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

**Meeting Date:** Mar 5, 2025

**Attendees:**

* **Committee Members:** Greg Sheldon, Jeff Gordon, Joni Parker-Roach, Brian Bolton

**Meeting Summary:** The meeting focused on finalizing logistics for upcoming events, refining grant applications, and strengthening stakeholder engagement. A major discussion centered on planning the March 21 focus groups for downtown traffic and infrastructure improvements, ensuring key stakeholders and community members are invited. Updates on the Rural Development Fund RFP and One Stop Expression of Interest grant were reviewed, including next steps for site preparation planning. The committee also coordinated marketing and outreach efforts for the 250th-anniversary event on April 6, confirming event materials, invitations, and media outreach. Plans were outlined for promoting Groton’s historical assets through an audio tour, printed materials, and tourism-driven initiatives. The committee also reviewed its budget allocations for event promotions, merchandise, and an economic development initiative grant request at the upcoming town meeting.

**Key Takeaways**

1. **Downtown Traffic & Infrastructure Focus Groups (March 21)**

* Two focus groups planned: **9 AM (town committees & technical stakeholders)**, **10 AM (public, residents, businesses)**.
* Key invitees include the **Highway Working Group, DPW, Select Board, police, local businesses, and residents in affected areas**.
* A **target list of 15 participants** will be finalized by Friday to maintain a manageable group size.

1. **Rural Development Fund & Grant Applications**

* **RFP responses due March 20, with a decision on consultant selection by April 1**.
* Discussion on site preparation grants to support economic development and planning.
* Updates on the **One Stop Expression of Interest submission**—feedback received, and next steps for refining the full application due June 5.

1. **250th-Anniversary Event (April 6) Planning & Marketing**

* **Guest speaker Josh is confirmed**; outreach continues for additional speakers, with a **March 21 cutoff**.
* **Event marketing strategies** include social media, direct mail, newspaper ads, and digital platforms.
* **Printed materials (flyers, postcards, programs) are in development**, with final approvals expected by March 21.
* Discussion on **setting up an RSVP system** due to venue capacity constraints.
* **Event budget of $5,700** covers promotions, speakers, and logistics, with sponsorships from **trust funds, Groton schools, and local organizations**.

1. **Public Engagement & Tourism Initiatives**

* Plans for **promotional booth setup at upcoming tourism conferences** to showcase Groton’s historical and economic opportunities.
* **Groton Experience Raffle Package** proposal includes an overnight stay, dinner, and a concert to boost engagement.
* **Audio tour launch strategy discussed**, with the need for finalizing files and making them accessible to the public.

1. **Budget Warrant & Economic Development Strategy**

* The **$15,000 budget warrant for economic development** will be introduced at the town meeting under the consent agenda.
* The committee reviewed **potential grant funding through state tourism initiatives** to support ongoing projects.

**Action Items**

* Finalize invite list for the March 21 focus groups, ensuring a balanced mix of stakeholders, businesses, and residents.
* Submit the Rural Development Fund RFP responses by March 20 and schedule consultant review meetings.
* Secure additional speakers for the April 6 event, with a decision cutoff by March 21.
* Finalize printed event materials, including postcards, programs, and flyers, by March 21.
* Launch RSVP system for the April 6 event and distribute invitations via social media, email lists, and direct outreach.
* Coordinate with local businesses for the “Groton Experience” raffle package and confirm logistics.
* Confirm promotional material orders for tourism conferences and ensure booth setup logistics are finalized.
* Draft and distribute a press release for the 250th event, ensuring alignment with local media and town officials.
* Work with the Trustees of the Trust Funds to finalize sponsorship acknowledgments for the April 6 event.
* Upload and distribute audio tour files on the DestinationGroton.com website, ensuring accessibility for stakeholders and the public.