

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

WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION
Meeting: Tuesday, March 27, 2007 5:30 PM
Town Manager's Conference Room
MINUTES

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m. by Acting Chair Chris Traczyk.

Attendance - Members in attendance: Acting Chair Chris Traczyk, Anne Kuckro, Elaine St. Onge, Joan Hughes, Paul Montinieri, Charlie Ford, Charlie Forsdick (via phone), Ken Sokolowski and Gerry Munroe.

Public Comments - None.

Approval of [Minutes - February Meeting](#) - The following amendments were made to the February Minutes:

Page 1 - Approval of January Minutes - Amended the spelling of "Lois Clark" to "Lois Clarke"

Page 2 - The CTM discussion was amended to read the following:

- a. The Wethersfield Tourism Commission does not currently have a contract to advertise with CTM. CTM representatives proposed a combined contract for brochure distribution with advertisement in CTM's marketing brochures that offered a significant discount to us.
- b. CTM should reference "Wethersfield" as a Tourist Destination in its "What to Do in CT" Brochure.
- c. Charlie Forsdick, not Charlie Ford, made a Motion that the Town of Wethersfield negotiate a new contract with CTM that includes advertising.

Page 2 - End of Budget Discussion: Charlie Forsdick, not Charlie Ford, inquired about funds for Convention Center leaflets.

Page 2 - Trolley Bus Discussion: Paul Montinieri spoke to Tom Bascetta from AA Transportation - not AA Bus.

Page 3 - Member Vacancy Discussion:

- a. Webb Deane Stevens was misspelled.
- b. Charlie Forsdick, not Charlie Ford, mentioned Berlin Turnpike shopkeepers need a representative.
- c. Peter Gillespie spoke to Bob Yandow about Berlin Turnpike Representation.

Page 3 - GHVCB amended to Greater Hartford Visitors & Convention Bureau

Page 3 - Marketing Assistance Discussion:

- a. Webb Deane Stevens misspelled.
- b. Charlie Forsdick asked for Demographic Survey results not democratic.

Page 4 - Guide to Towns amended to Hartford Courant Guide to Towns, Annual Supplement

Page 4 - Ken Sokolowski's comments amended to state that the Hartford Courant Guide to Towns has an inappropriate amount of information regarding trash collection in the Wethersfield section of the guide.

Page 4 - Discussion of the Hartford Courant Guide to Towns should include information on "Historic Wethersfield", Trolley Bus, and various other tourism opportunities.

Motion made for the Approval with the Minutes as Amended made by Elaine St. Onge, Seconded by Ken Sokolowski. Minutes, as amended, were approved unanimously.

Announcements/Introductions - None

REPORTS:

Meetings with River Valley Tourism District

Chris Traczyk attended 2 meetings with the Central Connecticut Regional Tourism District aka River Valley Tourism District and distributed notes to the Commission regarding suggestions and focus items.

Five main areas were discussed: Brand Identity, Advertising, Hosting Special Groups, Tour Packages, and Tour Ideas.

- Brand Identity: there should be consistency amongst all brochures, advertising, and rack cards.
- Advertising:
 - The Trolley should be advertised on the website and rack cards in the promo kit.
 - There should be a master calendar with all Town events synced for information and promotional purposes.
 - 30 second /60 second video should be included in Promo Kit and placed on website. Paul Mayer from the district has offered to take pictures and make the video for the promotional materials.
 - Peter Gillespie to follow up with CT Film Office
 - Packages sent to corporations should include advertising for off-site convention events highlighting different meeting locations that have regional appeal and flare.
- Hosting Special Groups:
 - Effort should be made to attract groups and create tourism packages for "special interests" like gardeners; travel writers; architecture buffs, etc.
 - Tourism Board Members discussed participation in the international Fam Tour scheduled for the fall as well as participation in the 25th Discover New England Fam Tour - which is to be coordinated with Central Connecticut Region Tourism District. - Anne, Elaine and Charlie will coordinate putting together a 1/2 day visit for fam tours that we can propose to the River valley Tourism District.
- Tour Packages:
 - Packages centered around special interests
 - Tie different tours in with regional events
- Tour Ideas:
 - Build on Seed heritage; Mystery Tour, Dinner Lunch Tour
 - Bring in rentals: bikes, canoes, kayaks on weekends- Gerry Munroe will speak to Cabelas representative about potential on site presence at the Wethersfield Cove on select weekends.

Convention Center:

- Paul Gillespie to follow up with Arlene Edwards and Heather in order to track upcoming events and

send promo packages.

Civic Center:

- Peter Gillespie to follow up with Civic Center staff to coordinate Wethersfield attractions as additional offerings for Civic Center events.

Comments from Members regarding these Meetings:

Charlie Ford stated that there should be a shopkeeper presence at these meetings because the types of ideas discussed seem to involve shopkeeper participation. He expressed concern that suggestions would not be presented in a timely fashion allowing them to take advantage of the opportunities.

Paul Montinieri discussed the idea of assigning ambassadors from the various groups (ie: Shopkeepers, Historical district representatives, etc.) to share resources and ideas at future meetings. He also inquired as to whether a thank you note was sent to the River Valley Tourism District to thank them for their time and consideration. Chris Traczyk will follow up with the thank you letter.

Paul also suggested that there should be a sign of commitment from the Tourism Commission regarding the 1/2 day visit for the International fam Tour and the 25th Discover New England fam tour. A schedule of activities should be created before the next Tourism Commission Meeting on 4/24/07.

One of the concerns discussed with creating the 1/2 day visit was the rack card. Keiler was supposed to develop the rack card however the sample Keiler submitted was not attractive enough. Paul Montinieri and Chris Traczyk to follow up with Peter Gillespie regarding suggestions for the rack card.

