



Sturbridge Tourist Association

A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge

Minutes

30 May 2018, 6pm

Center Office Building, 301 Main Street, 2nd floor meeting room

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

Guests | Beck Rustic (BR); Alix McNitt (AM)

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

1. **Call to Order** | BA called the meeting to order at 6:01pm. A quorum was present.
2. **Review of Previous Minutes – 2 May 2018** | KF noted an error in the amount allocated for the Hartford Courant from the meeting as it was \$0.05 under what was required. KF also noted that the Brimfield Guide did not have a monetary amount associated with it in the draft minutes.
3. **Treasurers Report** | KF provided update on the report. *TC MOVED to approve the treasurers report as presented.* Discussion raised by TC to ask for more descriptions on the cover sheet of future reports. *JA seconded. APPROVED 4-0.*
4. **New Business**
 - a. **New England Shake Up** | BR representing. Provided summary of the 1950s themed event, noting that the Host Hotel has been booked since February for the event. BR expanded to discuss how the show has been expanding and such needs more transportation capabilities. BR detailed the shuttle transportation plan including how it will help hotel guests connect with local businesses and how it will run on Friday and Saturday. TC asked how BR came to choose the shuttle company in question. BR noted that she used a quote from a company she had a history with, but that she did get quotes from other businesses. BA noted the freedom the group will be afforded to visit different venues in Town. NS asked if the van will stop at other location apart from hotel. BR said that the drivers would be permitted to stop or adjust the route as necessary. TC noted that potential that money from the STA may be less in the future due to an increase in request. General discussion. JA asked why the Shake Up did not use the full amount

allocated in FY2018. KF explained that FY2017 was not listed on his cover memo and that those allocated dollars were spent. BR noted that they were not seeing the returns on the radio and hence did not spend the full allocation. *TC MOVED to allocate \$5,907 from FY2019 Community Support, and \$3,075 from FY2019 Marketing to support the 2018 New England Shake Up subject to Town Meeting appropriation. NS seconded. APPROVED 4-0.*

- b. **The Big MOE** | GARY and CS representing. CS provided a general overview and explanation of the Hamilton Rod and Gun Club (HRG) and the Big MOE. CS noted that due to recent accidents at other shows, insurers have increased their fees to cover events like the Big MOE; CS further explained how the costs have evolved over the years to make the event cost prohibitive for them. He went on to explain that the HRG usually covers the volunteer food costs. He concluded explaining other events the HRG does and that these are revenue neutral events and a way to give back to the community. TC expressed concern with the purchase of insurance, CS understood and there was a general discussion about possibly having the Town listed as additionally insured under the policy. There was general discussion on potential funding challenges in the future. NS asked if the quoted insurance amount was for the event only, and CS confirmed the insurance is only for the Big MOE. General discussion on the Plimpton Property. *TC MOVED to allocate \$6,470 from FY2019 Community Support to support the 2018 Big MOE at the Hamilton Rod and Gun Club subject to Town Meeting appropriation and that the Town be listed as additionally insured. JA seconded. APPROVED 4-0.*
- c. **Makerspace** | (In the interest of time, the members moved this article after Agenda Item 4.d). KF provided a detailed explanation of reasoning behind the makerspace, referencing the 2011 Master Plan, and the proposed makerspace purchases for the Town. TC raised several points, questioning whether or not this falls under the definition of 'tourism' and whether or not this sort of purchase would be better found under the Town line item budget. There was general discussion on the article, and potentially having it go before the Special Town Meeting if there is enough interest. KF suggested tabling this topic for now until a more developed idea could be presented. Members concurred.
- d. **Chamber of Central MA South** (in the interest of time, the members moved this article ahead of Agenda Item 4.c). AM spoke on behalf of all three applications.
 - i. **Harvest Festival** | AM noted that this event has been level funded based on last year's numbers, further explaining that this is the 29th year of the event. BA asked about the sponsorship of the event, AM talked about the Chefs of Sturbridge and the nonprofits, and how due to a lack of interest she brought in food trucks several years ago. She said that crafters pay a fee but it is low. TC noted the need to potentially alter the allocation in future years and for the

Chamber to prepare for that. General discussion on funding. BA MOVED to allocate \$3,300 from the FY2019 Marketing line item and \$4,450 from the FY2019 Community Support line item to support the 2018 Harvest Festival contingent upon approval of the funds at the Annual Town Meeting. TC seconded. APPROVED (4-0).

