



Sturbridge Tourist Association

A Committee of the Town of Sturbridge

Regular Meeting Minutes

17 December 2019, 6:00pm

Town Hall, 308 Main Street, Julian Meeting Room

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

Members Absent: Dawn Merriman (DM) – Excused

Staff Present: Kevin Filchak (KF), Economic Development; Jeff Bridges (JB), Town Administrator

1. **Call to Order** – BA called the meeting at 6:06pm. There was a quorum present.
2. **Review of Previous Minutes** – 13 November 2019. *TC MOVED to accept as presented. BA seconded. APPROVED (4-0).*
3. **Treasurers Report** – KF gave update. No questions. TC noted that the shirts ordered through MassCor were not processed, but will be shortly. *BA MOVED to approve as written, TC seconded. APPROVED (4-0).*
4. **New Business**
 - a. **Business of the Year – 2019 – Discussion** – KF provided overview of process. JA asked if this was a good return in terms of nominations received, KF said that he felt it was a good return. General discussion on recent business surveys conducted by KF. BA went over the top candidates in each category [Please see attached for all nominations]. JA suggested considering (A) who got the most votes and (B) who would benefit most from the award. General discussion on the nominees and local businesses as BA went through the list. KF gave overview of the current membership agreement with DCM. NS asked if there will be checks and balances for marketing grant; KF said yes as it would go through the STA's normal policy process. BA asked if the membership would go towards new members of DCM, KF said yes.

Members started with Eat category. General discussion on Wild Flour Kolaches. JA suggested value in supporting those businesses that would benefit from such and award. General discussion on the Kolaches business in Town. NS said that he would support the award going to someone who would find value in the reward. KF suggested that the committee consider those businesses not normally considered for awards. TC noted that he looked at the websites of these businesses to get a sense of their community involvement, noting that he was pleased to see many are very involved. He

cited Escape the Pike for their effort and support various causes as a local business. General discussion on how best to select winner. NS supported Kolaches or Homefield. TC talked about Homefield. JA said he'd support Kolaches and Sturbridge Seafood, general discussion on those locations. BA talked about the value and draw of Sturbridge Seafood. *TC MOVED to nominate Sturbridge Seafood as the winner for Business of the Year in the Eat category. APPROVED (3-1).*

Members moved to discuss the Play category. BA said that he liked Escape the Pike as the winner, members supported the idea. *TC MOVED to nominate Escape the Pike as the winner of the Business of the Year in the Play category. BA seconded. APPROVED (4-0).*

Members moved to discuss the Shop category. BA said that the Bird Store has been there for years and continues to do more, leading to a general discussion. TC said the only other business to consider would be Alternatives for Health, noting their recent Herbfest. General discussion on the two businesses. *BA MOVED to nominate Alternatives for Health as the winner of the Business of the Year in the Shop category. TC seconded. APPROVED (3-1).*

JA said that the Comfort Inn would be the winner based on the nominations, and suggested that they move to renew their membership in DCM as they already have a membership. TC asked if it were possible to reimburse the Comfort Inn for their membership; KF said yes. *JA MOVED to nominate Comfort Inn as the winner of the Business of the Year in the Stay category. NS seconded. APPROVED (4-0).*

KF gave overview of next steps for award. Town Administrator will send award letter to winners. *TC MOVED to allocate up to \$1200 for the two memberships, and up to \$1,000 for marketing and advertising per business.* JA asked if the STA could spend on their behalf, KF explained the oversight process. TC said that the award letter should explain all that can be done. *NS seconded. APPROVED (4-0).* NS asked if there should be a plaque, general agreement. *TC MOVED to allocate \$500 out of marketing to purchase four plaques for the businesses. JA seconded. APPROVED (4-0).*

- b. **Restaurant Week – Discussion** – KF went over the feedback from the businesses, noting price point was a concern for some. General discussion on price point. KF suggested some ways to approach this. General discussion on creating new meals to draw in crowds, something new from everyone. Members discussed when would be a good time to test this week, NS suggested testing different models for the restaurant week for what works best. KF suggested being around Brimfield, TC suggested April and NS suggested April vacation. Item will be on January agenda for further discussion.
- c. **GPS Trail Finding App** – TC provided overview of this app, noting this was a goal of the past Town Administrator. Said he has only talked to one company and these are the results. Said the Trails committee is looking for the support of the STA for this program. TC said that the Trail Committee has this company coming to their January meeting and

STA is welcomed to join. TC said that this would allow people to use the app on the trails and that the Committee would get a lot of information on the back end. Said that there would be advertisements to help offset costs for the maintenance of the app. BA said that he would like to see another proposal for future consideration. NS asked if they have looked at existing trail apps, TC said that as a managing agency they don't have control over the trails published on those apps. General discussion on other vendors. JA asked what the business is before the STA, TC said nothing tonight just for discussion. General discussion on what the app would look like. KF suggested the app be more inclusive than just trails, positive feedback from members.

