

Destination Groton Committee Meeting Minutes

Wednesday April 6, 2022

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

Absent: Mairi Elliot Attendees: Judy Anderson, Patrick Parker-Roach

Agenda item A- Call meeting to order

Meeting opened by Greg Sheldon at 6:20pm

Agenda Item B- Approve/discuss minutes from 3/30/2022

CORRECTIONS: Judy Anderson corrected the spelling of names: Scott Wilson, Richard Chilcoat, Kevin Lindemer

Greg Sheldon corrected that Senator Cronin is Chair of the Tourism, Arts & Cultural Development

MOTION: Made by Joni Parker-Roach to approve the minutes of 3/30/2022

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

Agenda Item C: Strategic Initiatives:

1. **DEDC Job description:** Greg Sheldon reported there is not much of an update here from towns except that the salary range is \$70K - \$90K/year. This would be a town-funded position and it would not be addressed until Fiscal Year 2024.

2. **Earl Carter Museum:** Nothing new to report

3. **David Wang:** Julie Platt states that we need to hear from David if his grant was approved.

4. **FY22 Budget Spending Plan Discussion:** \$5000 on videos and \$10,000 on marketing?
Greg Sheldon: Would like a list of town events to publicize in order to prove that the Destination Groton Committee (DGC) is promoting tourism to Groton. For example: Groton Road Race?
JPlatt: Memorial Day Parade? JAnderson: Farmers Markets?

We should reach out and help promote events and maybe create videos.

JGordon: mused about can we use the \$15K from the town to pay for events past July 1, 2022

GSheldon: We need to figure out short term marketing strategy of events & timeline.

JParker-Roach: We could use the money for a 30 second advertisement on NPR

JGordon: What we need is more of an overall view of the infrastructure of the marketing.

JParker-Roach: Such as logo design

JGordon: A professional designer or marketing / branding consultant would help. We need to invest in a website, digital marketing.

JParker-Roach: Question: does the 15K we spend this year count as a tourism expense - which would help toward grant proposal?

GSheldon: Called the Grant manager at Mass. Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT) who stated money granted must be allotted toward attracting tourists.

JPlatt: Reminds everyone we are starting from scratch here.

GSheldon: Need to do research on what advertising on radio/paper, events and web tools cost.

JGordon: We have \$15K to use for other peoples benefits- where will the tangible proof be that we advertised?

GSheldon: Plans to call MOTT to clarify. In the meantime GSheldon asks *Jeff Gordon* to look into infrastructure costs for webpage etc., asks *Julie Platt* to look into upcoming events in Groton. Asks *Joni Parker-Roach* and *Mairi Elliott* to please determine a concrete idea of what advertising might cost: Local/Regional, Radio, Print, Social Media

JGordon: If the 15K cannot be used for advertising then we can make a professional promotion video with an overarching view/description of Groton and history/trails/ Music Center etc.

GSheldon: Ideated on the recent article in the Groton Herald newspaper that reported on the CPC grant for the 11K restoration of 3 portraits for the Groton History Center. The mission of the Groton History Ctr. Is to educate Groton residents and visitors to Groton about the town's history. Thus- the CPC might be thought of as a partner in DGC tourist mission due to grants awarded that might have helped the tourism aspect of Groton.

GSheldon wonders if certain CPC projects can be counted as "promoting tourism" in Groton, DGC might have more of a budget from the 15K voted for the DGC to use in FY2022 (which ends July 1). If not, we need to be creative and work within the 15K allotted.

JAnderson: How about the money from CPC for the First Parish Church projects?

JPlatt: Believes the money allotted needs to be from the current fiscal year.

GSheldon: Logo design is needed. Scott Wilson?

JGordon: Scott Wilson declined, too much to do at the moment for him.

JPlatt: Mentioned Kathleen Phelps who designed the Groton Visitor Center logo.

JParker-Roach: Mentioned Doug Patten might have connections/references.

JGordon: Scott Wilson welcomes a discussion with DGC regarding the Master Planning process.

JAnderson: Master Planning money needs to be allotted prior to planning.

GSheldon: Our Public Forums will help define the direction of the upcoming Master Plan.

GSheldon: Need a Marketing Plan for DGC written out in a list/spreadsheet/document

JGordon: Remember to include wider audience with #mylocalMA - MA Tourism Board, Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce and Regional Tourism Board- Johnny. Appleseed/North Central.

5. Advisory Group Meeting

GSheldon: List of proposed Local Advisory Group members - do we need to add any more people? Will draft a letter to invite these potential members to a meeting where we can describe what we are doing and ask if them if we can meet on a quarterly basis, and call upon them if we need their expertise on a certain matter.

