**Destination Groton Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Sunday June 12, 2022**

**2-6pm**

**The Groton Center**

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

**Attendees: Judy Anderson, Patrick Parker-Roach**

**Agenda item 1- Public Forum**

**Agenda Item 2- Approve Minutes from 5/22/2022 and 6/1/2022-**

**Motion to approve minutes as amended**: made by Julie Platt, 2nd by Joni Parker-Roach

All Approved- Jeff Gordon, Mairi Elliott, Greg Sheldon, Julie Platt, Joni Parker-Roach

**Agenda Item 3- Public forum debrief**

Greg Sheldon opened discussion by asking the committee’s thoughts on what we had heard today and how to boil down the input and put it into the final presentation. JPlatt gets clarity from Sheldon on the order/format of final presentation. He states it will be a shortened presentation but it will include our findings from the first two forums.

Sheldon points out that he heard from several members of the audience who expressed concern over the town becoming a Destination and why are we promoting the Town.

Patrick Parker-Roach asks what our goal is for the next Forum

GSheldon states it is to present solutions and ideas as well as answer questions.

JPlatt expresses concern about answering questions and being accurate in our answers. Sheldon states we will be creating a report for the Town that will have accurate answers, by Fall Town Meeting. JPlatt wonders if we have a strategy for “surprise” questions that we are not able to answer. Sheldon suggests we capture the information of the person and turn the question to the Planning board or appropriate Town representative. JPlatt suggests for items we are unsure on to say that “We may not have all the answers today but we want to hear your concerns”. Sheldon states the concerns will be incorporated into our report.

Patrick Parker-Roach suggests we present the input we have gathered and what we think can/needs to be done. He suggests presenting plans for our future work.

Joni Parker-Roach asks if she should record peoples concerns and questions as she did for the world café format.

Committee decides a list written by Joni on large paper will be helpful.

Promotion of next event:

Committee will reach out to stakeholders for two separate letters of support to be written and placed in the Groton Herald.

GSheldon suggests each committee member make personal invites to last forum. He suggests we start with the list of contributors to the GBA report as well as members of the Finance committee.

Judy Anderson tells the committee that Fin Com is now looking out to projects 5 years in the future. She reminds that each committee and has it’s own goals and grant applications. She suggests we invite trails network members as well. GSheldon states again that we need to create an advisory group on Trails to go deeper into what we can do together. JGordon wonders if parking at Trail heads will ever be enough for the demand and how many parking spots at a trail head is enough? GSheldon again suggests an advisory committee on trails.

J Gordon starts talking about the presentation for the next public forum he states that we are not here to change but we are here to address improvements that will benefit the town. He prepares committee for the idea that there are people in town that do that want no change whatsoever he suggests that it's important that we get across that we are trying to get ahead of the problems and leverage the revenue to improve the lives of all stakeholders in town

Judy Anderson emphasizes the meals and room tax that is already being collected in town and we will see an increase in that with the revenue coming from Groton Hill music to reduce property tax burden. GSheldon states the current meals and room tax is approximately $350,000 per year and has a potential for doubling.

**Website, logo and branding**

Details of next meeting and discussion on interviewing and coordinating website designers to be interviewed at our next meeting are discussed. The committee discusses their expectations for our website and the functionality that they desire pointing to other similar destination town websites.

Johnny Parker Roach spoke with Deb Buckley and she will send info on how she works and can have a meeting with us next week. Jeff Gordon will contact Alicia green to schedule a meeting.

Julie Platt tells the committee that she spoke with Greg Sheldon about funding a position at Prescott Community Center as they were denied for the public funding for a summer intern. Craig Sheldon told her that our money is not accessible for this purpose as that is not tourism.

**Budget**

G Sheldon clarifies that we have spent only $475 of our $15,000 allotment to be spent before June 30th our website discussion needs to come quickly and with a contract to follow that we can commit to committee decides to meet on Wednesday June 15th from 3:00 to 5:00 PM in the meeting room at town hall they will have AJ the videographer at 3:15 Deb Buckley at 3:45 and Alicia green at 4:15 PM

Jeff Gordon emphasize is that we need to be able to instruct the designers on the needs of our website and that we should strategize around web growth MElliott suggests that we send current websites that we want to emulate as a starting point for conversation

Julie Platt asks how we streamline multiple websites in town and that we will not have government functionality on our website purposefully but want to maintain a streamlined functioning website.

Joni Parker-Rach suggested we tell them what we want within the categories that we work in for example: history, trails, fine dining, entertainment, ecotourism and equestrian.

G Sheldon wants to make sure we streamline multiple events and have a central calendar as it came up in public forum. Jeff Gordon suggest we choose a platform and individuals can add to the calendar without oversight from us.

Patrick Parker Roach suggest that maintenance graphics updates are all important things to discuss with the designers.

J Gordon states that conceptual functionality for the website will be drafted for the designers prior to our next meeting.

J Gordon and M Elliott agree that we contract for the website and logo first and then we fill in with the videographer the remainder of the 2022 fiscal year budget.

Greg Sheldon brings up that members of this Pepperell select board have approached us to meet and discuss our committee and how they can help as they just went through this over the last several years. He mentions that Pepperell recently received $47,000 grant from mass office of travel and tourism and he would like to pick their brain about how they got that.

On the subject of scheduling Julie Platt brings up that she is not in town for the month of August Jeff Gordon states he is gone for the 1st through the 8th of July committee decides to try to schedule Pepperrell select board members sometime in July.

G Sheldon tells the rest of the committee that was not present for the joint cable advisory committee meeting about our main takeaways from that meeting and he asks the committee to get creative on how we can utilize the Groton channel as well as create sponsorships and some revenue for them. He relates that programs can be pushed to other towns which is helpful when staying in contact with the 60 towns in the region that Groton hill music works with.

JPlatt suggests that the Groton inn could be great sponsors for the Groton channel and great partnership

MElliott suggests Kristi Bates president of Westford cable access Board, meet with Groton channel board as she has witnessed Westford cable access doing many fundraisers and finding ways to fill the cable revenue gap.

JGordon asks that if they are failing is it the best use of our time to put our efforts and to promoting it. The committee agrees that that is something to think about.

G Sheldon suggests a partnership with WGBH television undoing perhaps a pay-per-view or potential for music shows from Groton hill music.

Patrick Parker Roach suggests that we have two cameras for the next forum provided by the Groton channel for different points of view. Julie Platt will bring box fans to cool the rooms Mary Elliott will bring the PA system for sound Joni Parker-Roach will follow up with the Groton history center about Facebook ad placement for the Jeffrey Boutwell event happening on June 19th.

Committee discusses their summer schedule and decides to skip the month of August they will be in session the 2nd 3rd and 4th week of July and have a meeting June 29th after their last forum.

Meeting adjourned at 5:50pm.