**Destination Groton Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday March 15, 2022**

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

**Attendees: Judy Anderson**

**Agenda item A- Call meeting to order**

Meeting opened by Greg Sheldon at 6:20pm

**Agenda Item B- Approve/discuss minutes from 3/9/2022**

**MOTION: Made by Jeff Gordon to approve the minutes of 3/9/2022**

2nd by Julie Platt Roll Call vote: Greg Sheldon, Mairi Elliott, Jeff Gordon, Joni Parker- Roach, Julie Platt- **Unanimously Approved**

**Agenda Item C- Strategic initiatives- Short Term**

**David Wang Update-**

G. Sheldon summarizes extensive proposal sent by David and shows the mock up of a website he has started. He states that his entire scope of work is possibly too much to take on for us.

J. Platt asks if there is too much overlap with the existing Groton Visitor Center website and if there is a way to integrate the two. She suggests we do our own other website as the larger part of an Umbrella to the Visitor Center site, where we house regional links and businesses etc. more so than the vision for the GVC to stay Groton-centric.

J. Parker- Roach points out that the mock up is designed to be regional with multiple town links on it’s main page.

J. Platt brings up the need for continuous maintenance on such a large site and who would populate the information after David leaves for college or finishes the project. She also asks if we are running it how we would give access for business and local organizations to populate the Events Calendar themselves.

G. Sheldon asks how many current outlets we have in town that populate the same information. He also points out that J.P. is correct in concern over who does the work once David is gone and should we look at a different way to direct him could be to merge his ideas with the Groton Visitor Center website.

J. Platt states they have plans in place to build the site out more and having someone skilled like David would be very helpful to them.

G. Sheldon gets back to Joni Parker-Roach’s point about the mock up being built as a Regional Partnership site and that feels too broad for David to fully operate on a high level

He asks that we redirect David to working directly with the Visitor Center to help them create a more broad regional Calendar of events that regional partners could somehow access and use mutually to integrate across multiple communities.

J. Gordon states that many different places have many different platforms and getting regional partners on the same platform is too large of an undertaking.

J. Platt brings up again that the GVC is planning to do much of what David is proposing but they don’t have anyone to do it yet. This would be a great way for them to build it out with our goals in mind for a Calendar that Groton busineses, committees, etc can input into.

G. Sheldon states that we will guide David to help the GVC build out their website and to include a calendar with some way to access by individuals.

J. Gordon shows the GBA website and that it has a member log-in access page and that could eb a way for anyone to have access to input in the Town-wide Calendar.

J. Platt states she can talk with David further and focus him in on our goals. She also states this is a huge help to the GVC.

M. Elliott states the GBA site is a great model to work from for our purposes if we were to add non-profits and committees etc.

J. Platt states that the GVC does not intend to be as broad as that and not sure the non-profits and businesses have a place on the GVC site, however it does make sense for a Destination Groton site to house all things going on in Groton and beyond.

G. Sheldon states we will want to house our vertical videos somewhere and if not the GVC site where? And that we will create an Umbrella site for the GVC to be under.

Next step: M. Elliott will link J. Platt and David Wang to progress in this new direction for the GVC

**Upcoming meeting with Sheila Harrington and MOTT Executive Director**

J. Parker-Roach states they will be joining us via zoom at 7pm 3/23/22

G. Sheldon asks Joni to be sure they have had time to look at the GBA Destination Groton Report and Jeff Gordon’s video.

J. P-R will confirm they have received

G. Sheldon underscores the weight of the upcoming meeting and just how large the tourism industry is. He runs through his goals and opening remarks for the meeting. Intends to ask about what our “next steps” are to obtain Marketing Grants using Sturbridge as an example, Advice on using regional partnerships in applications. He asks the group to have relevant questions.

He brings up asking about other contacts that we could make through them i.e Juan Vega from the Executive office of Housing and Development

M. Elliott brings up asking about connections in the travel and tourism marketing industry i.e contacts at Chronicle or Tourism magazines.

G. Sheldon asks the committee to do research this week and come prepared

**Public Forums**

G. Sheldon-points out date of Town meeting is April 30 and is it a good idea to have a forum before or after it for higher attendance.

J. Platt suggests it may be wise to do one before TM and then advertise the rest at Town meeting. She also states that location would do well with a Sunday afternoon schedule.

J. Gordon states it may make sense to start all of them after town meeting and to advertise them all at town meeting.

J. Parker- Roach states that she would not be very available until the weekend of May 21/22 due to Son’s upcoming wedding in Groton.

G. Sheldon asks if spreading meetings that far apart would loose momentum for us.

Suggests doing them in shorter order makes sense to him.

