



# Sturbridge Tourist Association

## Regular Meeting | Minutes

October 24<sup>th</sup> 2018, 6:00pm | Center Office Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

### Attendance:

*Members Present:* Brian Amedy (BA), Chair; Nick Salvador (NS); Tom Chamberland (TC)

*Staff Present:* Kevin Filchak (KF), Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator; Ted Kozak (TK) Interim Town Administrator

*Other:* Mike Suprenant (MS)

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### Meeting Minutes

1. *Call to Order* | BA called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.
2. *Review of Previous Minutes – 12 September 2018* | TC **MOVED to approve the minutes as presented. NS seconded. APPROVED (3-0).**
3. *Treasurers Report* | KF provided an update on the treasurers report and clarified some documentation in the budget regarding the transfer of \$12,000 the STA had previously allocated. **BA MOVED to accept the report as presented, TC seconded. APPROVED (3-0).**
4. *New Business*
  - a. *Discussion with Special Events Committee* | KF explained that due to a failure to properly post the meeting as a joint meeting between the two committees, the Special Events Committee (SEC) would not participate that evening. While no members of the SEC were present, the STA had a brief discussion regarding the committee. NS asked about where their budget comes from, and KF explained that the SEC receives dollars from the Betterment account. BA talked about the STA budget and its line items noting that previously there was a Special Events Line item, and possibly revisiting that. TC raised concerns about supporting local nonprofits that are not necessarily bringing visitors to stay in local hotels. BA expressed an appreciation for the memo provided by the SEC. Committee had general discussion about expenses associated with the Half-Marathon race. BA said it would be interesting to have a discussion with the SEC to discuss bringing more community events to Sturbridge. BA asked about Winterfest and KF said that due to limited staff time they would put that off till next year. Brief discussion on winter fest and Christmas by Candlelight at OSV. TC raised concerns again about funding. MS asked about links between the half marathon page and local hotels. KF explained that there was no link to hotels on that site as Team Hoyt controlled the content. TC said that having that information would be ideal so we can get that information for future campaigns. General discussion on data.

- b. *Post Event Evaluations* | BA gave overview of the new post event evaluation sheets that are now being followed.
  - i. *Pintastic* | TC noted that no data was provided by Pintastic of who came for the event. BA concurred noting that that info should be available.
  - ii. *Hamilton Rod and Gun Club* | NS asked about total funds spent by applicant and KF explained that STA has paid more than that.

**TC MOVED to accept the reports, BA seconded. APPROVED (3-0).**

- c. *Initial Review of Pintastic Funding Request (Month 1) - \$8,000 request* | BA said that this is the first big test of the new evaluation worksheets that the STA developed in the fall. KF explained the new review to TK and MS, while members explained what Pintastic is. TC explained that this was one of the STA's success stories of how the STA can help to bring events to Sturbridge. General discussion on the history of the STA's funding of Pintastic. TC noted that currently on Facebook Pintastic is listing the different package levels it is offering to potential patrons.

KF provided overview of the event and noted concerns with the request as the applicant is making revenue and noted he had heard the applicant is planning a move to Worcester. BA asked about the previous allocations. NS raised concerns that not all the money was spent in marketing in FY2018 and yet the applicant is now asking for more. BA asked what the STA's worksheet scores were: 33 and 38. TK asked about the worksheets and KF provided brief overview of the worksheet. NS raised concerns about revenues and how Pintastic would pay down personal debt in the same amount he is requesting from the STA. BA asked if Pintastic is paying particular focus to help with bringing in and using local vendors. General discussion on food vendors. General conversation about the venue costs. NS asked about the sale of vendor booths, group had conversation about vendor booths. TC said that ultimately there's value in being associated with the show. BA expressed his interest in supporting the marketing but not the entertainment. KF recommended that if the STA is interested in allocated funds it not provide more than three thousand dollars.

The members had a series of questions that they asked KF to inquire about before the next meeting. BA asked that the following inquiries be made: How many rooms were sold? Did the applicant get rebates? What were the room rates? Is the applicant doing promotion of Sturbridge? Is the applicant outreaching of other businesses in Sturbridge? TC asked for documentation from hotels in general, KF suggested asking where visitors are coming from; TC agreed but specifically wanted to know where those visitors who were paying for the top tier packages are coming from. MS suggested that if the STA is sponsoring this event that cross marketing should occur. There was general discussions

about hotel overflow and visitors going to get food at nearby restaurants. **Consensus of the members was to invite applicant to the next meeting (no motion necessary).**

- d. *Review of Hamilton Rod and Gun Club Funding Approval - \$500 of Initial Allocation* | KF explained request he had received to pay \$500 to restock the pond at the HRG Club and the history of the request, expressing concern with the request as not being part of the initial application. NS asked how the initial request was made and KF explained the payments already made. NS asked if pond was catch and release, answer was not known. BA reviewed budget, TC said the motion was approved and said it was in their budget even if it wasn't discussed. KF explained costs. MS asked if it had been stocked and KF said it had. **Consensus of the members was to permit the payment, as the motion was already approved no motion required.**

#### 5. *Old Business*

- a. *Discover Central MA – Yankee Magazine Campaign – Funding Request - \$2,000* | KF explained that the initial motion approved by the STA did not cover the whole allocation. **TC MOVED to allocate \$2,000 from the Marketing Line Item to cover the cost of the Yankee Magazine campaign done in conjunction with Discover Central Massachusetts .NS seconded. APPROVED. (3-0).**

BA asked if the STA was getting info from CCMS about campaigns or if KF was working on the 800 phone line. KF said no to both but that he would approach the Chamber on the matters.

#### 6. *EDTC Report*

- a. Community Bonfire – 20 September 2018
- b. Discover Central MA
- c. Farmers Market
- d. First Impressions Program
- e. Harvest Festival 2018
- f. STA Marketing Campaign with Worcester Magazine
- g. Sturbridge & Southbridge Business Breakfast - December 2018

KF provided a general update on all of the items listed. There was a general discussion on the success of the Community Bonfire in September. The committee has extensive discussion on the Harvest Festival. TC noted that anecdotally he had heard a lot of negative comments about the lack of restaurants and the lack of police detail at the event. General discussion on the harvest festival and its management. The members discussed the Worcester Magazine campaign and TC noted challenges with seeing a return on investment, and determining what the value of the campaign was. General discussion on challenges with determining a return on investment with campaigns. TK

suggested different tracking mechanisms. TC explained previous regional ad campaigns. KF provided brief update on the *Sturbridge Express* and its progress. KF presented the STR Report on hotel occupancy, BA noted that occupancy was down but the overall numbers were good. General discussion on STR Report. MS asked about regional data which KF noted he did not have.

7. *Next Meeting – 14 November 2018* | Members decided to meet again on Wednesday, 12 December at 6pm.
8. *Adjourn* | BA moved TC seconded to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:40pm. APPROVED (3-0).

Respectfully Submitted:

Kevin Filchak, M.P.A.

Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator (EDTC)