- d. **DCM Invoices** – KF gave overview of both invoices. *BA MOVED to allocate \$200 from Marketing to cover the costs of the winter article preparation with Discover Central MA. TC seconded. APPROVED (4-0). TC MOVED to allocate \$735 from the Marketing line item to cover the costs of its advert in the Discover Central Massachusetts Visitor Guide. NS seconded. APPROVED (4-0).*

e. **2020 Goals**

i. **Committee -**

ii. **Economic Development & Tourism Coordinator –**

KF provided overview of goals and of the business tours program. TC asked if we're splitting the time equitably; KF said yes the town and STA each pay half. BA said that there should be more communications between businesses about each other. NS talked about some of it being on the businesses, and the need to ask and engage. General discussion on having quarterly community events and what that looks like in 2020. TC noted that he has 68 people confirmed for people attending the first of the year trail hike.

5. **Old Business**

- a. **Branding and Marketing Update** – BA provided update from Chris Pappas. JA talked about his conversation with her. BA noted that he, KF and TC went to the Bus Tours discussion at OSV and gave overview of that meeting.

6. **EDTC Report**

- a. **Annual Update** – KF provided members with his Annual Report to the Board of Selectmen.
- b. **Post Event Evaluation – Harvest Festival** – TC noted that the funding information was lacking in the report.

- 7. **Next Meeting** – Next meeting will be held on January 22nd and shall be a joint meeting with the Special Events Committee.

- 8. **Adjourn** – BA MOVED and TC seconded to adjourn at 7:38pm.

*Respectfully Submitted:
Kevin Filchak, M.P.A.*

Attachment – Business of the Year Nominations Received as of Dec. 11th

Timestamp	Category	Which business are you nominating?	Why are you nominating this business?
11/21/2019 17:06:31	Eat	Kiazans	We have never had a bad meal there! nice atmosphere and nice staff.
11/21/2019 17:28:08	Eat	Just a Nibble	Their support of town functions, the essence of small home based business, and don't forget the best chocolate chip cookies around.
11/22/2019 8:18:57	Eat	Teddy G's	Great food, has a local flair , family owned
11/22/2019 9:35:15	Eat	Publick House	Excellent Comfort food, historic charm and friendly staff
11/22/2019 10:30:45	Eat	Sturbridge Seafood	I personally know the owner. I know Ken takes time to make sure the product he serves is local, fresh and every dish is made with care and attention to detail from taste to presentation
11/22/2019 16:44:44	Eat	B.T.'s Smokehouse	They are a continual contributor to the town and community. B.T.'s has a large presence that helps draw people to the area. They also seem committed to Sturbridge and the town as a whole.
11/24/2019 6:55:58	Eat	Teddy G's	Great selection of pub food, local ownership, friendly staff, relaxing atmosphere
11/24/2019 22:30:50	Eat	Sturbridge coffee house	Wonderful food and atmosphere!
11/25/2019 12:23:48	Eat	Just a Nibble	Nikki makes the best cookies and brownies!
11/25/2019 13:26:12	Eat	SOUP TO NUTZ	BEEN IN BUSINESS IN TOWN FOR OVER 30 YEARS. SMALL MOM AND POP PLACE
11/26/2019 8:51:36	Eat	Teddy G's	Local owner, great selection with excellent value, friendly staff

