

**WETHERSFIELD TOURISM COMMISSION**  
**Meeting: Tuesday, August 30, 2005 5:30 PM**  
**Town Manager's Conference Room**  
**Minutes**

1. Chairman Forsdick called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m.
2. Members in attendance: Chairman Charles Forsdick, Vice Chair Chris Traczyk, Anne Kuckro, Elaine St. Onge, Carol Bruce, Ellen Goldberg, Charlie Ford, Paul Montinieri. Also in attendance: Carmela Moore and Phil Santopietro - Chamber of Commerce - Peter Gillespie - Economic Development Manager, and Chris Shepard - Nature Center.
3. There was no one present from the public to speak.
4. Approval of Minutes - Elaine St. Onge motioned to approve [the minutes of the July meeting](#) with the following changes: change Earl Munroe to Geraldine Munroe; Carol Bruce was present; and under brochure distribution add a note that there is a 2 year supply of brochures to support distribution along the I-91 and I-95 corridors.
5. Announcements/Introductions: Chairman Forsdick welcomed Mr. Phil Santopietro, General Manager of the Best Western Camelot Inn to the Commission and noted that he will soon be appointed to the Commission. Mr. Santopietro will be the liason to the Chamber of Commerce.
6. Reports:

**Grant Funding** - Mr. Gillespie reported that the application for Preserve America designation was mailed out on August 25 by Rae Ann Palmer. Mr. Gillespie thanked everyone that had assisted with the grant information.

Mr. Forsdick noted that the Interpreting America's Historic Places grant deadline is September 16. Mr. Forsdick encouraged Mrs. Kuckro to meet with Ms. Palmer to discuss possible grant projects in time for the deadline.

**Marketing and Publicity Committee** - Elaine St. Onge reported that the Committee has asked that the Commission hold off on any specific marketing efforts until it is determined how to best serve those visitors that we presently have. Specifically the Committee suggested an information kiosk or improved signage program should be investigated with the limited funds that we have available. The need exists to get information to visitors after the normal hours of the museums and visitors center. Mr. Gillespie will research information on kiosks for the next meeting. Mrs. Kuckro suggested that the VIA may want to assist. Additionally the Committee suggested more local advertising and use of the Triple AAA publications.

Mrs. Bruce reported that she has been distributing the brochure rack to local businesses. Mrs. Bruce will add Peter Gillespie's phone number to the racks as the contact person for replacements.

Mrs. Goldberg reported that 500 brochures were distributed at the 5K race held last week.

Mrs. St. Onge also reported on the difficulties she is having with the production of the folders for the promo packets. The contact person has not been returning her calls. Ms. St. Onge will contact Brian Magee for other options. Mr. Ford questioned whether the promo packets are getting visitors into Town. Mr. Forsdick stated that the return may not be realized for 2 years.

Mrs. Bruce stated that the Chamber of Commerce has just come out with a nice color map of Wethersfield and the region supported by local businesses.

Mr. Forsdick asked Mr. Montinieri to work with Gerry Munroe and Destinations Connecticut and continue to

have involvement with the meeting planners.

Mr. Forsdick stated that the advertisement for the Hotel Guest Guide has been completed and is very eye catching. The Guide will be distributed to over 6,000 hotel rooms.

Nothing to report on the Tourism DVD. Lois Clarke has been very busy on other projects.

Mr. Forsdick stated that Barb Bellas is still working on compiling the list of all available tours in Town.

Ellen Goldberg reported that she has not been getting information from the event organizers in Town and is not sure what the criteria is for posting events. Mr. Forsdick stated that the events must be open to the public and the Heritage Partnership Committee had previously approved the criteria. It was suggested that the website be modified to include the ability to submit event information through the website. Chris Shepard suggested that the next time a letter goes out it should include information on how many hits the website receives each month. Mr. Gillespie stated that he has not gotten any inquiries from the website for 1-2 months. Ellen Goldberg will investigate what the problem might be.

**Strategic Plan Committee** - Mr. Forsdick reported that he did speak with Jim Murdy from Research and Resolutions regarding the termination of the contract for the Tourism Strategic Plan with R&R. It does not appear that they will contest the decision of the Commission. Mr. Gillespie will provide Mr. Murdy with the requested list of deficiencies found in the report. Mr. Gillespie will contact another firm to inquire about their ability to complete the project. The Commission members reiterated their need for a strong marketing component to the plan.

Mr. Ford expressed his position on the need for a better handle on who our visitor base presently is in terms of demographics. Additionally we should inquire about how they found out about the Town and what we can do to improve the visitor experience. Peter Gillespie will contact Jennifer Eifrig to determine what information is presently gathered on visitors and investigate how we could improve upon the information.

**Way-finding Signage** - Chris Traczyk reported that a meeting was held with the Mayor and Town Manager and support was received regarding the concept. A presentation would be made to the Council at a later date when more specific information is available on costs. Alternative funding sources need to be pursued given the limited local budget resources. A meeting is scheduled for mid September with the local stakeholders to begin the process of determining specific locations and sign details.

## 7. Old Business:

Budget 2005-2006 - Mr. Forsdick reported that the budget is in good shape.

Marketing & Publicity Committee Chairperson - Mr. Forsdick is talking to Dana Spicer about acting as the interim Chair of the Committee.

Vacancy, Chamber of Commerce Representative - Waiting for Council appointment of Mr. Santopietro.

Coop with EDIC - RFP - Marketing Services Agency - Mr. Gillespie reported that the EDIC Committee is meeting on Friday the 2nd and a joint meeting will be held shortly thereafter.

## 8. New Business:

Photo Library - Mr. Forsdick questioned whether the Commission needs to spend time compiling the various photos available for print and web site publications. The issue of appropriate credit being given to the various photographers was also discussed. Mr. Goldberg and Mr. Walsh have volunteered to start taking photographs this Fall for a photo library. Chris Traczyk will contact the school system to inquire if an intern might be available to help with the database work. Mr. Forsdick suggested that in the interim Mr. Gillespie's office should be the repository for all existing photographs.

Mr. Ford stated the Scarecrows on Main Street event will start on September 24 and will run for 3 weeks. This is the 10th anniversary of the event sponsored by the Old Wethersfield Shopkeepers Association.

Mr. Forsdick reminded the members that the next meeting will be held on September 27, 2005, 5:30 PM - Town Managers Conference Room.

9. Mr. Forsdick adjourned the meeting at 7:02 pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Peter D. Gillespie  
Economic Development Manager/Town Planner