
|  | BY N Salvadore SECOND: S Gibson Quigley |
| **Vote Record:** | **Yes:** Salvadore, Gibson Quigley, Champagne, Bell |
| **Outcome:** | Approved 4-0 |