**Destination Groton Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Tuesday June 1, 2022**

**6:30 pm**

**First Floor Meeting Room- Town Hall**

**Present:** **Greg Sheldon, Jeff Gordon, Mairi Elliott, Joni Parker-Roach (arrived at 7pm)**

**Attendees: Judy Anderson**

**Agenda item 1- Call meeting to order**

**Meeting opened by Greg Sheldon at 6:30pm**

**Agenda Item 2- Approve Minutes from 5/18/2022 and 5/22/2022 – Item skipped for time- will vote next meeting.**

**Agenda Item 3- Branding Logo- Steve Harrington Discussion**

JParker-Roach was unable to secure a meeting with Mr. Harrington but was given a referral

**Agenda Item 4- Marketing budget review**

GSheldon opens discussion on spending the $15k that the committee has to spend on tourism dollars by June 30, 2022. He states our 3 main categories are Website/branding, videos and advertising

He mentions 3 events in June that we can focus on advertising for to include RiverFest, Juneteenth and Jeffery Boutwell visit on June 19.

Website-Sheldon asks committee to allocate a number for website development and branding, MElliott refers back to quote JGordon made in previous meeting of $7k. JGordon agrees that design, build and delivery can be done for that money.

GSheldon asks who the candidates are that we can interview for hire for web development.

JGordon mentions Alicia Green, a member of the GBA who he has spoken with about this project.

JParker-Roach joins conversation at 7pm to add that she has been referred by Steve and Sheila Harrington to a web developer that comes highly recommended named Deb Buckley. She would like to meet with us at next meeting to get a feel for the scope and design we are looking for.

Advertising- MElliott refers to an email sent to the committee from Action Unlimited a print publication inquiring about placing an ad with them. Discussion on what type of ad could be placed was had with committee members on either events or a more broad “Groton” theme. JGordon feels we should not be bolstering any one specific business with advertising that they already have a budget for. MElliott then shows committee a mock up design she made with Categories of “Eat, Play, Sleep and Groton” along with correlating photos. JGordon liked the simplicity of the ad and its reference points. Ultimately however, committee members decided that advertising now with no website means that they have no way to track the viewer ship and traffic we are driving to town. Priority is placed on website first, then advertising.

JGordon brings up Search engine optimization and facebook ads as a way to promote events and items of interest in Groton. He states that the web developer or a separate consultant can be hired to be an SEO consultant to boost our viewership online. He explains linking to a youtube channel for our videos to members of the committee.

GSheldon would like to offer our assistance to the Groton History Center in the form of advertising Boutwell visit. He hopes to engender goodwill between us to help us move the Earl Carter museum forward. MElliott will create a facebook ad for the history center on the Jeffery Boutwell visit. JParker-Roach will call (Liz Smith) at History center to ask if they would like us to advertise on our social media. She will get a photo or image to be used in the ad. JGordon reminds that facebook ads are not trackable to reach and impact on attendance and that we could Boost and Ad to Boston for approx. $200 and we would not have a good idea of our impact.

Judy Anderson Suggest creating an ad with a “Have you heard about what’s happening in Groton” theme. She emphasizes that it is not just “events” that draw people to Groton, it is the natural beauty. MElliott can create this and have it ready to go when we have website to link to. Ms. Anderson also brings up that a gentleman at our previous forum brought up that he is interested in investing in “something” in town and he may be a good contact to have in on conversations about Earl Carter Museum.

JParker-Roach mentions she spoke with Gail Chalmers regarding the building at Rivercourt and that perhaps that is a good option for the museum and perhaps the collection can be broken up and put in different places around town.

Discussion about next meeting time breaks out and JGordon cannot make either 6/8 and 6/15 meeting and MElliott cannot make 6/15 if held at 6:30 It is decided committee would like to interview web designer at next meeting. JGordon asks for a meeting prior to that to determine what we need out of our website so we can properly disclose to our potential designers at a subsequent meeting. Committee refers to schedules and come up with Monday at 5pm at JGordon’s office for discussion on website needs and then Friday the 17th for interviewing Designers at separate times. JGordon states that we should approach with what our needs are, have them make their proposals and then calibrate to fit a $7k budget.