Travelers Golf Tournament Package:

- Chris Traczyk sent a letter to the Tournament organizers regarding day tours and other tourism opportunities for the players' wives. Chris Traczyk will follow up with the organizers.

Grant Funding: (Anne Kuckro)

- Preserve America
 - Meeting on 3/21/07-held at Keeney. People from the Cove Park area attended although attendance was not high.
 - Items discussed:
 - If the Motor Vehicle Department left, what would the space be used for? Ideas such as open law space for fairs, festivals, out of town vendors, etc. were suggested.
 - Historic District: the appearance of all the parks should be consistent with the colors, benches, paths, etc.
 - 2nd Meeting was an open forum for anyone in the district. The meeting was relatively well attended.
 - Items discussed:
 - Various signage - vehicular, pedestrian should be updated.
 - Attractions - was there a sufficient amount of events to be a heritage destination.
 - Joe Hickey suggested that Wethersfield events tie in to Hartford events to cast a wider net of interests.
 - There were 3 towns selected as models for Wethersfield to take ideas from:
 - Essex, Connecticut, Newcastle, Delaware, and Madison, Indiana
 - The consultants asked several question about the types of businesses in Wethersfield such as : What type of business mix exists currently? Do shopkeepers/business

owners live in town or own property? There were no representatives from the Silas Deane Highway businesses in attendance.

- The consultants thought that the Comstock Ferre project was a good idea.
- Another Community Forum will be scheduled at the end of April to draw greater community participation. The forums will be better advertised in order to publicize this event.

Tourism DVD:

- Charlie Forsdick made a motion to ask Paul Mayer if he would be willing to create a 30 sec and 60 second video to mail out to potential visitors and to play on the website and what his costs would be. The motion was seconded by Anne Kuckro - All members were in favor of engaging Paul Mayor's services for the creation of the video. The vote was unanimous. Anne will get back to the Commission on his response including any costs.

Budget:

- Chris Traczyk announced the dates for the Budget meetings:
- 1st meeting: April 9, 2007 at the Nature Center from 5:30 -9:00 p.m.
- 2nd meeting: April 16, 2007 at the High School at 7:00 p.m.

Trolley Bus:

- Paul Montinieri drafted and distributed a brief description of Double A Charter Services.
- Paul suggested that pictures be taken of the bus as well as advertisements drafted for the shuttle.
- Paul stated that a rack card for the Trolley Buss will be created by Double A and distributed to interested groups. It was agreed a pdf. of the Trolley Bus rack card should be put on the tourism website

Member Vacancy:

- The Berlin Turnpike needs a representative on the Tourism Commission. Peter Gillespie spoke to Bob Yandow however Bob has not gotten back to Peter. Chris Traczyk will stop by Carmen Anthony's Restaurant to see if they are interested in serving on the commission.

Convention Center:

- Peter Gillespie will follow up with Arlene Edwards and Heather about tying into upcoming events.

Wethersfield Memorial Day Parade Committee:

- Members discussed Trolley Bus participation in the Memorial Day Parade. It was suggested that Tourism Commission Members should walk along the parade route with the Trolley Bus handing out tourism materials, seed packets, magnets, etc.
- Volunteers for the parade:
 - Ken Sokolowski
 - Chris Traczyk
 - Gerry Munroe
 - Charlie Forsdick
- Chris Traczyk will file the parade participation form with the Memorial Day Parade Committee.

Old Business:

- Elaine St. Onge contacted New England Calendar for the promo folder.

- New England Calendar stated there could be no more than 2 slots in the folder.
- New England Calendar suggested a 6 inch deep pocket fold up to stack brochures. This would increase the cost from what was originally allocated to this project.
- Elaine St. Onge to bring samples of each type of folder to Tourism Commission meeting on April 24, 2007.

Comstock Ferre Project

- Chris Traczyk suggested that the Tourism Commission discuss the project.
- Charlie Forsdick stated that the project has the potential to make Historic Wethersfield a more attractive destination.
- Elaine St. Onge stated that all the members of the Commission have not been privy to all the information and therefore as a Commission the members should refrain from making a decision on the particular plan.
- Elaine also stated that the shopkeepers decided to support the development of the retail project within the character of Historic Wethersfield. The shopkeepers support the development but not necessarily the particular plan in place.
- Anne Kuckro echoed that thought by stating that any endorsement of additional retail space be coupled with the caveat that the development must keep with the character of Historic Wethersfield.
- Chris Traczyk stated there was a Historic Design Committee hearing that evening (3/27/07) for the approval of the design of the Comstock Ferre Project.
- Charlie Forsdick made a motion that the Tourism Commission support the concept of retail and residential development for the Comstock Ferre site as long as the development remains in character with the rest of the Historical District.
 - Gerry Munroe seconded the motion
 - 6 members in favor, 1 member opposed, no abstentions.
 - Motion passed.
 - Chris Traczyk and Charlie Ford will attend the Historic Design Committee meeting on 3/27/07 to give the following statement on behalf of the Tourism Commission:

"At the Wethersfield Tourism Commission meeting, a motion was made and passed to support the concept of retail and residential development on the Comstock Ferre site. Our commitment to retain the character of the Historic District requires us to ask that this development be sensitive to the current character of the district as we know it."

At 6:55p.m. A motion to adjourn was made by Anne Kuckro and seconded by Elaine St. Onge. The vote of the membership showed all were in favor.

Next Meeting: April 24, 2007, 5:30 PM - Town Managers Conference Room

Respectfully Submitted

Megan Hickey
Recording Secretary