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### **TOWN OF GROTON**

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**Town Manager**

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**Destination Groton Committee**

Greg Sheldon, *Chair*

Jeff Gordon, *Vice Chair*

Julie Platt, Clerk

Brian Bolton, Member

Joni Parker-Roach, Member

Joni Parker Roach, *Member*

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**Destination Groton Committee**

**Wednesday, June 26, 2024**

**Minutes**

**Present: Greg Sheldon, Jeff Gordon, Brian Bolton, Julie Platt**

**Guests: Judy Anderson, Karen Tucker-Barisano, Veronica Martinez-Huber, Phil Francisco**

**1. Minutes from  June 20** - Brian Bolton is working on the minutes.

**2. Updates:**

 *A. MRPC Local interviews:* Tracey Murphy from MRPC has been given a list of local people from businesses and stakeholders to interview. DGC has suggested questions as a data starting point. Will TMurphy also develop questions? JGordon has been in communication with the local businesses and stakeholders. GSheldon has distributed a chart for DGC and TMurphy.

 *B. Review of the 6/24 Joint Committee on Community Development Listening Tour:* GSheldon presented, and JGordon and JPlatt (also KTucker-Barisano) were present in the audience to hear the panelists and issues that were asked and reported from local businesses to our State Rep. Margaret Scarsdale and her colleague, Sen. XXX from the 1st Essex district of Massachusetts. Feedback was positive, GSheldon presented a nice overview of the 6 Small Town Collaborative.

 *C. FY 24 budget discussion:* $4451.76 remains in the FY 2024 DGC budget. Invoices have been brought forward to encumber money for the following services: DGC Website - Web host, maintenance: $1670.00

 Groton Visitor Center: $ 500.00

 Small Town Collaborative web support $1200.00

 Groton Inn / Fall 2024 conference $ 691.00

 Remaining funds: $ 000.76

 *D. Website:* Store and Survey: A link to the Destination Groton merchandise is now live on the DG website. Look for the “store” icon in the menu bar. JPlatt suggested the merchandise also be highlighted in an upcoming DG newsletter. The DG Survey has approximately 365 responses, however since the response are “open-ended’ they are more challenging to synthesize into charts and graphs for easy display.

 *E. Weddings/Dining statistics:* KTucker-Barisano reported that the wedding costs in Massachusetts are the most expensive in America. The average wedding in MA costs $42,000, the average number of guests is 134, and the average cost per person is $304. Generally the costs break down to the venue being 25% of the total wedding cost and catering approximately 13% of the total wedding cost. There were roughly 500 weddings in Groton (last year) in 2023. The raw numbers need a narrative.

 *F. Master Plan Community Forum 6/20:* Discussion regarding the Master Plan Forum on Thursday, 6/20 at The Center, West Groton. Questions: Will there be more Forums for feedback from the community? Should DGC reach out to Barrett Group to share more feedback via Zoom or memorandum? Is there a missed opportunity by not hearing from younger residents- those with children? How do we get younger residents involved in more town-centric activities/forums/volunteer opportunities?

Phil F shared that Barrett Consulting Group (BC has identified 8 critical items for Groton. BCG is still in the information gathering phase. Recommendations for Groton will be forthcoming. Question: Will the Town of Groton/ Planning Board / Destination Groton get a preview of the Master Plan prior to the entire town seeing it?

**3. Grant Writing Working Group:**

 *A.Grants that are not related to the “One Stop” grants:* KTucker-Barisano reported on the focus has now turned to the possible grants available to the Town of Groton with regard to the 250th Anniversary of America in 2026.

 *B. Society of Cincinnati (SoC):* Description of the organization from it’s website: “The Society of the Cincinnati is the nation’s oldest patriotic organization, founded in 1783 by veteran officers of the Revolutionary War. Today, it is a nonprofit historical and educational organization, as well as a hereditary membership organization, that promotes an appreciation for the achievement of American independence through library, museum, and educational programs and other efforts.”

Discussion: The SoC does have grant money available for organizations in the categories of: education, research, restoration/conservation, historic markers or plaques. A “good ask” should be researched and devised in order to apply for this grant. Groton could be a very strong candidate. There was discussion around a possible walking tour of locations in Groton that can be accessed via iPhone for a visitor to walk and also listen to Groton History. An idea was discussed about the possible re-release of the Groton at 350 book for the 250th anniversary of America.

Summer meeting schedule: Wednesdays JuIy 17, August 7, August 21.

5. Meeting adjourned 3:25pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie S. Platt

Clerk

Destination Groton