11/26/2019 21:01:14	Eat	BT smokehouse	Best food in town!
11/27/2019 10:08:30	Eat	Altruist Brewing Company	Because they have a really cool establishment that is a very fun and entertaining atmosphere with fantastic beer to go along with it. Also everyone there is extremely kind and friendly!
11/29/2019 11:05:35	Eat	Homefield Brew and kitchencraft	Fantastic ambiance and environment to have a good time. Jon is always welcoming and available to share stories about the brews and foods they serve. The live music is always a unique and entertaining mix that provides for a fantastic evening out.
12/3/2019 13:05:38	Eat	BT Smokehouse	Best B-Que around for miles, always packed
12/4/2019 23:46:33	Eat	Wild Flour Kolaches	A new and different food option; a choice of how to consume it (walk-in, party trays in regular or small sizes, custom varieties with advance notice); friendly owners passionate about what they do; fun customer service (e.g. discounts on Sundays to support the Patriots)
12/6/2019 16:29:54	Eat	Rapscallion Brewery	Friendly, all types of fun events and of course their delicious craft beers!
12/9/2019 9:53:30	Eat	Teddy G's	Excellent Pub food great atmosphere, great for locals and tourists alike, locally owned
11/21/2019 16:41:13	Play	Pine Lake RV Park	Expansion of the RV park to include fire pits, pool, swimming, movies, group gatherings. They offer more for those who stay there than anyone else.
11/21/2019 17:00:10	Play	Brush It Off	It is great for all ages, all seasons, it is relaxing and many fun things to choose from to do.
11/21/2019 17:30:11	Play	Escape the Pike	I went last month and it was the most fun that I have ever had in Sturbridge.
11/22/2019	Play	OSV	Historic , interactive for all the family, love the Candlelight and

8:21:59			Sleepy Hollow experience
11/22/2019 9:39:32	Play	Rapscallion	Outstanding brews, food options, disc golf on site, helpful staff
11/22/2019 10:31:31	Play	Brush It Off	I feel this is a great way for people to get together, socialize and learn some painting techniques!
11/23/2019 20:32:20	Play	Brush it off	very family friendly , people like to have something different to do , men and women
11/23/2019 20:45:30	Play	Brush It Off	What a wonderful place to go, the atmosphere and fun professional staff. Great place to relax.
11/23/2019 21:34:08	Play	Brush It Off	The business owner creatively offers fun painting activities for adults, children, families, and couples. The owner also offers group parties for birthdays, engagements, and as fundraisers for businesses and organizations. The establishment is cheerful and relaxing. The owner is friendly and always inviting suggestions from customers. She is a community minded person and eagerly participates in networking events to promote Brush It Off as well as the success of other small businesses. A fun place for all!
11/23/2019 21:41:15	Play	Brush it Off	This business offers a special, relaxing atmosphere that gives the customer a service while offering entertainment and an opportunity to have fun!
11/23/2019 23:21:18	Play	Brush It Off	Wonderful place to go if your looking for something to do in Sturbridge. Such an inviting and fun DIY paint studio with lots of options of things to paint!
11/23/2019 23:22:55	Play	Brush It Off	My entire family loves this place! Such a wonderful place to relax and have fun
11/23/2019 23:30:40	Play	Brush it off	So much to do for all ages! You don't have to be an artist to have fun and PAINT
11/24/2019 0:16:51	Play	Brush It Off	So much fun! Staff is super friendly and helpful! It's always a great time!
11/24/2019 12:44:39	Play	Escape the Pike	The owners are hard-working and take pride in what they do. Escape the Pike provides a high-quality, unique entertainment experience that Sturbridge should be proud of.

11/24/2019 22:30:09	Play	Escape the pike	A.wonderful place to have some fun!
11/24/2019 22:33:22	Play	Brush it Off	Great place, fun
11/25/2019 8:30:44	Play	Escape the pike	It's the only place in the area like it. Great family and adult fun
11/25/2019 8:32:52	Play	Escape the Pike	A new fun activity in the area.
11/25/2019 8:36:07	Play	Brush It Off	Excellent customer service, a fun spot for all ages, and I love working with Denise!
11/25/2019 13:27:01	Play	ESCAPE THE PIKE	NEW BUSINESS STARTING OUT. WANTS TO BE MORE INVOLVED WITH TOWN EVENTS.
11/26/2019 21:02:08	Play	Escape the Pike	Great experience.
11/27/2019 8:18:59	Play	Altruist Brewing Company	They make delicious beer!
11/27/2019 9:25:05	Play	Altruist brewing company	They are amazing
11/27/2019 9:46:40	Play	Altruist Brewing Company	Absolutely great venue and owners.
11/28/2019 10:37:44	Play	Escape the Pike	A totally unique place to play!
12/6/2019 16:36:06	Play	Rapscallion Disc Golf Course	Great outdoor fun with friends or family for both beginners and advanced players!
12/9/2019 16:23:25	Play	Old Sturbridge Village	Old Sturbridge Village is an amazing piece of Sturbridge. Not only is it educational due to the historical buildings and the knowledgeable and kind staff, but it is a fun and relaxing place for the community and those from far away to visit and enjoy.