Committee discussed multiple options of times and dates and settled on starting at **The Groton Center May 22. 2022 from 2-4pm; Groton Wood June 7th from 7-9pm; Prescott School June 12, 2022 from 2-4pm.**

**Slideshow Presentation**

G. Sheldon shows his work so far on powerpoint slides for our presentation

He states he would like to add a Challenges and Opportunities set of slides at the end that he has not included yet.

Committee all agree with the presentation

**Budget Request letter to Town Manager**

**Open discussion on draft letter-**

G. Sheldon confirms with Judy that we are asking for a “Line Item Transfer” for both FY22 and FY23- points out we only have 3 months left of FY22

M. Elliott asks why we would need so much for FY22 since we only have 3 months left

G. Sheldon points out that 5k of that is for a grant match and if we need to have a match set aside now is the time to ask.

He has cut number from 25 to 10 videos for committees

He also states he will add Farming, the Groton Center and Prescot to the categories of Vertical Videos which adds $ to bottom line- Agreed upon by committee

Refreshements- Will need to check with each venue what we can do.

Marketing- Smaller budget for FY22

J. Platt states she has a new contact for printing at the Technical High School and we could get a great deal doing it there.

J. Parker- Roach brings up that we will need supplies for World Café style including markers and table paper.

G. Sheldon will add $100 for materials.

FY23

G. Sheldon will add PCC, Groton Canter and farming to budget as well as $100 for a subsequent set of forums

**Agenda Item D- Strategic Initiatives- Long Term**

**Infrastructure**

**Identify specific infrastructure projects.**

**Lead: Julie and Joni**

Traffic volume, noise, congestion, speed, rotary

Parking on street, Trail sites, structured garage,

Sidewalks Town Center area

Signage directional, historic homes and sites

**Lead: Greg**

Transportation Shuttle bus to Ayer and Lowell train stations

Van and/or bicycles to attractions and trails

Powerlines bury lines on Main Street (Old Ayer Road – Champney St.)

G. Sheldon has begun making in-roads with key people towards the goal of burying powerlines. He believes we should meet with Tom Delaney as part of this discussion and will add him to the calendar for a future meeting.

**Commercial Growth- Lead J. Gordon, M. Elliott**

G. Sheldon asks for more ideas on what we want to bring to town and more info on available spaces beyond what is active on the market

**Town Events- Lead J. Parker- Roach, M. Elliott**

G. Sheldon states that when we look at future events already scheduled we need to find places to fill in with new events

**Marketing- Lead J. Parker- Roach, M. Elliott**

Two leads will have meeting over the next week to discuss drilling down on our marketing with Logo, slogan and website name ideas.

**Advisory Group- Lead J. Platt J. Parker- Roach**

G. Sheldon suggest we schedule a full in person meeting with our identified members of Advisory group in 3-4 weeks for us to brief and engage them

**Finance- Lead G. Sheldon and J. Platt**

J. Platt states she has created a spreadsheet of available MA grants and will have that forwarded to the group for review.

**Other Issues**

G Sheldon mentions that the history center is meeting tomorrow 3/16/2022 and Michelle Collett will be speaking on our behalf regarding the Earl Carter museum we are working towards brokering a deal to house the collection

He also mentions the oral history videos that have already been created and that we should be finding a way to market those

M Elliot suggests that we use those as part of the whole music that was discussed in last week's meeting

G. Sheldon brings up the historic Commission and the great resource of Bob deGroot and he would like to invite him to a meet at an upcoming meeting of ours to start understanding how we can create a National Historic registered properties in town

J. Platt states anybody taking that on is going to need passion and much encouragement to do so

G Sheldon brings up that the trails committee is discussing our committee at their next meeting and how to work with us so stay tuned for information coming from trails committee

G. Sheldon suggests we put together a regional partnership meeting in the next one to two months committee agrees Greg Sheldon mentions that the select board is starting the undertaking of a new Master Plan. It was last done 10 years ago and we should engage in the process especially considering that the trajectory is much different than it was then

J. Platt mentions that she saw on the Groton Facebook page that cherty site temple mentioned that they have 1000 a thousand visitors every week and that they have a screen upon entry that businesses can advertise, and we should look into that for advertising for our purposes

G. Sheldon mentions the Shanklin theatre as another destination much unheard of housing the original Wang theater Oregon

Judy mentions that the Shanklin theatre is on the town website under the Organ society

Greg Sheldon mentions the website name and that historic is the main theme we want to get across and that there are many Groton’s in the country but ours is the original Groton to the United States and that the Great road was created from people marching from Groton to Lexington

M. Elliott agrees we need to emphasize that and will brainstorm with J. Parker- Roach to come up with something historical yet internet searchable with an interesting “hook” to it.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm