

WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION
Meeting: Tuesday, June 26, 2007 at 5:30 p.m.
Town Manager's Conference Room
MINUTES

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:35 p.m. by Charlie Forsdick, Chair.

Roll Call/Attendance: Members in attendance: Charlie Forsdick, Chair, Charles Ford, Joan Hughes, Anne Kuckro, Gerry Munroe, and Elaine St. Onge. Also in attendance: Andrew Adil, Mayor, and Peter Gillespie, Town Planner/Economic Development Manager. Members absent: Ellen Goldberg, Chris Traczyk and Ken Sokolowski.

Public Comments: None. One member of the public present: Katie Sullivan, Tourism Commission member nominee.

Approval of Minutes: May Meeting - Charlie Forsdick asked if there were corrections needed for [the May minutes](#). The motion to order custom pocket folders was corrected to include "500" folders. Gerry Munroe made a motion to approve the meeting minutes as corrected, Joan Hughes seconded the motion and the vote showed all members in favor.

Announcements/ Introductions: Charlie Forsdick made three announcements:

- Katie Sullivan was present and has been nominated to become a new Commission member starting with the July meeting. She will replace Ellen Goldberg as the representative from the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum. Katie Sullivan said that she would be on vacation during the July meeting, but would be present for the August meeting.
- Commission member Ken Sokolowski had submitted a letter of resignation, effective immediately. Charlie Forsdick asked if any action is needed to accept the resignation. Peter Gillespie said that no action by the Commission is needed, and that a letter of request for a new representative has already been sent to the Chamber of Commerce. Gerry Munroe recommended that the next representative be someone with an interest in tourism. Peter Gillespie said that the representative from the Chamber of Commerce has usually been someone from a hotel or restaurant business.
- A new secretary began taking minutes for the Commission at tonight's meeting - Kevin Sullivan.

Reports:

- **Grant Funding:** Preserve America grant status - Charlie Forsdick said that the public forum last week was well-attended, with approximately 100 attendees. The draft proposal included a recommendation for John Milner Associates, Inc to come back to the September / October meeting with more detailed recommendations. There was also discussion of how to implement the recommendation to expand the Town's effort put into tourism. Peter Gillespie said that the consultant wants to see sufficient Commission membership to successfully carry out the goals. Charlie Forsdick said that the membership could and should extend beyond including the membership of the Tourism Commission. Anne Kuckro added that the draft proposal was 62 pages long, and appeared to be well written so far, including the history section. Charles Ford noted that the history section is very important, and asked if copies of the draft chapters could be distributed to the Commission members.
- Mayor Adil arrived at 5:50 p.m. and asked if there were any questions for him. Anne Kuckro said that she had received an e-mail from Doug Shipman with a recommendation that a steering committee be formed to plan a celebration for the for the Town's 375th anniversary in 2009. Such a committee would include members from inside and outside the Tourism Commission.
- **Horse and Carriage Ride Grant:** Mayor Adil said that he met earlier that day with Town Manager Therrien about the grant. She is drafting a request for proposal for a driver and/or guide that would get town history

training and would start the ride by the time of the Cornfest. Peter Gillespie said that he had received an e-mail complaint about cruelty to the horse involved in the ride.

- **Ad Placement:** discussion tabled until later in the meeting
- **Tourism DVD:** Anne Kuckro reported that Paul Mayer is willing to do the DVD, and will follow-up to see what are the next steps.
- **Promotion Kit:** Elaine St. Onge reported that the prototype pocket folder had been given to New England Calendar and is waiting for their review. Peter Gillespie said that there is money in the budget for the purchase so that is all set.

Old Business:

- **Trolley/Bus Promotion web page:** Charlie Forsdick said that a web page has been drafted. Peter Gillespie said that he planned to post it on the Town's website, as he was confident that it is ready, and changes can easily be made later, if needed.
- **Vacancy - Berlin Turnpike Businesses representative:** Charlie Forsdick said that no recommendations had been received.
- **Convention Center and GHCVB Marketing:** Charlie Forsdick said he is checking with the Convention Center's Communications Director to see how the Town can best get its information out.
- **Horse and Carriage Ride Grant:** Peter Gillespie reported that a lot of logistical details still needed to be worked out for the RFP, such as: parking, hours and days of operation, the route, etc. Charlie Forsdick asked if the Commission is responsible for developing these details, and if the grant allows the Town to charge for the rides. Peter Gillespie said that the Town Manager's office has a summer intern working on the logistical issues, and that the grant allows the town to charge for rides. He also said an example of logistical issues is if there is no guide, then the driver would have to collect the money from the riders if the town charged for the rides.
- **Event Calendar Coordinator:** Charlie Forsdick asked if there was progress on identifying the town staff that would maintain the calendar. Anne Kuckrow suggested that library staff may be a good match for this task, and Peter Gillespie said that he would inquire about that idea.

