

[NOTE: These minutes are made available to the public prior to Tourism Commission acceptance.]

WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION
Meeting: Tuesday June 24, 2008 at 5:30 p.m.
Town Hall Conference Room #1
MINUTES

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:37 p.m. by Vice-Chair Chris Traczyk.

Roll Call/Attendance: Members in attendance: Chris Traczyk, Vice-Chair; Charles Ford, Carol Hall, Geraldine Munroe, Elaine St. Onge, and Katie Sullivan. Also in attendance: Tony Homicki, EDIC liaison; Peter Gillespie, Town Planner/Economic Development Manager; and Jenna Delay, Town webmaster.

Members absent: Charlie Forsdick (Mr. Forsdick had made arrangements to participate via conference telephone, but a connection could not be established.)

Public Comments: None.

Approval of Minutes: [May 27, 2008](#) - Chris Traczyk asked if there were corrections needed for the draft minutes. One correction was to add Jenna Delay to the list of members to reflect her recent appointment to the Commission. Elaine St. Onge made a motion to approve the meeting minutes, Tony Homicki seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.

Announcements/ Introductions: None.

Reports:

- **GHC&VB, Potential Events** - Carol Hall: No new events to report.
- **Grant Funding**
 - **Preserve America - Status:** Peter Gillespie said that the entire report is now out and available on the Town website. The Preserve America steering committee has requested feedback from the Tourism Commission.

An important point of interest to the Commission is the recommendation in the report to form a Heritage Commission, by restructuring and expand the size and role of the Tourism Commission. The intent of these changes is to increase citizen membership, increase coordination with businesses and Town departments and Commissions, and increase the Commission's decision-making role.

The consensus of the discussion was that members generally liked the idea of expanding the Commission to increase the citizen and business participation, and add representatives from the Parks and Recreation Department and the Historic District Commission. The members also liked the name and expanded role of a Heritage Commission. However, the members felt that more clarification is needed to define the roles of the Heritage Commission.

Concern was also expressed about making the Commission too large, and making meetings and decision-making cumbersome. A cap of 11 members was suggested. The members felt that there should not be both a Tourism and Heritage Commission, which would result in too much duplication. An expanded Commission would likely need part-time, paid staff to support oversight of projects. Otherwise, projects would be a barrier to increasing the Commission's role as a decision-making body. Chris Traczyk said that Charlie Forsdick had previously relayed to her that he preferred

keeping the Tourism Commission separate, much like it is today.

- **Marketing Grant - Status:** Peter Gillespie said that the Historical Society is the designated recipient of the \$5,000 state grant. However, the money has not yet been received. In the mean time, he will review the contractor selection process and whether there is a state-approved contractor list.
- **Budget Status, 2007 - 08; 2008 - 09:** Peter Gillespie said that there are 4 days left in the current budget year, but the Tourism Commission has no funds left to expend. Keilor Associates is still working on museum promotion and economic development projects on a prioritized basis.
- **Convention Center Open House:** Katie Sullivan reported that there were plenty of exhibitors at the event, but very few visitors. The exhibitors mostly visited each other.
- **GHCVB Annual meeting:** Carol Hall reported having established a good contact at the meeting, and would share more about this at a future meeting.
- **Central CT Culture & Tourism Commission:** Geraldine Munroe said that the Airstream trailer promotion would soon be at the New England Air Museum and at the Cabella's Sporting Goods store. More brochures will be needed to keep the trailer stocked with information about Wethersfield.
- **Economic Development and Improvement Commission:** Tony Homicki said that there was no relevant information to report.
- **375th Anniversary Committee:** Chris Traczyk said that there was no news to report, except that she had heard that a scavenger hunt had been discussed. Charlie Ford said that the Wethersfield Shopkeepers had once run a successful history search game, and will share the forms and rules from that game with Chris Traczyk.
- **Event Calendar:** Jenna Delay said that she is exploring the use of a public calendar feature available through the Google website.
- **Monthly Report:** Peter Gillespie passed out copies of a draft report format from Charlie Forsdick. Mr. Gillespie said that feedback is needed from stakeholders such as the Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association, the Historical Society, and the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum. Data collection is critical and the stakeholders need to help identify what data can and will be collected and reported, on a reliable and sustainable basis. Mr. Gillespie also distributed a report of Town website hit data. The members agreed that such data would be useful for the monthly report, but felt that the categories reported needed some clarification.

Old Business:

- **Brochure - Reprinting:** Peter Gillespie distributed copies of a draft updated brochure done by McGee Associates. He said that the new Tourism phone line has been set-up and the number is in the brochure. His office will have to retrieve the messages collected on this line. Jenna Delay said she would post the new phone number on the Town website. No funds are currently available to print the updated brochure. Elaine St. Onge agreed to proof read the updated brochure and report back.
- **Horse & Carriage Ride Schedule:** Peter Gillespie reported that another \$25,000 grant was approved for these rides, plus there is a little money left over from the current budget year. The current plan is to have the rides operate every Saturday and Sunday through the summer, except when it is too hot in August. The rides would resume in the fall, starting around Columbus Day weekend, and continue through the holidays.
- **Promo Packet:** Peter Gillespie said that some packets have been assembled and mailed, but a packing meeting is needed. Several members volunteered to meet Mr. Gillespie June 26th at 3:00 PM in Town Hall to assemble the remaining packets.
- **Visitor Specials/Promotions:** Katie Sullivan said that she has assembled the information for the "Daycation" promotion from all but 4 of the participating businesses and attractions. She expects to have the remainder by June 25th, and the flyer finished by the 27th. This will leave time to get the application submitted by the June 30th deadline. Some members expressed concern that the Daycation program is too business-specific and will not accommodate a promotion for a town/area/group of businesses. Katie Sullivan said she would find out and report back.

- **Greeter Book:** Kate Sullivan reported that the book has been completed and is ready for copying.
- **Participation in CCCT Spring marketing:** Chris Traczyk reported that she is working on downloading software to establish a listserv e-mailing list to support this marketing and other communication needs.
- **Photo Library:** Peter Gillespie reported that the intern discussed at the last meeting had fallen through. There had been a misunderstanding over compensation, and the intern decided not to accept the project upon finding out that it was essentially a volunteer project. In the mean time, Mr. Gillespie borrowed and copied 50 discs of digital photographs from Lois Clark. There are currently no alternate plans for cataloguing these photographs.
- **Revised Visitor Survey:** Peter Gillespie reported that the visitor survey form had been revised per previous meeting comments, and is now printed and ready for distribution and use.
- **Tourism DVD:** This item tabled until next meeting.

New Business:

- **Farmers Market:** Jenna Delay said that she is working on adding a farmer's market to several Town events, starting with the Cornfest. She has some state guidance to follow, and said there is state and federal grant money available that she will pursue. She has a meeting scheduled with Charlie Hart, of Hart Seed Company, and is planning meetings with the other farm owners in Town. There is also supporting interest on the part of some of the schools and the EDIC.
- **Restaurant menu advertising - Convention Center:** Peter Gillespie said that there was a meeting with the GHCVB, about placing restaurant menu information in the hotel rooms. Charlie Forsdick is assembling this menu information.

Completed Items/Tasks:

Correspondence: None.

Next Meeting Date: July 29, 2008 at 5:30 PM, Town Hall Conference Room #1.

Call to Adjourn: Elaine St. Onge motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:52 p.m., Katie Sullivan seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan
Commission Recording Secretary