GSheldon- That leaves us with $8k for photography and videos. JParker-Roach states she spent $5,700 on wedding photographs. JGordon emphasizes that we do not need a high-end photographer to start the website.

**Agenda Item 5- Public Forums**

MElliott reports that not all people signed-in either via QR or on paper but we do have some emails that we can send a thank you email to. She asked if she could send a thank you email to participants without needing review from committee. Sheldon agreed.

Elliott suggested that at next forum we have a person or a table at the entrance to capture all attendees. She will use QR and paper sign in but be at entrance of next two forums to greet and register people.

GSheldon asks MElliott to reach out to Ashely at Groton Center to distribute Public forum press release to the Center’s email list prior to next forum.

GSheldon then brings up the Groton Herald and the possibility of writing Letters to the Editor for the following weeks edition and asks if we should submit a formal letter form the committee or request Stakeholders to write letter and/or reviews of public forums. Committee members will reach out to those who have expressed support.

Slide presentation-committee agrees that slideshow was too long Sheldon will remove some slides and he points out a slight change to add one sentence to a slide committee agrees and approves

Questions

G Sheldon asks what committee thought of the questions and their outcomes. Committee agrees that the questions were too long and did not provide enough direction to be answered in the way they were hoping committee attempts to rewrite questions to be more direct. The committee has extensive discussion and reworks questions they agree that the first question should allow the participants to express their concerns about the challenges

Judy Anderson suggests that the challenges are known at this point and should be stated not asked in a question in question form. She believes that it is important to ask for solutions not problems

J Gordon suggests we should paint a vision of what the future of downtown could look like through our questions

Two new questions are reworked and will be added to next World Cafe format forum.

G Sheldon brings up the letter given to him by Jack Petropoulis at the time that he had from the time he was a select board member from Stephen Shepherd who did pro bono work on the economic impact of Groton hill music coming to town and to the region. The letter suggests that there will be $21 million in impact regionally and the question is posed to the committee how do we position ourselves to be the hub in the region of that $21 million impact. The committee considers that we have a small amount of commercial space and where would the potential revenue physically go in town and how do we best maximize that.

**Agenda Item 6- other issues**

GSheldon brings up the email that Julie Platt sent to the committee in her absence tonight regarding her and Joni Parker roaches meeting with Trisha Tompkins at the Groton Inn. They discovered that Groton Inn already has some internal questionnaires that they give to visitors that come but they are happy to work with us to develop some more that can specifically help us and we are open to finding ways that we can help them as well. Julie Platt and the Prescott school Community Center and the Groton Inn will be working more closely together to cross promote. The discussion around an internal Groton Inn television channel was had and what that could look like. Elliott suggests that our vertical videos could be played on this channel if it is on a loop at the Groton Inn.

Sheldon brings up the attachment to the agenda of the One North central plan that was provided to us by senator Cronin office. It is approx. a 130 page document with development plans for the region included. GSheldon suggests the committee take a look specifically at pages 100 through 124 as well as 135 through 137 these pages talk about destination towns within the region.

Sheldon brings up that Margaret Scarsdale of the Pepperell select board would like to meet with us in July or August he mentions that Pepperell recently received a $41,000 grant from the one stop.

GSheldon brings up a publication called scenic America in which he learned of a new $5 billion federal program to help beautify the country which would include burying power lines. The breakdown of that to Massachusetts is $4.6 million he would like us to look into accessing those funds for our town.

He would like to invite our state senators and congresspeople to a meeting to discuss how to access this money. Sheldon believes that gratins project is approximately $2 million for the one mile portion of burying power lines through the center of town.

GSheldon brings up that Lisa Fiorentino suggested her marketing team would be more available after May to meet and discuss Co-marketing plans together and Elliott will reach out to L Fiorentino to get a meeting scheduled.

MElliott brings up that Ashley Doucette of the Groton channel has invited our whole committee or one or two members of our committee to the Groton channel committee meeting upcoming to discuss how we can partner together and create sponsorships as the Groton channel is looking to increase their revenue. G Sheldon wonders if we should have our own show on the Groton channel with sponsorships included. Committee agrees this could be a good idea and will look into it and discuss at meeting with Groton channel.

Meeting adjourned 9:01pm.