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

**Meeting Date:** September 3, 2025

**Attendees:**

* **Committee Members:** Greg Sheldon, Jeff Gordon, Joni Parker-Roach, Brian Bolton, Heather Puksta. **Sub-Committee member:** Karen Tucker-Barisano (via Zoom)
* **Guests:** John Sopra (Groton resident)

**Meeting Summary:** The committee focused on finalizing a grant application to the Society of Cincinnati for funding historical markers, planning public forums to gather community input on Groton’s town vision, and refining communication and outreach strategies. Key discussions included budget and approval processes for the grant, structuring upcoming forums for better engagement, updating website resources, and strengthening publicity efforts. The meeting emphasized balancing transparency with efficiency in working with the Select Board and local committees while preparing strong narratives for grant funding and public engagement.

**Discussion Summary**

1. **Grant Application – Society of Cincinnati**
* Application due September 14 for 15 historical markers (~$15,000 budget).
* Plan: Request $12,000 with a $3,000 local match to strengthen the proposal.
* Discussion on whether to brief the Select Board (to maintain transparency and courtesy, especially in light of recent press criticisms).
* Consensus: Submit by the 14th, inform Select Board on Sept. 8, avoid showing premature sign designs, and emphasize Revolutionary War connections in the narrative.
1. **Approvals & Coordination**
* Historical District Commission (HDC) and Signage Committee approvals are needed but can follow the application.
* Select Board briefing set as a courtesy, not for permission.
* Planning Board, Highway Department, and other committees will be looped in as the process advances.
1. **Public Forums & Visioning**
* Forums scheduled for October. Goal: shorter, more engaging presentations (10–15 min chunks with Q&A).
* Stantec’s traffic study must be condensed for accessibility while keeping full details online.
* Forums to emphasize traffic mitigation, economic development, and community visioning.
1. **Outreach & Publicity**
* Mailing list of 300 to be organized in a proper email platform (avoid BCC).
* Press release to announce forums, include resident survey link, and highlight ongoing efforts.
* Multiple communication channels planned: Groton Herald, newsletters, social media, and listservs.
1. **Website & Documentation**
* Sixteen documents already posted under *Vision and Planning Framing*.
* Additional materials (2021 report, Prescott/2-50 plan updates, consultant presentations) to be added.
* Economic Impact Report needs dating for clarity.
1. **Additional Updates**
* Prescott Community Center lecture by Donald Ryan confirmed for November 2.
* Scenic America photo contest submission noted (decision expected October).
* Discussion enhancing the Visitor Center deferred; focus remains on historical markers.
* Yankee Magazine travel writer visit opportunity discussed to boost publicity.
1. **Long-Term Implementation**
* Committee responsibilities tied to the master plan include visitor guides, signage, and marketing.
* Stress on aligning with Select Board and Planning Board policy-making authority.
* Need to attract businesses, address infrastructure (water/sewer), and market Groton as a destination.

**To-Do List**

* **Brian Bolton** – Add the 2021 *Destination Groton: Exploring the Possibilities* report to the website’s *Vision and Planning Framework* section.
* **Brian Bolton** – Ensure the Groton Economic Impact Report is dated on the website.
* Reach out to **Josh, Jim, and Aubrey** to lead the Select Board presentation on Monday.
* **Follow up with Mark** for access to committee member email addresses (≈300) to invite them to public forums.
* Finalize and post the **new resident survey** by next week.
* Prepare **two versions of Stantec’s presentation** – a 10–15 minute summary for public forums and the full 30-minute version online.
* Review the **master plan implementation section** to identify Destination Groton’s responsibilities.
* Ask Stantec for a 10–15 minute summary of traffic study findings.
* Request Michael at Stantec to reduce his 41 slides into segments (12/12/20).
* Involve the **Highway Department** in the September 17 public forum.