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

**Meeting Date:** June 25, 2025

**Attendees:**

* **Committee Members:** Jeff Gordon, Joni Parker-Roach, Brian Bolton, Heather Puksta
* **Sub-Committee member:** Karen Tucker-Barisano
* **Other guests:** Patrick Parker-Roach; **Studio InSitu**: Tim Hess, Matthew Killam, Joshua LaLiberte; **:** **Stantec:** Michael Clark

**Meeting Summary:** The meeting focused on finalizing the **Vision Snapshot** document, refining messaging in response to recent public scrutiny and Planning Board feedback, and preparing materials for outreach to stakeholders. The committee continued working to ensure that messaging clearly differentiates between visionary concepts and actionable proposals. A major objective was aligning visuals and language to reinforce that the Vision Plan is intended to foster dialogue, not dictate development. The session also included planning the structure and tone of the full Vision Narrative and identifying next steps for public engagement over the summer.

**Key Takeaways**

1. **Refinement of the Vision Snapshot (2-Page Summary)**

* The committee reviewed a near-final version of the **public-facing Vision Snapshot**, intended to accompany outreach to the Select Board and broader public.
* Specific edits and clarifications were made:
  + Headline structure reworked for tone and clarity.
  + Adjusted references to “Town Center” vs. “Downtown” for consistency and alignment with prior feedback.
  + Ensured visual elements align with the narrative tone of **aspirational yet grounded**.
* A sidebar element will include “What This Is and What This Isn’t” to proactively manage expectations.

1. **Core Messaging Alignment**

* The committee reaffirmed key message points:
  + **This is not a zoning change** or a concrete development proposal.
  + It’s a **visionary conversation starter** backed by economic data and public input.
  + Town Center is a starting point for exploration—not the exclusive focus of growth.
* Language will continue to emphasize **phased, incremental, and community-guided change**, not top-down decisions or irreversible plans.

1. **Vision Narrative Document Planning**

* The structure of the **long-form Vision Plan** was reviewed.
* Intro sections will cover: history of the committee, grant funding, planning process, retail leakage study.
* Middle sections will outline conceptual opportunities and thematic goals (walkability, civic vitality, economic sustainability).
* A dedicated section will explicitly address **public concerns**, Planning Board feedback, and how the vision evolved based on input.
* Ending will include **“Where We Go from Here”**: options for public dialogue, further study, and phased implementation.

1. **Slide Deck Finalization**
   * Additional refinements will be made to the presentation deck to ensure consistent tone with the Snapshot and Narrative Plan.
     + Removal of overly “developer-speak” phrases.
     + Visual emphasis on **walkability, civic space, small-scale mixed use**, and historic character.
     + New slide structure: “Why This, Why Now?” followed by “What We Heard,” “What We Imagine,” and “What’s Next.”
   1. **Outreach and Engagement Strategy**

* The committee discussed next steps for **stakeholder engagement** and public outreach:
  + Scheduling meetings with Planning Board, Select Board, and Town Manager in July.
  + Preparing briefing kits with Snapshot + Slide Deck + Talking Points.
  + Planning targeted outreach to Groton Hill Music Center, Lawrence Academy, and key property owners.
  + Larger public forums still targeted for **early fall** (September/October).

**Action Items**

* Finalize Vision Snapshot and post on Destination Groton web page.
* Complete latest draft of Slide Deck and circulate internally for review.
* Begin outlining full Vision Narrative document; assign writing responsibilities for each section.
* Draft a Q&A or “Myth vs. Fact” insert addressing public misperceptions and FAQs.
* Plan and schedule Select Board and Planning Board briefings for July.
* Coordinate with Town Communications to include Snapshot in newsletter or email outreach.
* Begin early stakeholder engagement with local business owners and civic institutions.
* Explore design/production options for an animated or narrated video overview.