JPlatt: Missing the Fire Chief, Police Chief

6. Meet with Regional Partners:

Determined that it makes the most sense to meet with Groton Advisory Board members and first and wait on a Regional meeting after the Public Forums.

7. Meet with Mark and Staff: Tom Delaney, Takashi Tada, Nik Gualco, IT person?

Determine needs of the town prior to developing a grant proposal to combine efforts/needs. Discuss the possibility of a DGC Trust or if potential grant money would be included in town funds with town oversight.

8. Meeting with Senator Cronin, Tuesday, 4/19, 9am @ Town Hall.

We need an agenda, presentation, and an ASK.

GSheldon: Has a call into Sturbridge to verify if their \$375K was a grant or earmarked funds. Also wonders if it makes sense to ask for money to be distributed in phases over a 3 year period to be able to create local partnerships with spending.

9. Pepperell Partnership meeting with SB Chair Margaret Scarsdale and Economic Staff

GSheldon: SB Chair Scarsdale requested to meet. She is also running for State Representative for our area. GSheldon will propose a meeting and if they are able to join us on Zoom or in person we will make it happen.

**For future meetings, GSheldon plans to post meetings that we will be in person starting 4/13/2022. For gatherings with special guests, a meeting will be posted with time/place and those of us who can attend are welcome, if not the group will report back during regular scheduled meetings.

10. Public Forums - Patrick Parker-Roach (PPR) joined for discussion

JGordon: Has a spreadsheet / priority list for the Public Forums.

Confirmed: Sunday, May 22 - Grotonwood 3-5pm

TBD: The Groton Center - Sunday, June 12 2-4pm Need confirmation

TBD: Prescott Community Ctr- Saturday, June 18, 3-5pm - Need confirmation

JParker-Roach: GELD mailings deadline is 4/13 for inclusion in May electric bill.

Fee is \$250.00

PPR: Visited Grotonwood with Joni and setup is perfect: Utilize the Main Dining Hall and 6ftx2ft tables that will seat 4 people each. 15 tables = 60 participants

DGC will supply water.

JGordon has a projector to help with slide deck and documentation.

GSheldon: Prescott Community Ctr. Forum will be Open Discussion and Pat Parker Roach will consolidate ideas prior to open discussion.

PPR: Has written Questions to present to participants with a tone of "Appreciative Inquiry".

Positive yet probing.

Question 1:

“There is one consistent comment that comes up in discussions regarding the inevitable changes that Groton will be experiencing in its ongoing evolution. People seem virtually unanimous in their desire to maintain Groton's character. Character can mean many different things to different people. At your tables talk amongst yourselves and capture those things about Groton's character that are important to you and need our attention as good stewards?”

Question 2:

“Knowing some of the changes coming to Groton with their challenges and opportunities, what are your ideas of how to preserve and build up those things about Groton's character that you love.”

PPR: Envisions a graphic recording template with a large gem in the center of the chart representing our "character" and during round one of feedback, gather the things we would love to preserve in a circle around the gem. Then continue building around the outside of the circle with the ideas to preserve and build upon our “character”.

GSheldon: Public Forums will engage all stakeholders in conversation to promote civic pride.

PPR: More brainstorming builds upon creative process.

GSheldon: Some of the ideas for Groton have been stated in the report but we are looking for transparency and community building. The biggest fear is the unknown and disrupting what Groton's special historic character. These forums will educate, engage and excite.

JPlatt: Has inquired with the town about the banner and time availability.

GSheldon: Start thinking of other ways to publicize Forums.

JGordon: Offers help from Groton Business Association.

JAnderson: There will be a May/June newsletter from The Groton Ctr to publicize.

JPlatt: Town website will also go a long way to help.

Discussion regarding budget for the Forums. Decor, materials, water. PPR suggested we name the Forums the “Destination Groton Cafes” vs. “World Cafes”. Needed also will be an additional note taker to aid in JParker-Roach's graphic recording method.

All: Thanks to Pat Parker-Roach for his guidance and enthusiasm and all are looking forward to Forums.

D. Strategic Initiatives - long term: Discussion

GSheldon: Contact has been made with Juan Vega, Associate Secretary of the EOHEd and “One Stop” program. Makes sense to meet with him after the visit with Senator Cronin and the team from the Town of Groton.

E. Other

1: Lisa Fiorentino from Groton Hills Music Center was present at the Selectboard meeting on 3/28/22. She expressed interest in meeting with DG team and tour the new facility.

2: Brief mention of the Google docs chart of potential grants created. By JPlatt. Various grants available. With different monetary amounts, need to focus on what makes sense for our purposes.

Motion to Adjourn meeting at 8:40 pm made by Julie Platt

2nd by Joni Parker- Roach

Unanimously approved by roll call vote: Greg Sheldon, Jeff Gordon, Joni Parker- Roach and Julie Platt