

Wethersfield Tourism Commission Meeting Minutes - April 27, 2004

Mr. Charles Forsdick reported that Chairperson Anne Kuckro would not be in attendance at tonight's meeting. Chairperson Kuckro asked Mr. Forsdick to chair the meeting in her absence. Mr. Forsdick called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Town Manager's conference room. Members present were Charles Forsdick, Paul Courchaine, George Bottini, Elaine St. Onge, Carol Adil and Charles Ford. Staff members present were Peter Gillespie, Town Planner and Kathleen Bagley, Director, Recreation and Parks Department.

1. Public Comments.

No public comments.

2. Approval of [Minutes - March 30, 2004](#).

Corrections to the minutes included the following: Paul Courchaine was not in attendance at the March meeting. The spelling of Mr. Bottini's last name was incorrect. It should be "Bottini." Also, Elaine St. Onge was missing an "e" at the end of "Elaine." Another correction was Item 5. The next meeting date is April 27 - not May 25, 2004. Mr. Bottini moved to approve the minutes with the corrections. The motion was seconded by Charles Ford and voted unanimously.

3. Strategic Plan.

Mr. Gillespie discussed with Commission members how to develop a process for the Strategic Plan. He suggested the Commission send out a "Request for Qualifications" to identify consultants for this project. Mr. Gillespie and Commission members talked about a goal of establishing a series of tourism development strategies that promote tourism, manage visitation and preserve assets. Mr. Ford asked Commission members if they have the money to undertake a Strategic Plan process. Mr. Forsdick reported that this item was asked for in the Commission's budget for 2004-05. Mr. Gillespie reported that included in the Economic Development Commission's Strategic Plan was an objective to develop a Tourism Plan for the Town of Wethersfield. Commission members talked about the availability of grant money to help in this process. Mr. Gillespie reported that a grant is available with a deadline of May 12 to ask for funds from the new State Tourism Commission for this project. Mr. Gillespie suggested having the town's grant person submit a grant application regarding this Strategic Plan process. A motion was made by Elaine St. Onge and seconded by George Bottini to request the town apply for this state grant money. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Gillespie reported that he will ask the grant person to look into this project. Commission members talked about their goals and objectives for the Commission. They would like to make Wethersfield recognized as a tourist attraction for the northeast region. Commission members discussed strategies for this Plan. They felt the strategies could include:

- a. Marketing.
- b. Coordinating programs.
- c. Visitor amenities.
- d. Support existing and future heritage attractions.
- e. Public process for consensus building.

Mrs. St. Onge suggested that the Tourism Commission handle the marketing and advertising for the events held in town. She felt the museums could plan the events and programs.

Mr. Forsdick asked for volunteers to serve on a sub-committee of the Commission to begin the process of the Strategic Plan. Commission members who volunteered included Elaine St. Onge, Charles Forsdick, Charles Ford and George Bottini. A suggestion was made to ask Anne Kuckro as Chairperson of the Commission to serve on this sub-committee. Charles Ford suggested we look at describing tourism as it is today. A handout was given to Commission members from Chairperson Kurcko discussing her preliminary thoughts on the Strategic Plan for Wethersfield. Also, Charles Forsdick distributed handouts of ideas and suggestions he put together for discussion

points during this process. Charles Forsdick suggested the sub-committee take this information and use it as a starting point for the beginning of the process.

4. Mr. Gillespie reported that the Wethersfield Chamber of Commerce will be opening their new office on May 14 and invited all Tourism Commission members to the opening at 10 a.m.
5. Marketing and Publicity Committee.

Commission members discussed the opportunity of creating a Marketing and Publicity Standing Committee of the Tourism Commission. Mr. Gillespie reported that he was supportive of this Committee and suggested it should also include representation from the Berlin Turnpike. Mr. Forsdick distributed a sample motion for this Committee to be created by the Tourism Commission. Commission members discussed the proposed motion and made some changes. A motion was then made by Charles Ford and seconded by Carol Adil. The motion is to create a Marketing and Publicity Standing Committee. This Committee will report directly to the Tourism Commission. Its charge will be to develop, implement and oversee a coordinated, ongoing marketing and publicity campaign representing the combined promotional interests of the Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, Wethersfield Historical Society, Wethersfield business community and the Wethersfield Tourism Commission consistent with the Strategic Plan.

The Committee membership will include, but not be limited to representation from the following: marketing representatives from Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum, Wethersfield Historical Society,

Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association, Silas Deane Highway business community, Heritage Partnership Committee, Tourism Commission, Berlin Turnpike business community and a resident of Old Wethersfield. This motion passed unanimously.

6. Report from Chairperson Anne Kuckro.

Her report to the Commission is attached to the minutes.

7. Mr. Bottini reported that he distributed a mailing of the Tourism folders to the bus tour operators from a list given to him from the state tourism office. He distributed copies of this tourism folder to members of the Commission. Commission members thought the information inside the folder was excellent.
8. Heritage Partnership Committee.

Mr. Forsdick reported on the actions of the Committee. He reported that the calendar is on schedule. The Greeter's Manual is up and being utilized in the different locations. He reported that the Program Committee is working to match up organizations with additional heritage attractions or events. The Partnership Committee anticipates a draft report of the wayfaring signs in town by the end of May.

9. Budget.

Mr. Forsdick reported that they are waiting to hear from Town Council as to what their budget appropriation will be for next year. He recommended that Commission members talk to Town Council members and ask them to look favorably on the Tourism Commission's request. Mr. Forsdick asked Ms. Bagley to determine the amount of money requested by the Town Manager in the budget for next year.

10. Distribution of Tourism Brochures.

Ms. Bagley reported that the May and June allotment of Tourism brochures were delivered to the distribution company and will be distributed per the contract for the months of May and June along the I-91 corridor. Mr. Forsdick asked for a status report from the distribution company on the amount of brochures distributed to the public. Ms. Bagley reported that she receives a report from the distribution company on a periodic basis. She will bring it to the Commission's attention when she receives the next report.

11. Adjournment.

Elaine St. Onge moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m. The motion was seconded by Charles Ford and voted unanimously.