

# **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**

 **Thursday, March 30, 2023**

 **In Person Meeting** **2-4pm**

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

**Guests: Judy Anderson, Phil Francisco**

**Meeting opened at 2:30pm**

Committee and guests discuss options for sourcing new business to come to town for available commercial spaces.

**Agenda Item 1:**

GSheldon reviews current status - Will be requesting from MRPC additional funds for a grant writer. DGC has won $45k grant for planning services to include traffic studies. Letter to Mark Haddad and John Reilly for support in our request to MRPC for grant writer.

GSheldon believes we may need 5-6 traffic studies to be done at various locations and we will need to look at a 3rd grant opportunity for more studies.

JPlatt would like to know if studies come with interpretation of data.

GSheldon will follow up with MRPC to see if they will partner with Arrivalist to get deep data on who is traveling to and from Groton.

Committee and Phil Francisco discuss the traffic at GHMC and that it has been negligible to this point. He points out that the parking lot was designed to keep traffic on the property and not on the roads.

GSheldon mentions that we are hopeful to collaborate with GHMC and their traffic studies done in the past.

GSheldon reports that FinCom voted 7-0 in favor of $15k for FY24 and that Select Board approved in a 4-1 vote.

Judy Anderson suggests we might get more public support if we publicize that public toilets and sidewalks are a priority. She states that Conductorlab clean up is almost complete and the Trails Committee is looking for a parking lot at the Rail Trail entrance near there.

Committee all agree that Judy is indispensable and that all committees should have a Judy, DGC is grateful for her continued contributions and connections.

GSheldon reiterates that we would like to be part of the Master Plan and that perhaps we can write a plan about Economic Development. He wonders if we can find some deliverables from the MRPC grant that we can offer to Planning Board. Phil Francisco suggests we share all the data with them.

MElliott suggests we ask planning board members to help us craft what other items will be included in MRPC grant deliverables.

**Agenda Item 2: Marketing Review**

GSheldon wonders if we can start monetizing our logo. PFrancisco suggests trademarking our logo first.

**Action: Find a qualified person to help with trademarking**

Sheldon states that he would like to write a new press release. PFrancisco states to be aware of release dates to be picked up by other media outlets. Suggests we should announce news on Mondays.

JPlatt states that she has signed up for a mail chimp account for the newsletter, she and Joni will work together on this. She would like to solidify a marketing plan by April 29th.

MElliott talks to group about social media plan of attack and the tone. Suggests we have a daily theme to stick to with posts and we need to organize our thoughts on what that looks like. Suggests: Monday- News, Tuesday- Trails, Wednesday-Upcoming events, Thursday- Thirsty/dining posts, Friday- Fun day, Saturday- Small business.

**Action: Solidify marketing plan and who will be responsible for making/creating all posts and posting on specific days.**

GSheldon would like to keep pushing the Resident and Non-Resident Surveys to be placed in press releases and media coverage.

Question arises about tweaking/changing the questions in the survey to drive more readable results.

Ultimately changed some wording in Question #9 and add “Dark Skies Lighting” as an option for preference in projects. Noted- There is possible MOT funding for such a project.

**Action item: All members to come with revision suggestions to next meeting.**

**Agenda Item 3: Annual Tourism Conference**

Sheldon conveys that Roy Nascimento gave great feedback about the Discover New England tour at Gibbet Hill. Many tour bus companies were involved and will be putting Groton on their map.

JParker-Roach reports to the committee that she has been able to get some tentative dates from the Groton Inn for the conference - November, 1,7, 8 and 14th.

It is noted that November 7th is Election Day, so the 8th would be our preferred date of that week.

GSheldon asks PFrancisco if GHMC would be open to collaborating on a performance in the evening of the Conference. Francisco suggests that a meeting be set up with Lisa Fiorentino to discuss our options.

MElliott suggests that instead of burdening GHMC with providing the music, we collaborate with the local schools and bring in the Chamber Choirs and Jazz Quartets to perform.

MElliott will attend a meeting that GSheldon will schedule with LFiorentino prior to next meeting if possible.

JParker-Roach states that John Amaral has verbalized willingness to be a Sponsor for the conference, but he would like a description before he commits.

**Action: GSheldon will write before next meeting**

JParker-Roach brings up that the application to become a Cultural District is a free form application and she has a call in to the liaison to help her craft it.

GSheldon points out that the Governor has put $2 million in the budget for the 250th Anniversary of the Revolutionary War and asks committee to think about what we could use funds for. Suggestions: Monument, ribbon cutting ceremony, consider a parade and a band, and Minutemen for April 19th kick off in 2024.

Judy Anderson suggests we talk to Don Black on the Commemorations and Celebrations Committee to help coordinate.

**Action: JParker-Roach to fill out form for 250th Anniversary Funds**

Discussion about how we play out a year long celebration and take advantage of the length of time. We need to discuss how to find benchmark dates to celebrate along the way.

Discuss with Josh Vollmar

**Action: JPlatt will reach out to the Merrimack Valley Visitors Center regarding their Annual Tourism Conference for details**

**Next meeting set for 4/14/23 2-4pm**

**Meeting adjourned at 4:18pm**