



Sturbridge Tourist Association

A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge

Minutes

Regular Meeting

20 June 2018 | 6pm

Town Hall, 308 Main Street

Members Present | Brian Amedy (BA), Chair; Tom Chamberland (TC), Vice Chair, Nick Salvador (NS); Jeff Ardis (JA).

Guests Present | Kathy Boyer (KB), Team Hoyt; Mary Dowling (MD), Board of Selectmen; Michael Suprenaunt (MS), Board of Selectmen; Diane Galipeau (DG), Worcester Magazine; Cedric Daniels (CD), Business Advocacy Group Chair.

Staff Present | Kevin Filchak (KF), Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator

1. **Call to Order** | BA called the meeting to order at 6pm. A quorum was present.
2. Approval of Previous Minutes | *TC MOVED to accept the minutes as presented. NS seconded. APPROVED 4-0.*
3. **Treasurers Report** | KF provided an update on the FY2018 budget. General discussion on the end of year funds. *BA MOVED to accept the treasurer's report as presented. TC seconded. APPROVED 4-0.*
4. **New Business** |
 - a. **Rick Hoyt Sturbridge Half Marathon** | KB representing. KB explained the expenses (\$14,441.24) and their income thus far (\$8,920). Explained that the committee is still looking for sponsorship dollars but that in the interim they need to make certain payments. Explained how the program came to be from the Special Events Committee and why they were seeking funding's. BA asked about why Police and Fire companies salaries were not coming from Betterment. TC explained Betterment and talked about challenges with funding this event. KB said that she

does not need the full \$9,000 initially requested, and that if coverage could be provided for the Police, Fire, and Porta-Potties as those are necessities. JA asked about how many more racers might register. KB said they expected a total of 125-150 to register, below their initial figures. TC asked how to increase the number of runners. KB explained potential avenues for promotion but also detailed their challenges given their limited prep time for the race. MD explained that this event was one that the Town of Sturbridge approached Team Hoyt about supporting, and that this was an idea of the special events committee. MD explained that there are out of state runners who will be staying in the hotels. JA asked if there are expectations that the expenses for the race would increase and KB said there is not expected increase. TC asked about Fire Department cost breakdown, leading to general discussion on the detail rate. JA expressed his support for the race, and NS asked about altering the future planning timeline. KB said they could work with a different timeframe going forward. KF provided an overview of the FY2019 budget. JA suggested allocating \$6,000 for the race. *JA MOVED to allocate from the FY2019 Community Support line item, the amount of \$6,000 for the Rick Hoyt Sturbridge Half Marathon. TC seconded. APPROVED 4-0.*

- b. **Worcester Magazine** | DG representing. DG explained Worcester Magazines proposal for ¼ or ½ page color advert, providing samples for the STA. Explained that this was done last year by the STA and it reached their 80,000 readers ranged primarily between 25 and 60, citing their readership primarily goes to families. DG went on to explain that they would like to build on the momentum from last year and include digital adverts. DG explained their capabilities with digital ads including geotargeting, 150,000 display ads per month, and the data that they can get from that. TC asked what the digital ads would look like; DG said that they could create an ad or the STA could provide it. General discussion about branding Sturbridge. GA asked about geofencing leading to a discussion about digital advertisements. DG detailed their geotargeting capabilities. TC asked when the STA would get the feedback from digital ads, DG said that they can measure the response and can then change as necessary. TC explained the challenges will paying for ads and then knowing if the spend is there. General discussion on digital ads. JA asked how the magazine is printed, and NS asked about distribution of magazine, to which DG answered both. JA expressed concerns for double coverage of adverts, and asked about what the returns would be. TC suggested Rhode Island, Vermont, and New Hampshire have not received much advertising focus. General discussion on adverts size. *TC MOVED to allocate from FY2019*

Marketing line item the amount of \$6,500 to purchase a ¼ page full color advert in Worcester Magazine. NS seconded. APPROVED 4-0. TC MOVED to allocate from the FY2019 Marketing line item the amount of \$9,000 to purchased targeted digital ads from Worcester Magazine. BA seconded. APPROVED 4-0.

