



STURBRIDGE TOURIST ASSOCIATION

A COMMITTEE OF THE TOWN OF STURBRIDGE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES – 13 FEBRUARY 2019

Center Office Building – 301 Main Street – Large Meeting Room – 6pm

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brian Amedy (BA); Tom Chamberland (TC); Nick Salvadore (NS); Jeff Ardis (JA)

STAFF PRESENT:

Kevin Filchak, Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator (KF)

GUESTS PRESENT:

Kelly Tourtellotte (KT); Dale Gonyea (DG)

- 1) Call to Order – BA called the meeting to order at 6:03 with a quorum was present.
- 2) Review of Previous Minutes – 23 January 2019 – *TC MOVED to approve as submitted, NS seconded. APPROVED.* At 6:05pm DG joined the meeting and BA welcomed him and noted that he is here to see the committee and may be interested in applying for the vacant seat. General introductions were made.
- 3) Treasurers Report – KF gave update. Lengthy discussion on terminology used in the budget report. *TC MOVED to approve the budget as presented, NS second. APPROVED.*
- 4) New Business
 - a. Funding Request –Meeting – Global Design and Publishing – BA gave introductions. KT provided additional information regarding how she presents information to potential purchasers. JA discussed the suggested motions for the STA, highlighting the back cover, the subsidies, and the purchase of additional copies. JA asked about the number of copies printed and the extras available. KT said 5,000 are printed and distributed, free, through south central Massachusetts and north eastern Connecticut, and noted that the Mystic, Connecticut visitor center also received a box. KF gave update on the number of remaining copies in the Center Office Building. General discussion on purchase of additional copies of guides. JA suggested giving these to visitor centers around the area, general discussion on this. KT stated that if the STA needed more copies they could always order a reprint, there would just be additional costs. TC asked if hotels are given

enough copies. General conversation about getting these guides to the local hotels and effectively distributing them. *BA MOVED to allocate up to (but not exceed) \$5,000 from the Marketing line item to subsidize adverts in the 2019 Sturbridge Visitor Guide. TC seconded. APPROVED (4-0). BA MOVED to allocate \$950 from the Marketing line item to purchase a full page back cover advert on the 2019 Sturbridge Visitor Guide. JA seconded. APPROVED (4-0). BA MOVED to allocate up to \$2,000 from the Marketing line item to purchase an additional 1,500 copies of the 2019 Sturbridge Visitor Guide for later distribution by the STA. NS seconded. APPROVED (4-0).* TC asked if there was a way to put coupons in the book, as a way to create incentives for people to use them leading to brief conversation amongst members. KT talked about the benefits of social media.

- b. Funding Request – Initial Review – Gatehouse Media – KF provided overview of the request and suggested that the STA consider investing elsewhere in the upcoming fiscal year for a larger return on investment. General conversation about marketing and the RFP for marketing strategy. TC suggested focus on advertising in the off seasons, leading to a discussion on the ‘shoulder’ marketing seasons. BA suggested that Gatehouse come in for a smaller campaign, TC suggested a max of \$500/month. Group was in agreement for a shorter campaign, asked KF to invite Gatehouse and ask them to decrease the amount. TC asked to inquire if there’s analytical data for when the displays were access and when it was chosen to be posted.
- c. Discussion on Supporting 2019 Economic Development Initiatives – BA talked about supporting electric vehicles (EV) charging stations. TC said that such support could be undertaken through the Complete Streets program. General discussion about EV charging stations.
- d. Discussion – Discover Central MA (DCM) – Spring/Summer Advert – KF presented the two examples developed by DCM’s vendor, members approved the second advert. No vote taken.

5) Old Business

- a. Discussion – Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article – Draft Review – KF gave overview of the draft article, and noted his recommendation that this not be pursued by the STA. JA gave opinions on the warrant motion, noting the benefits and the concerns. BA noted he understood the concerns raised but noted that restaurants are coming before the STA seeking funding. Members had extensive discussion on the question of funding community events and the STA’s part in funding it. NS and TC asked if there is a sheet that says what is considered a community event verses what is not. BA suggested with the new review process it is important to ask questions about the community events. TC raised the question about the Special Events Committee getting money from Betterment. *TC requested the EDTC to review FY2019 Community Support expenditures*

*with the focus of identify those that do not meet the purview of the STA. JA asked what the endgame of this process would be. TC raised questions of the STA funding tourism events vs. community events. General conversation about redefining the role of the STA. TC reminded the members that we do not go afoul of the enabling legislation for the committee. TC amended his initial motion to say *TC requested EDTC to review the previous three fiscal years of the Community Support line item to examine the expenditures in that account. BA seconded APPROVED (4-0). TA MOVED that no action be taken on the Annual Town Meeting Warrant Article for Meals Tax. BA seconded. APPROVED (4-0).**

- b. Discussion – Request for Proposal (RFP) – 2025 Marketing Strategy – Draft Review – KF gave full overview of RFP and asked if the committee would like to include branding in the process. TC asked about new town logo leading to a lengthy discussion on branding and logo. NS asked about having a second RFP about branding. Members supported idea of doing a second RFP for branding. TC suggested bumping the population number on page three of the RFP to ten and twenty five thousand.
- c. Discussion – FY 2020 Budget & Budget Definitions – KF explained the budget as presented and explained the definitions. BA noted that EDTC definition should note that the town now covers half of the EDTC salary and benefits. *TC MOVED to approve the STA budget and definitions as presented. BA seconded. APPROVED (4-0).*

6) EDTC Report – KF provided EDTC update. .

7) Correspondence

- a. Discover Central MA – Legislative Breakfast Invitation – Members were made aware of said breakfast.
- b. The Last Green Valley – Walktober 2019 Request – Members decided to take no action at this time.

8) Next Meeting – Scheduled for 13 March 2019 at 6pm.

9) Adjourn – BA MOVED and TC seconded to end the meeting at 8:15 pm. APPROVED (4-0).