**Destination Groton Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Wednesday June 15, 2022**

**3-5pm**

**First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall**

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

**Guests: AJ Pecukonis, Deb Buckley**

**Attendees: Judy Anderson**

**Meeting opened by Greg Sheldon at 3:08pm**

**Agenda item 1- skipped due to time, will approve at next meeting**

**Agenda Item 2-Discuss upcoming Public Forum- moved to later in agenda for guest interviews**

**Agenda Item 3: Marketing discussion: AJ Pecukonis, Deb Buckley**

JGordon starts meeting by informing GSheldon of what he has already informed Mr. Pecukonis of, as far as our videography needs.

Mr. Pecukonis asks if we have a monetary number in mind yet. JParker-Roach explains to him that our priority is the website build-out, JGordon goes on to explain that what we have left from that will be the budget, but to expect $300 per video times X to be the number we give him. JGordon then explains that he will connect with people on town committees and non-profits and will provide a list of our top approximately 20 choices. He suggests that we ask a set of pre-planned questions to them for a streamlined feel.

JParker-Roach brings up a commercial she recently saw about Nantucket and mentions a QR code on the screen. She suggests this style is something we can do with our videos.

GSheldon tells Mr. Pecukonis that he has seen some of his previous work. He states that his recent acquisition of a drone is important to us for plans we have with vertical videos. He tells him that he would like him to work in June, once contract is signed. He mentions that we have discussed getting 4-season shots of different locations around town for which Julie Platt and Mairi Elliott have created a master list.

MElliott inquires if our use of a drone in videos would increase his cost per video of $300 each. He states that he does not expect it to do so.

JGordon inivites Mr. Pecukonis to the Rollstone Concert series the following day at Town Field with Ronnie Earl performing.

JParker-Roach asks if we can incorporate still shots from a drone. The answer is yes, drones have the capability of still shots.

**Promotion:**

GSheldon asks if committee knows of anyone writing a letter of support. JParker-Roach will reach out to some stakeholders for a letter to be submitted before Tuesday of next week.

GSheldon is working to get an email invite sent to each committee head this week.

MElliott shares that the Groton COA will not email our invite to their private email list. JGordon confirms the same with another organization in town.

GSheldon moves on to the format for the final forum. He states that with the Q&A section all members should feel empowered to answer the questions along with him. He asks JParker-Roach if she has yet compiled the information gathered at the previous forums, as he believes it would be good to display at this one. Sheldon asks to have that completed before next meeting. JPlatt offers her help to get it done.

He then mentions that Prescott could yield us more of the young families than we’ve had thus far and we should find ways to market to them at the sports fields. MEliiott and JPlatt reveal that sports are over for the school year. JPlatt suggests MElliott post our Facebook invite on the GD parents page to engage that crowd.

The format and length of intro comes up and the video is then discussed as an option to take out. Judy Anderson adds that before playing video we need to state that was made a little while ago and some things in it are outdated already. JGordon asks what the point of the video is? GSheldon states that it is to set the mood for audience members and to engender town pride. JPlatt adds that people learn in many different ways and having a visual component is helpful for some. Committee agrees to keep video in presentation but to add a preface.

**Media:**

GSheldon confirms with MElliott that Groton Channel will be present. Yes.

Judy Anderson suggests that committee send report of forums to surrounding towns to make them aware of the work we are doing. GSheldon states that he plans for the committee to write a strategic report to present to Select Board in the Fall. He can also see reporting this information out to the Chamber of Commerce. Judy then suggests that her intention would be to have Sen. Cronin see that we are working regionally. Committee will think about this and come up with a plan for reporting findings.

**Interview with Deb Buckley:**

GSheldon welcomes Ms. Buckley and informs her of our mission and goals. He tells her of the many assets the Town has and that we want to capture and promote those.

Deb Buckley asks if this is really two campaigns, one for the town and one for the visitors. GSheldon states that we are mindful of resistance and our audience begins with residents and then moves out regionally and then expands from there. He states we will be considering making television commercials down the road.

JGordon brings up SEO and it being a key component. Ms. Buckley states there are many layers to a website. She is thinking of using long tail Keywords to drive traffic. She would do keyword matching and many layers of SEO.

JPlatt explains that there is a Visitor’s Center website that will be more Town focused and ours will be the umbrella site for not just the town, but the region. She also explains that this will not be the government website.

GSheldon then describes the items we would like to emphasize on the website, history being first and foremost and then moving to arts and culture, fine dining, conservation and trails.

Ms. Buckley asks if we need to monetize the site. Committee discusses and agrees that affiliates would like that capability. JParker-Roach explains the committee’s purpose and that we would not be taking in revenue, unless we do some fundraising at some point. Ms. Buckley suggests we should have that capability on our site.

MElliott tells Ms. Buckley that the feeling of being a “Quintessential New England Town” must come across on the website. GSheldon tells her that Groton Hill Music will be cross-promoting our events and happenings.

JGordon brings the idea of vendor packages that can be created on the website. Nights’ stay, along with dinner and flowers from local vendors, for example. He asks if they can be loaded via a third party. He also brings up a Master Calendar of events that individuals can load themselves. She asks if we would want to have oversight on that with approval abilities. Committee agrees it is needed. A centralized calendar is of vital importance.

JParker-Roach adds that we intend to have links to all local businesses and non-profits, as well as regional ones on our page. Ms. Buckley states that is helpful in the SEO dept.

JGordon states that he would like the committee to have the ability to modify the website as we grow. Ms. Buckley suggests we use wordpress to publish. JGordon states the challenge is then maintenance and the ability for it to be buildable.

GSheldon tells Ms. Buckley that our current budget is start up money and we are waiting on an answer from Sen. Cronin’s office on earmark money. She asks what we need from her by next week to get the ball rolling. GSheldon says a scope of work and quote built in phases. She asks when we want to be live and through some discussion, the committee agrees September, around the time of GHM opening would be the latest. She asks for a range that we are able to spend now and committee relates that it is between $6-8k.

Ms. Buckley then tells the committee her professional history and how she came to website design. She tells how she has worked with Steve Harrington and that is how she came to be with us, on his recommendation. She states she enjoys building brands.

She then asks the committee to do some “homework” and send her websites or logos that we like or don’t like as examples.

JGordon suggests that Joni and Deb be the point people on this.

GSheldon emphasizes that we are an over 300 year old community, but we need to also be modernized through our website. He tells her that branding, logo, and website are our top priorities.

Committee thanks Ms. Buckley for coming and she leaves meeting with intention to send over a proposal before next meeting.

**Forum Survey:**

GSheldon brings up that he has been asked by some stakeholders who were unable to attend first two forums how they can submit questions or comments to us. He asks the committee if we can make a survey form for people to fill out. MElliott suggest creating a Google form and posting to our webpage. She will do this and have it posted.

**Agenda Item 4: Set Summer Schedule**

June: 23, Thurs 2:30 pm

29, Wed. 6:30 pm

July: 13, Wed. 6:30 pm

20, Wed. 6:30 pm

27, Wed. 6:30 pm

August: No formal meetings

September: 7, Wed. 6:30 pm

**Agenda Item 5: Other issues**

**GHM tour:** GSheldon states we have one extra space available to join us and asks committee who to invite. He suggests Sen. Cronin. Committee feels that he will not, as he has told us already no weekends, but he will try him first. The next suggestion is John Reilly, as he is the new Chair of the Select Board. If we cannot get him, committee discusses who else to invite. Planning board members? FinCom members? Ultimately decided that if Cronin or Reilly can’t make it, we will have a vacancy.

**Pepperell Economic officials:**

GSheldon states Pepperell people have reached out to us and he would like to get them on our July schedule. Committee agrees.

**Briefing Town Manager before break:**

Discussion around Fall strategic report and a briefing to Town Manager before our break in August. Committee feels this is extra work and not needed at this time. GSheldon reminds committee of ARPA funds and that there is over $5 billion in money to be spent prior to FY24. He suggests that we need to get a handle on all of the Town’s projects.

JPlatt states she would like a meeting with Tom Delaney soon or the Complete Streets Committee. GSheldon states he is currently looking at design guidelines for Main Street.

GSheldon then asks if JParker-Roach was able to get in touch with History Center to do promotions on J Boutwell presentation upcoming on June 19. JPR was unable to get in contact. MElliott will post on Destination Groton page.

**Motion: Julie Platt makes a motion to adjourn meeting at 4:59pm**

**JGordon Seconded- all approved**

**Meeting adjourned 4:59pm**