New Business:

- **Trolley:** Charlie Forsdick reported that Double A Transportation had not returned his calls about leasing the trolley if there is enough demand.
- **Free Promotion:** Charlie Forsdick said that he received an e-mail from the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. They offered to place an ad in one of their publications targeting New York - at no cost.
- **Promo Package:** Charlie Forsdick read aloud part of the ad used in a previous special promotional package. The package included a discount to the Best Western hotel and 4 passes to museums. He suggested that the same type of package be assembled again, and several members agreed that was a good idea.
- **CCT Award:** The Central Connecticut Regional Tourism District presented Wethersfield an award. Paul Montinieri, Charlie Forsdick, Anne Kuckrow and Gerry Munroe attended the ceremony and received many compliments on how the town is actively communicating and coordinating to promote tourism well more than most other towns.
- **Convention Center and GHCVB:** Anne Kuckro said that the town still needs a hand-out on sampler activities for visitors planning a full day in town. Peter Gillespie suggested that the Commission find out more about how the Convention Center's business processes work, so the town can maximize its coordination efforts and expenditures with them.
- **Photography:** Charlie Forsdick said the Commission's volunteer photographer can no longer do so, and asked if anyone knew a photographer. It was mentioned that Kevin Sullivan, the Commission's new secretary, is a

part-time photographer. Mr. Sullivan agreed to discuss the Commission's photographic needs with Peter Gillespie.

- **River Cruise Boat:** Charlie Forsdick reported that he had been contacted by a boat operator that has 49 passenger cruise boat that is capable of entering Wethersfield Cove. The operator wanted to know if there is a usable dock. Mr. Forsdick said he understood the dock is not stable and would not be usable for this purpose. Anne Kuckro said it this boat represents an interesting opportunity to bring visitors in by boat, and then link up to the bus. Charlie Forsdick suggested that a package could be assembled consisting of a boat cruise, bus tour, and lunch at a restaurant or maybe catered at the under-utilized warehouse. The key would be to seek a better dock.
- **Thank you letter:** Gerry Munroe said that she sent a letter to Katie Blint, Director of Communication at the Connecticut Convention Center, thanking her for attending the Commission's recent meeting.

Completed Items / Tasks:

- **Consultant Services - Tourism Assistance:** Peter Gillespie reported that the consultant is putting together a cost proposal that will need to be formalized. When it is ready he will involve the Commission. Anne Kuckro expressed concern that the consultant may recommend replacing the current logo, which she and others like very much. Peter Gillespie said that he believes there is no move to replace the logo.
- **What To Do CT 2007:** Mr. Gillespie said that he is in the process of contacting the publisher to be certain they have updated information about Wethersfield.

Reports: taking up the Ad Placement topic tabled earlier

- **Ad Placement:** Charlie Forsdick met earlier today with Town Manager Therrien and Economic Development and Improvement Commission Chair Betty Rosania, and Paul Montinieri. The meeting centered around the budget amount of \$17,000 to be shared between the Tourism Commission and EDIC. Mr. Forsdick said that he made a list of the publications the Commission had already planned to advertise in. The total cost for that exceeds the total \$17,000 budget, and more publications were being considered. He said that the Commission could possibly get more funding from the Town Council if something promising came up. However, the Commission needs to prioritize which publications to use assuming there would be no more funding. Charles Ford recommended comparing target audience information to help prioritize.

Charlie Forsdick recommended that the commission go through its list of choices and make the top priorities the publications already approved by the Commission. The consensus of the Commission discussion was agreement on the prioritizing the publications already approved. The next highest priorities according to consensus discussion were Connecticut Magazine, as they are good for attracting group tours, and the GHCVB. Charles Ford noted that group tours are good for museums, but not necessarily for shops and restaurants because groups don't have time to venture very far away from their transportation.

There was general disagreement among the Commission members.

Charlie Forsdick said that the GHCVB doesn't necessarily target groups, so there should be a good mix of group and individual audiences targeted by the priorities discussed tonight.

Other Business: Charlie Forsdick asked if there were any other issues to discuss. No other issues were raised.

Next Meeting Date: July 31, 2007 @ 5:30 p.m.

Correspondence: None.

Call to Adjourn: Elaine St. Onge motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 p.m., Gerry Munroe seconded the motion, and the vote showed all members in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kevin T. Sullivan
Recording Secretary