- c. **Business Advocacy Group (BAG)** | CD representing. BA recused himself as he is a member of the BAG, TC chaired the meeting for this application. CD explained the background on the pilot program for the proposed shuttle service for the Town explaining the goal is to provide a Saturday shuttle. Explained the quote provided by JYL Transport, said that this would be a 6 week trial to see how the service works. TC asked about its relation to the Trolley Study conducted by the Town and KF explained that the study was provided to the BAG. TC asked about the marketing of the program. CD explained that ultimately would like to expand into a three season service, but that until then this was a grass roots movement to promote the service. General discussion. JA raised the points of (A) is this a needed service and (B) how to promote it, then asking for anecdotal evidence for the need for this service. CD explained that the BAG noted early on the lack of reliable taxi or Uber services in Sturbridge. KF explained the goal of the pilot program and the potential sponsorship. CD explained that he goal is to be a private sector service that is quasi funded by the STA. General discussion on marketing the program. General discussion on how the program can help make the town a two day rather than a one day visit and how the BAG will communicate information to the hoteliers. TC asked about other BAG initiatives, CD explained history of group. JA asked and KF confirmed that the STA could add some addendums to show the STA marketing proofs prior to launch. *JA MOVED to allocate from the FY2019 Marketing line item the amount of \$12,000 to go into the FY2019 Community Support line Item. TC seconded. APPROVED 3-0-1.*

JA MOVED to allocate from the FY2019 Community Support line item, the amount of \$12,000 to support the pilot program for the Business Advocacy Group's transportation service contingent upon (1) review by the STA by 7 July a collateral piece that will be provided to the hotels and restaurant that will be served on the route, and (2) a weekly report from the transportation vendor regarding ridership. NS seconded. APPROVED 3-0-1.

General discussion on the marketing of the transportation service and weddings. TC spoke about the need to market this service. *TC MOVED to allocate \$2,000 from FY2018 and encumber the funds to support the transportation initiatives of the BAG. JA seconded. APPROVED 3-0-1.*

- d. **Discover Central Massachusetts (DCM)** | BA re-assumed the duties of the chair. KF provided a general overview of his conversation with the DCM President and the proposed partnership and advertising opportunities in various regional publications and at shows. BA provided a history of DCM, followed by a general discussion of DCM and its challenges with membership. This led to a discussion on whether or not the STA should work to subsidize advertisements, including in Yankee Magazine. *TC MOVED to approve the expenditure of \$3,000 for the purchase of an ad in Yankee Magazine with Discover Central Massachusetts from FY2019. BA seconded. APPROVED 4-0.*

- e. **Funding Support Parameters** | TC explained that the STA is in a unique position as almost 80% of its FY2019 funding has already been allocated and there is little in case of future events. Suggested discussion on how best to measure events against one another. JA agreed and suggested a prioritization of events or an extended review process. NS talked about the need to keep the monies in Sturbridge and how to reduce event funding over time for repeat events. TC raised the question of funding events that are fundraisers themselves. General discussion on JA's suggestion of having a longer review process. KF suggested making a rubric for the review of candidates to be used internally by the committee, leading to a general discussion of the rubric. Continued general discussion on policy changes. KF will draft rubric and propose revisions to STA policies for consideration at the next STA meeting.

- f. **Encumbering Funds** | KF discussed the potential purchase of polo shirts for the committee members and padfolios from MassCor. TC talked about encumbering funding for the re-printing of Trail Guides and making necessary improvements to the guide including the addition of a full page. *TC MOVED to allocate from FY2018 Community Support \$825 to support the MassCor purchasing as presented and encumber the fund. BA seconded. APPROVED. TC MOVED to encumber \$3,000 from FY18 marketing to be set aside for the printing of 1500 copies of the trail guide. NS seconded approved. TC MOVED to allocated \$2,285 out of FY 19 for the purchase of the Trail Guides. BA seconded. APPROVED 4-0.*

5. Old Business |

- a. **End of Year Purchases** | TC discussed the 2 May allocation for the Trail Committee's table top display. TC talked about how he had recently purchased a

laminating machine for it, suggesting that the STA pay for the machine as well for future projects. *NS MOVED to allocate \$239.99 from FY2018 for the laminating machine. BA seconded. APPROVED 3-0-1 (TC abstained).*

6. **Sturbridge Farmers Market Update** | KF provided an update on the Farmers Market, noting that the first Market would be taking place on that upcoming Sunday.
7. **EDTC Report** | KF provided an update on his activities over the past month discussing the upcoming Business Class, the June Business Breakfast, the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the Worcester Region, the STA folders, the QR code readers, the Rick Hoyt Half Marathon, the Route 15 Study, Town Meeting and the update to the website.

KF also provided an update regarding the continued challenges with the Hartford Courant ad campaign. General discussion on the Courant.

8. **Next Meeting** | The next meeting of the STA will be on 8 August.
9. **Adjourn** | *TC MOVED and JA seconded to adjourn the meeting at approximately 8:30pm.*