

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

WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION
Meeting: Tuesday, May 29, 2007 5:30 PM
Town Manager's Conference Room
MINUTES

Call to Order - The meeting was called to order at 5:38 p.m. by Chair Charlie Forsdick.

Attendance - Members in attendance: Chair Charlie Forsdick, Elaine St. Onge, Joan Hughes, Charlie Ford, Ken Sokolowski, Ellen Goldberg, Anne Kuckro and Gerry Munroe.

Public Comments - None.

Approval of [Minutes - April Meeting](#) -

Motion made for the Approval of the Minutes was made by Gerry Munroe, Seconded by Ken Sokolowski. A vote showed that the Minutes were approved unanimously.

Announcements/Introductions - Katie Blint, Communications Director for the Connecticut Convention Center attended this meeting. The membership terms of Ellen Goldberg, Charlie Ford, and Elaine St. Onge are up after the June 2007 meeting of the Tourism Commission. Charlie Ford and Elaine St. Onge will continue with the Commission. Ellen Goldberg will be stepping down after the June 2007 meeting. Webb Deane Stevens has appointed Katie Sullivan as their representative on the Tourism Commission. Charlie Ford, Elaine St. Onge and Katie Sullivan must send their acceptances of their terms in writing to the Town Manager. The position of Part-Time Recording Secretary for the Tourism Commission is open as of the June 2007 meeting.

REPORTS:

Convention Center:

Katie Blint, Director of Communications for the Connecticut Convention Center. She commended Wethersfield on its commitment to tourism and economic development. Ms. Blint discussed Hartford's tourism potential and the Connecticut Convention Center at length. The Convention Center's focus has shifted from quantity of events to quality. It would like to focus its efforts on the economic impact on the area. This means that there may be fewer events but the events would be longer in duration so as to familiarize people with the Greater Hartford community. Ms. Blint stated that the Convention Center has taken advantage of some of the free transportation that is offered in Hartford; such as the Star Shuttle, Red & Green Lines, and the UTC sponsored Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus (this service is not in operation as of this date).

Gerry Munroe and Charlie Forsdick asked Ms. Blint what marketing advice she would give Wethersfield. Ms. Blint suggested that Wethersfield start with a theme, for example: History, and work from there. Gerry Munroe suggested maybe the Purple Onion and all the ideas associated with that. Katie Blint also suggested that the Tourism Commission contact Arlene Edwards, in charge of Convention Services, and update her on all of the Wethersfield Town Events so as to keep Wethersfield fresh on the Event Planners' minds. Katie Blint also advised that Wethersfield be consistent with their message so that people recognize it and come to know it as it is associated with Wethersfield.

Katie suggested that advertising in the Convention Center would be beneficial as many groups would be exposed to it.

All the members thanked Katie for her input and her time.

Ad Placement

Elaine St. Onge reported on AAA and the CT Motor Club. Elaine had the rate card for AAA Journeys. There was a discussion on the pricing which depended on the color and the size of the ad. Elaine reported that CT Motor Club only advertise groups that partner with them. They advised Elaine to talk to AAA in Hartford. The ad that was discussed in relation to these opportunities would be in AAA Journeys. 1/12 page ad in black and white was \$1,700.00. The members decided not to go forward with an ad in either AAA or CT Motor Club.

Discussion then went back to the 2008 Guest Guide that was discussed in the April Meeting. It was reiterated that this opportunity was not the best idea because by the time potential tourists saw it, it would be too late in relation to their itineraries.

The membership then discussed the advertisement in the Greater Hartford Visitor's Guide. As part of this discussion the members decided that it might be prudent to order a larger ad in this brochure.

A motion to encumber funds from the 2006 - 2007 Budget to place an ad in the Greater Hartford Visitor's Guide was made by Anne Kuckro. Gerry Munroe seconded the motion. There was a discussion among the members that all the businesses in town should intensify their efforts to find out why people came to Wethersfield. It was stated that the survey cards are being used and that the Shopkeepers are trying to gather this type of information. A vote showed that all the members were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

Promotional Folder

Elaine St. Onge brought a prototype of the folder to be used as the Promotional Package. It was a regular size folder with 6 inch pockets on the inside. The right side of the folder had 2 stacking slots for reading material. The left side had one 6 inch slot. An order of 250 would be \$3.81 each or \$952.50. This amount exceeds the funds that were originally allotted for this cost. Anne Kuckro made a motion to order these custom pocket folders with the Wethersfield Tourism logo. Joan Hughes seconded the motion. A vote of the membership showed that all were in favor.

Horse and Carriage

The State of CT has money available in grant form and offered it to Wethersfield for the purposes of administering a horse and carriage ride event. There was an article regarding this idea in the Hartford Courant. Unfortunately the article contained a great deal of misinformation. Wethersfield has not applied for the grant as of yet. The Town Council must approve the idea first and then the idea must go before the Town Manager in order to get the requirements and restrictions that would be involved in such an event. Peter Gillespie suggests that a subcommittee be formed. Gerry Munroe, Joan Hughes, Anne Kuckro and Elaine St. Onge all volunteered for this subcommittee. At the next meeting, the application should be reviewed and the membership will discuss how to move forward.

Central Regional Tourism District

Wethersfield Tourism Commission was awarded the Tourism Economic Development Award. It was awarded because of the effort and communication that Wethersfield Tourism Commission has put forth. The members discussed ways of improving upon their efforts. There was a discussion that a subcommittee be formed to create a tourism package that the Commission could offer consistently. This discussion was tabled due to time constraints until the June 2007 meeting by Chair Charlie Forsdick.

2007-2008 Budget

Peter Gillespie discussed the budget that was approved for 2007/2008. Total funds allocated to the Tourism Commission are \$36,500.00. The only caveat to these funds is that the advertising budget for print ads will be shared with EDIC - this was in the amount of \$17,000.00. The budget was increased significantly over last year. Charlie Forsdick moves to formally thank the Town Council, Town Manager and Budget Committee for their support of the Tourism Commission and recognition of its efforts. Ken Sokolowski seconded that motion. A vote of the membership

showed all were in favor.

Trolley Information

Contained in the Agenda was a copy of the Trolley promotional letter as drafted by Chris Traczyk. This ad and information on the Trolley should be placed on the website ASAP. The only amendment to the letter is that the email address should read "peter.gillespie@wethersfieldct.com for.." - a space should be added between the email address and the rest of the sentence.

AOPA

Mayor Adil wrote a Welcome Letter to be sent to the group participating in this conference at the Convention Center. There was a typo in line 5 of the letter - "please take a few minutes.." This should be used as a basis letter that can be sent out to any groups visiting the Greater Hartford Area and more specifically the Convention Center. Anne Kuckro volunteered to review this letter for the Mayor and edit it accordingly.

At 7:25 p.m. A motion to adjourn was made by Elaine St. Onge and seconded by Anne Kuckro. The vote of the membership showed all were in favor.

Next Meeting: June 26, 2007, 5:30 PM - Town Managers Conference Room

Respectfully Submitted

Megan Hickey
Recording Secretary