

WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION
Meeting: Tuesday, August 26, 2008 at 5:30 p.m.
Town Hall Conference Room #1
MINUTES

DRAFT FROM RECORDING SECRETARY

Review and/or edit needed where highlighted in yellow

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chair Charlie Forsdick.

Roll Call/Attendance: Members in attendance: Charlie Forsdick, Chair; Carol Hall, Geraldine Munroe, Elaine St. Onge, Katie Sullivan and Chris Traczyk. Also in attendance: Peter Gillespie, Town Planner/Economic Development Manager.

Members absent: Jenna Delay, Charles Ford, Tony Homicki

Public Comments: None

Approval of Minutes: July 29, 2008 - Charlie Forsdick asked if there were corrections needed for the draft minutes. Several clarifications were requested. Chris Traczyk made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as amended, Elaine St. Onge seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.

Announcements/ Introductions: Charlie Forsdick announced:

- Shireen Aforismo, from the Silas W. Robbins House, has been appointed as member of the Tourism Commission.
- There has been a personnel change at Pita Communications. The new person reportedly has experience with history-based tourism. A meeting will be scheduled soon to meet the new staff person.

Reports:

- Central CT Culture & Tourism Commission – Geraldine Munroe said that people have been asking how to get information onto the town website's calendar of events. Charlie Forsdick said to have anyone interested contact Jenna Delay, and she will get it placed on the calendar.

Geraldine Munroe also said that she missed a meeting of the Hollywood East Task Force because she was not notified by the State Film Commission. Charlie Forsdick asked Ms. Munroe to alert the State Film Commission and Representative Amann's Office about the miscommunication. He requested

that she convey that the Town, not the Tourism Commission, is interested in participating in the Task Force.

- Economic Development and Improvement Commission – Peter Gillespie said that plans are progressing on the Wethersfield Salute to Business event, and that the Tourism Commission may make nominations for awards. He said that the awards criteria are things like a new tourism-related business, or something done to significantly affect tourism. Mr. Gillespie also said that Betty Rosania is no longer the Chair of EDIC, and that Howard Greenblatt will be the next Chair.
- GHC&VB, Potential Events - Carol Hall said that she was unable to get an updated calendar for the meeting, and would follow-up to see why she could not get one.
- Grant Funding
 - Preserve America – Status: Peter Gillespie said that the grant will be presented to the Town Council on September 2nd. He encouraged Tourism members to attend the Council meeting.
 - * Marketing Grant – Status: Peter Gillespie said that the grant award criteria requires submitting information about the consultant the Town plans to use. He thinks that a Request for Proposal process will not be needed, because submitting the names of 3 candidates is consistent with the State process. In the mean time, he will work on setting a tentative meeting date with the stakeholders.
 - * Way-finding & Gateway signage – Peter Gillespie said that, assuming the Town Council approves accepting the grant, he recommends reassembling the same signage subcommittee as before. He and Chris Traczyk will work on reactivating that subcommittee.
- 375th Anniversary Committee – Chris Traczyk said that there were no updates to report.
- Budget Status, 2008 – 09: Peter Gillespie said that there have been no significant Tourism expenditures to report.
- Event Calendar – Update: Jenna Delay said that she added a new function to the information request form on the website. That is, the ability to say in which magazine the requester found the ad that prompted their request.
- Tourism e-mail listserv: Chris Traczyk said that she is trying to set-up a listserv by using the “Yahoo Groups” feature on the Yahoo website. She needs to have the Tourism members respond to an e-mail invitation she sent through the Yahoo Groups. Their responses will confirm and connect them as participants in this listserv group.
- Monthly Report – Charlie Forsdick said that his goal is to get the report data to the Town Council within 2 weeks of the end of the previous month. So far, most of the stakeholders have not submitted their questionnaires.
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Old Business:

- * Brochure – Reprinting: Peter Gillespie said that the printing remains tabled due to the lack of funding.
- Fall Weekend (Scavenger/Mystery Hunt): Chris Traczyk said that there was no progress to report.
- Farmers Market – New event: Jenna Delay said that she obtained a list of contacts from Rae Anne Palmer, and she is meeting with Doug Sacks. She also said that more members on this subcommittee are welcome.
- Greeter Book – Update: Kate Sullivan said that the books are done. Some updates are already needed, such as adding new restaurants and removing the old ones. She will be making those corrections and getting them out to the bed and breakfasts, the Historical Society, and elsewhere.
- * Horse & Carriage Ride Schedule: Peter Gillespie said that he is working on an ad with Pita Communications to include all of the dates scheduled. Charlie Ford said that he would check with the Wethersfield Shopkeepers to see if they are interested in piggy-backing on this ad.
- Tourism DVD – Footage and still collection: Gerry Munroe recommended inviting Paul Mayer to the next meeting to discuss the kinds of information he is looking for. Chris Traczyk said she will copy the Town's large collection of electronic picture files onto flash drives for quick copying. She will then review the pictures and identify the best ones to use. She will also check with Rick Garry to see if Wethersfield Public Access TV has video clips that can be used.
- Visitor Survey – Improved distribution & collection: Peter Gillespie said that there has been a good response so far.
- Winter Holiday (Door Decorating Contest): Charlie Forsdick said that he checked with the Village Improvement Association about sponsoring the event, but they declined. He said he needs recommendations for groups that could potentially take over this event.
- Staycation update: Katie Sullivan said that there has been very little use of the coupons, but a fair number of people came to Wethersfield in response to the flyer. Charlie Forsdick said that the number of hits on the website has increased, but there is little way to know if it is the result of Staycation, the billboard ads, or another source.

New Business:

- Free advertising in New York Times: Charlie Forsdick said he learned of this new opportunity, and asked the members if something like the Staycation offer could be used. Katie Sullivan said that she would check with the merchants to see if they would want to continue the promotion past the current ending date of September 1st.
- Yankee Magazine article: Peter Gillespie reported that there is a very nice article about Wethersfield in the latest issue.

- Annual Report: Charlie Forsdick said that he has distributed the final draft to the members. Peter Gillespie and Charlie Forsdick will decide on a few pictures to add. Charlie Forsdick said that he asked Pita Communications for some help with the report, and they said it would cost \$1,600. He ended up doing it himself and created a template for future reports.
- Walkers: Elaine St. Onge said that the Volksmarch walkers are coming to the Historical Society Saturday, October 4th to attend the Craft Fair.

Follow-Up Items:

- Monthly Report response
- DVD progress
- Photo library cataloguing

Correspondence: None.

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

Call to Adjourn: Chris Traczyk motioned to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m., Katie Sullivan seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan
Commission Recording Secretary