Sturbridge Tourist Association

*A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge*

Regular Meeting

#  5 August 2020, 6:30pm

 Remote Meeting – Go to Meeting

**Members Present**:
Brian Amedy, Chair
Nick Salvador
Jeff Ardis

**Absent:**

Tom Chamberland, Vice-Chair (arrived late)
Dawn Merriman

**Staff Present**:

Jeff Bridges, Town Administrator

Todd Miller, Economic Development/ Tourism Coordinator

**Chair Amedy went over the agenda items.**

**Chair Amedy 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 July 22, 2020 meeting**

**Motion: To approve the minutes from July 22, 2020 as amended By: Chair Amedy
2nd: Nick Salvadore
Roll Call Vote: Brian Amedy: YES, Nick Salvadore: YES, Jeff Ardis: YES
Vote: All in Favor (3-0) (Dawn Merriman and Tom Chamberland Absent)**

**Treasurer’s Report**

Todd Miller, Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator, went over the line items in the Treasurer’s Report. The committee went over what remains in the budget for each category. The committee agreed not to place a vote on the Treasures Report until it was updated to be correct.

**Old business:**

Chris Pappas - Marketing Package Quote and Discussion

Christine Pappas, Open the Door, talked about a proposal and outline for getting a website up and running. She mentioned that it is important to start to get the word out there since they have a campaign stated with the weathervane of “Experience Sturbridge like a Local”. She stated that numbers are showing that people are currently traveling but with COVID-19 going on she is noticing that they are traveling within 50 miles or less. Ms. Pappas said that content needs to be created, itineraries need to be strategized, they need a newsletter layout, and they need to tie in social media. Mr. Bridges asked how they are getting the content to put out to the public. Ms. Pappas stated that since they don’t have the visitor website yet, it would have to start as a page on the Town’s current website. Todd Miller mentioned that he talked with Ms. Pappas about what they were going to purchase from Open the Door, informing the committee that anything he can do in house he will.

Jeff Ardis said he went through sections of the proposal and ran some numbers. He said he thinks they need to figure out what they are doing with the website, because that has a lot to do with what they are going to have remaining in the budget. Chair Amedy asked what they can do short term to get the word out about Sturbridge.

Ms. Pappas explained to the committee that to start out she would suggest going with an all-digital approach, and that would be a project fee, for a rate of somewhere between $15,000 and $25,000.

Ms. Pappas went over all the different components of the proposals approach starting with content development. She stated that this consisted of them figuring out the different kinds of itineraries they wanted to broadcast. Ms. Pappas said social media is a very important part of this as well, and to do it right it can be very time consuming, but she believes this should be thought about sooner rather than later. The committee agreed that repurposing the content is key. The next item Ms. Pappas highlighted was newsletter development. She said they would take a look at two different types, one for the consumer, and one for trade. She said that the consumer newsletter would be people looking for different packages or activities to do and the trade newsletter would be similar but modified to be more towards the meeting planners, tour guides, wedding planners, etc. Ms. Pappas stated that another important part would be building a data base, which would consist of finding the trade people that would be a good fit for Sturbridge. Lastly on Ms. Pappas’ list was public relations, which broke down to taking the content and turning it into public relations, telling the world what’s happening and getting more awareness and exposure for Sturbridge.

Ms. Pappas left the virtual meeting for the committee to discuss together. She encouraged the group to reach out with any questions they may have after further discussion.

The committee asked Todd Miller to do some research on different organizations, to see what feel he gets and possibly develop an idea of where to start.

The committee discussed scheduling another meeting so that all members can be present to discuss this. They decided to hold another meeting on Wednesday August 12th to discuss the marketing plan and website options.

Tom Chamberland joined the meeting virtually.

Website Discussion - AppNet New Media

This topic will be a part of the next meeting scheduled.

**New Business**

Application Approval Discussion

Jeff Ardis stated that he isn’t comfortable with having a presenter or an applicant in attendance when the committee is voting on their application. He said unless it’s a legality then he feels they should not vote on something in from of the presenter or applicant. The committee discussed how they would go about voting going forward. Mr. Bridges stated that you can’t force the applicant to leave, and the meeting will still be public, so even if they were to leave they could still see what votes take place.

EDTC Report

Todd Miller stated in past two weeks he has conversed with Ms. Pappas to get a sense of what she can offer them. Aside from that he has been communicating with area entrepreneurs. Chair Amedy asked if he has had direct contact with business owner’s one on one. Todd said he has had one on one conversations exclusively on the phone.

**Motion: To approve the minutes with amendments made by Tom Chamberland By: Tom Chamberland**

**2nd: Chair Amedy**

**Roll Call Vote: Brian Amedy: YES, Nick Salvadore: YES, Jeff Ardis: YES, Tom Chamberland: YES)
Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Dawn Merriman Absent)**

**Next Meeting**

The committee’s next meeting is set for Wednesday August 12th as discussed.

**Adjourn**

**Motion: To adjourn at 8:15pm By: Chair Amedy**

**2nd: Tom Chamberland**

**Roll Call Vote: Brian Amedy: YES, Nick Salvadore: YES, Jeff Ardis: YES, Tom Chamberland: YES
Vote: All in Favor (4-0) (Dawn Merriman Absent)**

**Adjourned at 8:15pm**

**Minutes Prepared By: Andrea Mensen**