- ii. **2018 GeoFest** | AM noted that this is another level funded event and had moved to the Westfield Dam. AM gave a general overview of the event, noting that there may be a need to move the event up to July. General discussion on the timing of the event. TC asked about sponsorship, AM explained how the event brings people to town but that no sponsorship dollars are coming in for the event. General discussion about sponsorship and fees. KF asked if the swag items being purchased by the STA was being sold. AM explained that the swag is being resold by the Chamber of Commerce. JA asked about the travel contingent. AM explained that they capture information and where attendees are coming from. AM explained breakdown of costs followed by a general discussion on the breakdown. *TC MOVED to allocate \$1370 from FY2019 Marketing and \$3230 from FY2019 Community Support for GeoFest subject to Town Meeting approval. BA seconded. APPROVED (4-0).*

- iii. **Marketing 2018** |

- 1. **Discover New England** | AM explained that the partnership with DNE allows for a presence in the international market and detailed leads gained from it. AM explained that she has not see a strong return on investment as it appears international travel is down. General discussion on international market. No action taken.
- 2. **Journal of Antiques and Collectibles** | AM gave brief overview. JA asked if the market for this guide was already aware of Sturbridge. BA explained how the Town has already purchased ad space in the guide, leading to a general discussion on marking of the Town and TC and BA emphasizing the need to not have redunCScy in adverts.
- 3. **#800 Line and Mailing** | AM explained the cost increase over last year primarily coming from wedding groups. JA asked about the #800 line, and AM provided brief overview, JA asked about the need for the #800 line. Extensive discussion on the #800 line and fulfillment. *BA MOVED to allocate \$850 form the FY2019 Marketing line item for the tourism phone line and fulfillment with the stipulation that it is approve at the Annual*

Town Meeting, and with the understanding that KF and AM will study the 800 phone line. TC seconded. APPROVED 4-0.

4. **Hartford Courant (HC) / Albany Times Union (ATU) / Mass Live (ML) |** AM explained the \$1,000 increase in the request for the ATU, citing the increase in digital ads and detailing their geotargeting abilities and discussed the success from the previous campaign. General discussion on costs. JA asked about the relative spend between Albany and Hartford, AM explained the value of each ATU and HC. JA asked AM to topline both the ATU and the HC. General discussion on how to draw crowds and put heads in beds for hotels. JA asked about the value of the HC, and asked if the ATU is more valuable when compared to the HC due to its increased costs. General discussion on the value of the HC, ultimately deciding to pass on the HC. JA MOVED to allocate \$19,000 from the FY2019 Marketing line item for the Albany Times Union ad campaign contingent upon approval at Town Meeting. BA seconded. APPROVED 4-0. TC MOVED to allocate \$10,000 from the FY2019 Marketing line item for the Mass Live ad campaign contingent upon approval at Town Meeting. BA seconded. APPROVED 4-0.
5. **Discretionary Funds |** General discussion on the discretionary funds. TC MOVED to allocate \$2,000 from the FY2019 Marketing line item in discretionary funds for the Chamber's ad campaigns. NS seconded. APPROVED 4-0.

e. **Sturbridge Tourist Association**

- i. **Mystic Information Center |** KF provided overview on the situation regarding the under allocation at the meeting on 2 May. TC MOVED to increase the allocation for the purchase of brochure rack space with the Mystic Tourist Information Center initially approved from FY2018 Marketing on 2 May from \$525 to \$595. JA seconded. APPROVED 4-0.
- ii. **Visitsturbridge.org |** KF gave a status update for the visitsturbridge.org website as well as the merchantsofsturbridge.org website and presented several options to the committee. JA suggested that the STA let the merchantsofsturbridge.org website go and only keep the URL for visitsturbridge.org. The STA concurred with this suggestion. BA MOVED to allocate \$30 from FY2018 for the renewal of the visitsturbridge.org website. RS seconded. APPROVED 4-0.

- iii. **Putnam Traveler** | The STA discussed, but ultimately decided not to purchase ad space with the Putnam Traveler.
- iv. **Reimbursement Request** | *BA MOVED to reimburse Tom Chamberland \$17.00 from the FY2018 Community Support line item to reimburse for parking costs at the Hartford Courant Travel Show. JA seconded. APPROVED 3-0-1.* TC abstained from the vote.
- v. **End of Year Purchases** | The members had a general discussion regarding possible items for the STA to purchase with the remaining FY2018 dollars. KF said he would develop some suggestions for the STA's next meeting.

5. **Old Business**

- a. **QR Codes** | As per the STA's request, KF had developed and presented to the committee several options for potential QR code readers to be placed in public spaces. The committee discussed and decided upon a design and format. KF will pursue developing this program.
6. **Farmers Market Planning Committee Update** | KF provided a brief summary of the activities of the Farmers Market and noted that additional purchases were needed hence, a request from the committee for an additional \$200. *TC MOVED and JA seconded to allocate \$200 from FY2018 Community Support for the Sturbridge Farmers Market Planning Committee. APPROVED 4-0.*
7. **EDTC Update** | In the interest of time KF quickly reviewed the EDTC update and asked members to send him any questions they may have on its contents.
8. **Next Meeting** | The STA discussed possibly meeting on 27 June.
9. **Adjourn** | The STA moved by acclamation to adjourn at 9:07pm.