



Sturbridge Tourist Association

A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge

STA Meeting Minutes

Regular Meeting – 07/10/2019 at 6pm

Center Office Building – 2nd Floor Meeting Room

Members: Brian Amedy (BA), Jeff Ardis (JA), Nick Salvador (NS)

Absent: Tom Chamberland (TC)

Staff: Kevin Filchak (KF); Jeff Bridges (JB)

Guests: Sarah Greene (SG)

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1. Call to Order – BA called the meeting to order at 6:06pm. A quorum was present.
 2. Approval of Previous Minutes – 12 June 2019 – **BA MOVED to accept [minutes] as written, JA seconded (2-0-1).**
 3. Treasurers Report
 - a. FY 2019 – Closeout – KF provided overview of the FY 2019 and explained end of year budgets. BA asked about Herbfest, KF provided overview of Herbfest noting that it had over expended approved amount by \$336.96. SG explained her understanding of the approved funding was higher than the number found in the March meeting minutes (when it was originally approved). General discussion on the over expenditure and conversations regarding the original approval amount.
 - b. FY 2019 – Encumbrances – KF explained the encumbrance request for trail guides had been submitted to the town accountant.
 - c. FY 2020 – Review – KF explained the format of the FY2020 budget document. JA asked about GeoFest breakdown; KF provided explanation leading to general discussion on the event.

BA MOVED To approve all financial reports as written, NS seconded. APPROVED (3-0).
 4. New Business
 - a. Funding Request – Old Sturbridge Village – First Review (discussed after 4.b) – JA raised the question of the STA's scoring matrix and asked if that's being used. General discussion on use of the matrix and scoring going forward; members agreed to keep the matrix but not necessarily use the scoring at this time. BA provided overview of the OSV

request, noting that this is a new / old initiative from OSV. BA explained the request, saying that the Village is trying to recruit the bus tour groups to come to Sturbridge. He noted that this has not been done for many years and then explained the history of bus tours in Sturbridge. JA asked if the previous efforts were worthwhile and BA said yes. BA said there is not enough information now about how tour groups currently operate in the town. KF provided an overview of the cost breakdown of the request leading to general discussion on the proposal. JA noted that the bus tours have validity based on BA's comments, but BA noted that the results won't be seen for a while because these trips are planned well in advance. BA said that the person overseeing the tour implementation must know what they're doing. NS asked if all three goals must be accomplished or if they are done individually. General discussion on the Village's plans for the proposal. JA noted that he's pleased with how much work has gone into the application, and had some questions about getting other businesses to buy in. He further noted that there is value in this but perhaps not at the full amount, rather providing the seed funding for it. BA suggests seeing an example of their bid to operators, and how other local businesses used to support funding these initiatives. BA asked about Village funding and supporting this bid. General discussion on funding and how the STA could fund it in full and in part. General discussion on hotelier cooperation and how overflow and planning tour dates works. JA asked if the Village comes in and meets all of the Committee's criteria, what would be a reasonable funding amount. BA was in favor of \$12,000. NS noted that this would be an investment and wouldn't see the return until CY2022. BA asked if the Village has not budgeted it for this year, will it be included next year. KF provided history of funding the village. JA noted concerns about other large expenses in FY2020. General discussion on return on investment for this event. KF summarized the questions for OSV as follows: (1) If the proposal is not funded to the full amount would the project continue, would part of it be dropped? (2) What is the experience level of tour contact at OSV? (3) What is BTI's experience in this space and do they know Sturbridge? (4) What efforts will be made to make this messaging impactful and who is driving said message? (5) What progress has been made for seeking support from other potential partners (MOTT, individual destinations, etc.) and (6) Can a sample itinerary be provided? KF will invite OSV to the next meeting and ask the above questions.

- b. Funding Request – Herbfest – First Review (discussed before 4.a) – BA provided history of the approval for Herbfest. SG provided overview of the event for the members, discussing the various speakers, layout, caterer, etc. She noted that her issue is having people pre-register for the event; said that 20 vendors have signed up and pre-paid with space for up to 39 vendors. BA discussed the funds requested and SG explained what the initial funding approved by the STA was used for. BA noted two items: insurance, and police detail; he noted that these issues has been discussed as a group, and asked for feedback from JB. General discussion on how Betterment funds are used for police details at general events. JB suggested that it is up to the committee to make that determination of supporting the event. BA noted that without PD and Insurance the request is \$1238 in marketing and \$2375 for Community Support. General discussion on where equipment was being procured from, SG explained that nearly everything is local. NS noted that this is a larger expense for a non-overnight event. SG explained that the

hope is that some people will stay overnight, saying that the information going to the event patrons are encouraging people to stay overnight. BA asked if a question on the registration could ask if people are staying overnight and talked about the value of the information gathered. NS asked about pre-registration for the event and if there are numbers for attendees, SG said no not yet but they are hoping to gather that data soon. BA noted that he'd prefer seeing the event cover the Police and Insurance costs. **BA MOVED to approve \$1238 for advertising out of FY2020 budget, and \$2375 out of Community Support out of FY2020 budget for the 2019 Herbfest.** General discussion about the over-expenditure. JA asked about not including the Police and Insurance, BA confirmed those were not in the motion. NS asked if the shuttle was included, BA said yes and SG said that number likely will go down. General discussion on parking. **JA seconded motion. APPROVED (3-0).**

- c. Discover Central MA – STA FY2020 Marketing Campaign Discussion – KF provided overview of what DCM was looking for. General discussions about what to include in the September edition. It was agreed that the photographer should be invited to town in October for fall shots and fall events.
- d. Visitor Guides – Discussion – BA went over the guide, and noted a few of the photos did not show Sturbridge pictures in the forefront. KF noted that he wanted to show the guide and remind the group that there are other vendors who've expressed interest in this.

5. Old Business

a. RFP – Update

- i. Funding Request – Allocate Funding for Legal Notices – KF provided status report on the RFP. **BA MOVED to approve \$72 to pay for the STA Legal Notices in the Telegram and Gazzette. NS seconded. APPROVED (3-0).**

6. EDTC Report – KF provided detailed update. BA noted that he was re-appointed to the committee.

7. Correspondence – None.

8. Next Meeting – Dates selected were August 14th and 28th. BA asked that the nomination for chair / vice chair be handled at those meetings.

9. Adjourn – **BA MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 7:45pm. JA seconded. APPROVED (3-0).**

Respectfully Submitted:

Kevin Filchak, M.P.A.

Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator