

# **Destination Groton Committee**

Greg Sheldon, *Chair*

Jeff Gordon, *Vice Chair*

Mairi Elliott, *Clerk*

Julie Platt, *Member*

Joni Parker-Roach, *Member*

**Town Manager**

Mark W. Haddad

### **TOWN OF GROTON**

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**Destination Groton Committee Minutes**

 **Friday, January 5, 2023**

 **Zoom Meeting** **2-4pm**

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

**Julie Platt (arrived at 2:56)**

**Guests: Deb Buckley, Judy Anderson, Joshua Vollmar**

**Meeting Opened at 2:08 pm**

**Agenda Item 1: Review and approve Minutes**

**Motion: Mairi Elliott moves to approve Minutes from 11/28 - Joni Parker-Roach 2nds**

**Unanimously passed.**

**Motion: Jeff Gordon motions to approve minutes from 12/9- Joni Parker-Roach 2nds**

**Unanimously passed.**

**Agenda Item 2: Website Review**

DBuckley begins to review website page by page. She reminds members to clear their cache on their own computers when viewing to see the latest updates.

When she lands on the “Partners” tab, MElliott asks what actions will be required from herself and Julie Platt once a contact is generated. It currently reads “a committee member will contact you” and MElliott feels that could get overwhelming if we have a big response. She suggests an auto response that says something like “Thank you, you have been added to our contact list and we will reach out with partnership opportunities.”

JGordon would like to see a freeform text box allowing for people to write what type of partnership they are looking for. “Please discuss nature of partnership” was suggested.

JParker-Roach agrees that individual responses to each is not a correct way to go about it, but wants to be sure we aren’t missing valuable contacts.

DBuckley to amend the form and auto responses.

JGordon states that we need to further design Partnerships before we have this piece on the website.

DBucley pushes back with saying that it is important for us to identify Partnership potentials with the launch.

GSheldon suggests that for the time being it can be left as a broad interpretation of “partnership” which could be anything from reciprocal links to monetary donations.

JParker-Roach expresses confusion over whether she, as a local business owner, would be looking to be a partner with a reciprocal link?

JGordon states that at this time we are unsure of how partnerships will work. There are models to look at where certain members pay for visibility on a specific page of our site.

JParker-Roach points out the difference between GSheldon's statement and Jeff's and that we need to know what a Partnership is before we have a link for one.

JGordon explains that he envisions having different levels of partnership and that we need to define each level.

DBuckley suggests that levels should include Link Exchanges, Regional Partnerships, and those revenue based.

JGordon states that Partnerships need to synchronize with our mission, i.e., travel and tourism. For example, the Chamber of Commerce would be an Affiliate Partner.

GSheldon asks what we do regarding Weddings, etc.? Do we publicize wedding venues for a fee or for promotion?

JParker-Roach feels that asking for money now is not the right approach.

DBuckley moves on to the Home Page - A Town Rich in History.

Committee agrees to replace George Boutwell photo with a shot of Main Street and agrees to move Boutwell further down the page and to add a sentence about historic architecture. DBuckley will move.

JParker-Roach suggests the photo and narrative be moved to Groton History page.

DBuckley wants to be sure the new photo is a bright photo of downtown with no wires.

JParker-Roach has some that she can source from her files or take a new one herself and send to Buckley.

DBuckley states that Julie will be going through Explore page to update narrative and source more photos.

JParker-Roach edits Matisse portion and discusses the photo permission given.

JPlatt joins meeting at 2:56

Explore Page -

GSheldon asks to have Gibbet Hill photo lightened, as it is now much darker on the page.

Dining Experiences - JPlatt asks if it’s correct for us to have all local dining listed here or if it should be a link to the Visitors Center. Committee agrees to replace all links to establishments and replace with Visitors Center.

Weddings - JPlatt asks DBuckley again to crop the “courtesy of” out of the photo. Venues have been identified on this page as well, and the same question is asked about removing them. In this case the answer is that the wedding location venues will stay.

GSheldon wants more aerial videos, JParker-Roach has more videos to send to DBuckley.

Committee discussed how they would like videos embedded on the page. JPlatt and JParker-Roach feel that the video should not be hidden in a link, but visible and moving on the page.

DBuckley pushes back stating that the sound would come on for each person viewing the page and that can be “annoying”.

More photo editing to be done for Grotonfest.

JGordon will send in more photos of Grotonfest and Grotonfest Winter.

MElliott asks about where the Groton Overview video will be placed. Committee agrees it should be placed on main page in place of George Boutwell photo.

Tasks:

JPlatt to review Explore page.

JParker-Roach to review Engage page.

MElliott to review Enjoy page.

JPlatt asks if we should have a graphic designer to create the compass or a map for the Region page.

JParker-Roach will create a map with Groton as the hub from Fitchburg to Lowell.

JGordon states this is an opportunity to emphasize our regional expanse with different regions highlighted with Groton as the center.

GSheldon states we are in competition with the Boston area.

Discussion moves to video content and who is working most closely with AJ Pecukonis lately to get short videos of aerial shots. JParker-Roach has been with him recently to direct on getting closer and tighter shots, as well as keeping them short in length. She states they need to reshoot some recent videos due to lighting.

JParker-Roach brings up sourcing photos from the Andres Institute in Brookline, NH.

**DBuckley leaves meeting at 3:36pm**

**Other issues:**

GSheldon brings up the Montachusett Regional Planning Board having an RFP out regarding funding, f deadlines are 2/7 and 3/14.

Julie Platt and Greg Sheldon will dig in and get an application going. JPlatt mentions this is a matching grant and specifies what funds can be spent on.

GSheldon states that there are 13 regional planning commissions in the state and that we have met with two of the 13 now. He and Jeff Gordon have had a meeting with the North Middlesex Council of Governments, which represents the Greater Lowell area and includes Pepperell and Dunstable. This partnership is vital to our growth.

JGordon states that those at the meeting said they wanted to include Groton in the regional marketing and tourism study. They will have once monthly regional meetings that a representative of our committee should attend to identify common issues throughout the region. The study will be looking at assets and how best to promote us throughout the world. He states there is a Tourism and Economic Development subcommittee. JGordon suggests other members of Destination Groton participate in monthly meetings. GSheldon states consistency on this would be good.

Sheldon states that MRPC will do five traffic studies this year with a projected analysis on tourism markets and who to target - understanding market segments will lend credibility to our reporting.

JGordon states they are virtual meetings to accommodate a wide area of attendees.

GSheldon tells committee that he has connected with Congresswoman Lori Trahan's office and she will come out to tour Groton Hill in mid-February, and we are working on coordinating a meeting and dates.

JPlatt brings up a recent visit to ME and that she saw porta potties at all of the public parking areas. She suggests sponsoring porta potties and adding to parking at the trailheads.

JGordon states he has a connection and will get pricing.

Judy Anderson asks who we get permission from for something like that, as she thinks the problem will be getting permission from the state for many locations. She also suggests that this could be a good application of CPC funds under recreation.

**Next meeting set for Thursday 1/12 at 6:30pm via Zoom**

**Meeting adjourned at 4:18 pm**