11/21/2019 17:03:52	Shop	The Thrifty Gypsy	Affordable Gifts on the fly for almost any occasion! Home made things, Gluten Free things, CBD products that they are SO knowledgeable about and quality affordable products.
11/21/2019 17:32:50	Shop	Micknucks	community engaged outfit that also offers great products and service
11/22/2019 8:20:58	Shop	Alternative Health Store	Owner is involved in community and has great shop with many health alternatives
11/22/2019 9:33:45	Shop	The Bird Store	Local owners , everything you need for your birds and they also do field trips studying nature
11/22/2019 12:30:04	Shop	Best BiB & Tucker	Fine Leather goods and accessories , been in business for over 25yr here in Sturbridge, hidden gem
11/23/2019 7:34:19	Shop	Bird Store	Over 30yrs in business in Sturbridge, all you need for your birds all year round, friendly owners
11/24/2019 6:54:49	Shop	Leather Shop	Helpful staff excellent selection of leather products from jackets to accessories business for 30 yrs in Sturbridge
11/25/2019 12:24:18	Shop	OSV	They have the best gift shop!
11/25/2019 13:24:33	Shop	NOAH'S ARK PET SHOP	VERY INFORMATIVE, SUPER HELPFUL, BEEN IN BUSINESS FOR 32 YEARS IN THIS TOWN.
11/26/2019 8:52:35	Shop	Alternative Health for	Unique shop , owner involved with community, excellent selection of alternative options
12/1/2019 7:07:54	Shop	Bird Store	Engaged in community , has events for locals, interesting store with all your bird needs
12/3/2019 13:04:45	Shop	Alternative Health for	Great shop has all your alternative health needs, owner is involved in community and actually hosted an event in October (Herbst)
12/9/2019 9:52:33	Shop	Bird Store	Over 30yrs as Sturbridge Business, all your bird needs, does bird watching groups as well

11/21/2019 16:38:02	Stay	Holiday Inn Express	Beautiful property, state of the art accommodations, most modern and efficient hotel in town.
11/21/2019 16:41:13	Stay	Publick House Historic Inn	Beautiful property and a real value to the town
11/21/2019 17:08:07	Stay	The Public House	They are very active in the community, an affordable stay, great food, lovely grounds and buildings. Just an all around great place.
11/22/2019 8:18:05	Stay	Comfort Inn & Suites	#1 Place to stay in Sturbridge, friendly staff and close to all Sturbridge Has to Offer.
11/22/2019 9:36:25	Stay	Publick House	Numerous Lodging options, Rooms in Old Inn plus newer modern historic design rooms
11/22/2019 9:37:56	Stay	Comfort Inn	Easy Hwy access, next to Cracker Barrell, relaxing lounge and excellent breakfast, #1 in Sturbridge on Trip Advisor
11/22/2019 11:29:04	Stay	public house	brings together the history of Sturbridge plus the conveniences of the 20th century
11/23/2019 7:35:23	Stay	Comfort Inn	#1 place to stay in Sturbridge on Trip Advisor, friendly & helpful staff , engaged in the community
11/25/2019 13:25:20	Stay	COMFORT INN AND SUITES	GUEST SERVICE IS TOP NOTCH. HELPS PROMOTE EVENTS IN THE TOWN
11/26/2019 11:33:47	Stay	Comfort Inn & Suites Sturbridge	This hotel takes a GREAT DEAL of pride in customer service and promoting the Sturbridge town and community. They LOVE LOVE the local attractions and are always educating their guests on what to visit, where to eat, what to do and why. They will take the initiative to learn whats new in town and how to help. Places like this in the town help the town and community strive and makes customers want to come back to Sturbridge and spend their money there!
11/26/2019 12:17:24	Stay	Comfort Inn & Suites Sturbridge	I stay here whenever I am staying or passing thru Central Mass! The team is amazing and always treat me like I am staying at the Ritz...the rooms are modern and clean, they have 2 pools and a bar! What more do I need?!?
11/26/2019 13:22:31	Stay	Comfort Inn and Suites Sturbridge	This hotel exemplifies what visitors expect when they visit our town - great service and a warm & inviting place to stay.

11/26/2019 23:33:24	Stay	Comfort inn and suites	Customer service, attention to detail
12/1/2019 7:09:13	Stay	Comort Inn	#1 place to stay in Sturbridge via Trip Advisor, close to all Sturbridge has to offer and easy hwy access
12/9/2019 16:21:48	Stay	Old Sturbridge Inn & Reeder Family Lodges	This is a beautiful place to stay coupling 19th-century charm with first-class hospitality and 21st century amenities. Attached to one of the great stalwarts of the town - Old Sturbridge Village.