**Meeting Minutes - Destination Groton Committee (DGC) Meeting**

**Meeting Date:** January 15, 2025

**Attendees:**

* **Committee Members:** Greg Sheldon, Jeff Gordon, Joni Parker-Roach, Brian Bolton
* **Guests:** Karen Tucker-Barisano,

**Meeting Summary:** The Destination Groton Committee reviewed updates on the Town Center Master Plan, discussed strategies for the cultural district application, and finalized details for the upcoming audio tour and Patriots Day lecture. Budget reviews and funding opportunities were analyzed, including a $2,000 allocation for the state Tourism Conference. Discussions highlighted the integration of historical and cultural elements to enhance tourism and community pride, with plans to archive and leverage AI for streamlined document management.

**Key Takeaways**

1. **Town Center Master Plan**: Coordination for RFP templates and committee briefings was emphasized to ensure alignment across stakeholders.
2. **Cultural District Application**: The importance of community engagement, accurate mapping, and leveraging existing historic districts was discussed.
3. **Audio Tour and Patriots Day Lecture**: Progress on the audio tour script and plans for a lecture event were reviewed, focusing on audience engagement.
4. **Budget Allocation**: Reviewed $10,600 in the bank and $11,000 in the gift fund, with plans for a $2,000 allocation to the state Tourism Conference.
5. **Grant Management and Reporting**: Weekly meetings were established to streamline grant updates and ensure effective use of funds.

**Action Items**

* **Town Center Master Plan**:
  + Follow up with Mark for the RFP template and schedule meetings with committees.
  + Incorporate updates into the master plan to reflect current conditions.
* **Cultural District Application**:
  + Finalize boundaries and historical landmarks, including Margaret Fuller’s house and the rail trail.
  + Secure letters of recommendation and refine the application template.
* **Audio Tour and Lecture**:
  + Finalize the script, including background music and re-recording as needed.
  + Confirm dates and venue for the Patriots Day event with Don Black.
* **Budget and Conference Planning**:
  + Confirm attendees for the state Tourism Conference and determine reimbursement options.
  + Develop a strategy for allocating remaining funds.

**Meeting Minutes Breakdown**

1. **Town Center Master Plan**

* **Updates and Alignment**: The committee discussed coordinating with Mark to prepare an RFP template, ensuring it aligns with state-recommended language to avoid issues.
* **Vision Plan Presentation**: A walkability study and economic analysis were identified as priorities for committee briefings.
* **Budget Allocation**: Plans included a $15,000 allocation for FY26 to qualify for a state tourism capital grant.

1. **Cultural District Application**

* **Mapping and Boundaries**: The committee reviewed potential boundaries for the cultural district, emphasizing accessibility and inclusion of key landmarks like Margaret Fuller’s house and the rail trail with murals.
* **Community Engagement**: The need for accurate data and robust community support was discussed, with plans to integrate historic and cultural elements.
* **Letters of Support**: Local organizations and cultural entities will be approached for recommendations to strengthen the application.

1. **Audio Tour and Patriots Day Lecture**

* **Script Development**: Feedback on the audio tour script emphasized engaging content and professional production quality. Background music and potential re-recording costs were considered.
* **Event Coordination**: Patriots Day was selected for the lecture event, with Don Black involved in planning. A local reporter may assist with coverage.

1. **Budget Allocation and Conference Attendance**

* **Tourism Conference**: The committee debated the value of sending five attendees to the state Tourism Conference, concluding it as a worthwhile investment. Accommodation and travel costs will be reviewed for reimbursement.
* **Future Expenditures**: Ideas included allocating funds for spring public meetings and website updates to support tourism and community outreach.

1. **Grant Management and Weekly Reporting**

* **Grant Updates**: Weekly meetings were scheduled for cultural district grant updates, with Julie assigned to take minutes.
* **Conflict of Interest Concerns**: The committee discussed avoiding potential conflicts in grant writing and emphasized the importance of transparency.

1. **AI Integration and Document Management**

* **Archiving and Profiling**: Plans to archive all committee writing for AI access were discussed, enabling streamlined document generation and retrieval.
* **Technical Considerations**: The need for clean, editable PDFs (rather than scanned documents) was highlighted for efficient AI processing.