Meeting Minutes 2/17/22

Members Present via Zoom: Jeff Gordon, Greg Sheldon, Julie Platt, Mairi Elliott, Joni Parker-Roach

Also present around 7pm: Judy Anderson

Greg Sheldon opens meeting 6:22pm

Discussed weekly schedule of meetings that will need to be arranged around once monthly meetings of Groton Business Association

G. Sheldon- Brings up that we have been invited a webinar held by MSA for instruction on writing Economic Grant applications on 3/4/22 at 9:30

**Motion: To approve meeting minutes from 2/9/22**

**2nd: Julie Platt- Joni Parker-Roach, Mairi Elliott approve, Greg Sheldon descents as he pointed out that minutes state Jeff Gordon was in attendance when in fact he was not, J. Gordon cannot vote as he was not present.**

J. Gordon- shows committee email with invite and sends link to all members to register for

M. Elliott- Brings up that in her research she discovered the Travel and Tourism Grant application for FY22 is March, 31 2022

G. Sheldon states we should make it a goal to have a first draft done by the first week of March, He will ask his connection in Sturbridge for a copy of their application to get us started.

**Agenda Item: Memo to Board re: Nipmuc Field**

G.Sheldon: spoke with Becky Pine and was told that she is running this past the Conservation commission as the Town recently put efforts in to renaming Surrenden Farm to General Field. She also stated that Nipmuc means of the water or near the water. She would like the commission to identify a parcel that would make more sense. There may be an area of Surrenden that has water and would be a good place for a memorial statue.

**Memo to other Committeees and Commissions:**

No responses yet.

**Agenda Item #3- Findings and Conclusions- GBA Report**

G. Sheldon: opens discussion on key points from report to the committee for input

J. Gordon states there is nothing to add

M. Elliott agrees, states it is a solid report that we should use as our guidelines

J. Gordon: Suggests that “Infrastructure” should include digital infrastructure development in the form of websites and being linked on prominent and pertinent sites, he suggests that that piece of it should be under a different umbrella that infrastructure because it needs to be an earlier goal than some of the bigger projects under the infrastructure umbrella

M. Elliott states that should really be under the marketing umbrella

J. Platt emphasizes again that we need to have a good inventory of available locations for new businesses to move to.

**Agenda Item #4- Strategic Management Plan**

**Short Term Initiatives**

**1)Job Description-** J. Parker-Roach states she has touched base but is playing email tag thus far with Stuart Ikeda of Concord for him to share their current job description of the same position in their town.

G. Sheldon states that same on his end with Alex Manoian of Ayer but that Mr. Manoian wants to be a strategic partner with us and will be sending Job Description and salary.

G.S will contact J. P-R when he has received, and they will put together a draft Job Description by next meeting Wednesday 2/23/22 at 6:15

**2) Advisory Group**

J. Parker- Roach adds that Rep. Harrington has officially accepted her new job as Court Magistrate and is getting a hold of her new schedule and could not attend this evening but is very willing to help in anyway that she can. She will try to schedule her at a future meeting.

G. Sheldon asked what she can do for us in her new position and if there are any restrictions on what she can advise

J. Parker-Roach states that Harrington is still a town resident and a wealth of knowledge on resources for us in navigating MA gov’t entities.

G.Sheldon asks when it would be best to schedule her in our meetings and if after the March 4th webinar on grant writing would be a good idea.

M. Elliott states that with the 3/31 Deadline for the Travel and Tourism Grant application the sooner we have advice on how to approach it the better and suggests that we have Ms. Harrington as soon as we can.

J. Parker-Roach will try to get her on the schedule in the next two weeks.

M.Elliott states that the grant is a top priority now as we want to get branding underway ASAP and a budget for that will ensure that we have a polished professional look

**Long Term Initiatives**

1. **Infrastructure-** J. Platt states nothing yet to report on this subject but that she and J.P-R have met and discussed ideas and are in research and development phase
2. **Commercial Growth**

G. Sheldon states we need to learn about the zoning issues involved in different areas of town. He also asks if there a list of commercial availability

J. Parker- Roach suggests/asks if there are incentives for new businesses that we can find sources for. She also points out the multitude of buildings in many different areas of the town.

Judy-adds that John Ameral has bought the Waters building and that the Deluxe building is an area for development

G.Sheldon asks if there is already a Town source for vacant buildings but if not we should do that work

M. Elliott states we should centralize the information on our website and the first source for a list will be the MLS

G.Sheldon asks sub committee to start inventory of vacancies

J. Gordon replies that Loopnet and MLS can help to make a list with then we can compare with Groton GIS maps and identify owners and then drive around to identify other non listed vacancies which are many.

G. Sheldon asks M. Elliott and J. Gordon to create and inventory of open buildings and J. Platt and J. Parker-Roach to create a list of business ideas that could match the available spaces

J. Platt had to leave for personal reasons

Judy states she gets much information from the sewer commission

J. Parker- Roach suggests we have more areas in our inventory

M. Elliott suggests adding inventory of West Groton, Mill Run area, Broadmeadow, and Shaw’s

G. Sheldon asks where we should start

J. Gordon suggests this is a large work load and the most impactful would be the Center of town. The challenge lies in matching spaces to types of business with zoning and sewer in mind.

J. Parker- Roach- suggests we can ask for other ideas of areas at Spring public forums

G.Sheldon- States we will start with Main St., Hollis St. and Station ave

He also encouraged committee to read town Overlay Plan. He will send link to members.

**3)Town Events**

G. Sheldon suggests we need a full inventory of Town events on an annual schedule

J. Parker-Roach talks about the owner at Periwinkle having great ideas on events and she could help brainstorm new ideas for town events

G. Sheldon remembers that he just learned of a new concert series being put on by Rollstone Bank

J. Gordon- Prescott will have many of these events centralized already

G. Sheldon charges sub committee with starting to create an annual calendar with all events

M. Elliott suggests the calendar be open for business and committees etc. to be able to add their events as they come up. Massive under taking to know when each business is have a sale event or gathering.

**4)Marketing**

G. Sheldon holds up New Visitor Center brochure and states it is very nicely done. We need to promote. He also brings up a recent video he watched produced by GrotonWood and states we should start and inventory of business videos

Judy- Suggests GrotonWood as a public forum site

G. Sheldon- states if we had an inventory of videos for each business in town we could market to niche interests i.e. Wedding, ecotourism, historical interests, golf, etc.

States we should get as all businesses to produce their own videos for submission

M. Elliott states that would alleviate the budget strain on our committee if we aren’t the ones producing the videos

J. Gordon urges that the need for a consistent look and professional execution is key and we should have some oversight in how the videos are produced. States he works with a great production company and he could try to negotiate a deal for participating businesses.

G. Sheldon asks about how many businesses in town and that we should send a letter to Groton business for participation once a deal is negotiated

J. Gordon states at least 50

G.Sheldon asks J. Gordon to reach out to Video producer and negotiate deal

J. Parker- Roach asks if we should schedule a visit on Around Town

M. Elliott- suggests a better time to do that would be closer to town Forums

G. Sheldon agrees with Elliott and they plan to be “prime time ready” by April for Around Town promotion of public forum events

**5) Finance-**

Reviewing- no specific updates

J. Gordon suggest that Cannie Sartini is a large resource for us

**Other Business**

G. Sheldon and J. Gordon tell us that they have been invited to view Earl Carter’s collection of Groton History

M. Elliott and J. Parker- Roach expressed their desire to attend as well but acknowledge Covid and will rely on their counterparts for a great report

G. Sheldon will inquire if more attending is possible

J. Gordon asks Judy if our goals are resonating with her as a resident

Judy states that yes she likes our goals and direction. She states we have many large goals and some that are a 10 year goal still need to start getting worked on sooner than later.

G. Sheldon states that Ayer has a meeting with Groton Hill Music center and we should as well.

G. Sheldon reiterates that next meeting will be held Wednesday 2/23/22 at 6:15pm.

Ends meeting at 8:16pm