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

**Meeting Date:** September 24, 2025

**Attendees:**

* **Committee Members:** Greg Sheldon, Jeff Gordon, Joni Parker-Roach, Heather Puksta
* **Sub-Committee member:** Karen Tucker-Barisano

**Meeting Summary:** The meeting focused on reviewing **feedback from the first Vision Forum**, refining messaging and presentation strategy for the **October 1 forum**, and organizing logistics for **GrotonFest** and the **November 2 book signing**. The committee discussed fine-tuning the rebranding grant proposal, improving event materials, and incorporating community feedback regarding traffic, safety, and economic development. A key theme was the balance between **historic preservation and modern revitalization** in Groton’s town center, emphasizing that all proposed development concepts are **visionary, not prescriptive**.

**Detailed Discussion**

1. **Grant and Event Updates**

* No new developments on the **$40,000 Society of Cincinnati rebranding grant**.
* The **Don Ryan/Prescott book signing** remains scheduled for **November 2**.
* The committee reviewed the **event flyer**, noting issues with distorted images and inconsistent fonts. The design will be corrected before printing.

1. **GrotonFest Planning**

* Booth #149 confirmed; setup scheduled between **6:30–7:10 AM**.
* **Jeff Gordon** will bring chairs; **Joni Parker** to supply banners and printed materials.
* **Karen** to provide two folding tables; **Jeff** to pick them up on Friday.
* Materials include flyers, posters, sample merchandise, and a banner display.

1. **Vision Forum Review & Public Feedback**

* The committee discussed reactions from the **September 17 Vision Forum**, which drew ~40 attendees and over 70 Facebook comments.
* A recent **pedestrian accident on Main Street** underscored the urgency of **traffic calming** and **pedestrian safety**.
* Feedback revealed confusion over the purpose of the “vision,” with some attendees perceiving it as finalized development rather than conceptual exploration.
* The committee agreed to clarify that the **Vision Plan is exploratory** and reflects **public feedback collected over several years**, not predetermined outcomes.

1. **Key Issues and Themes**

* **Traffic and Safety:** Members reiterated that slower traffic would only marginally increase travel time but greatly improve safety and town experience.
* **Economic Development:** Plans should highlight potential **tax benefits, local job creation, and business growth** while addressing fears of overdevelopment.
* **Public Misperceptions:** Some residents view the plan as “Destination Groton pushing development.” The committee agreed to emphasize that it is **community-driven and data-informed**.
* **Historic vs. Modern Design:** Members discussed blending architectural styles to maintain Groton’s character while supporting future growth.

1. **Presentation Refinements**

* **Michael Clark’s presentation** will be trimmed to remove the Q&A section for clarity.
* **Tim Hess’s portion** was well received but suffered from low audio quality; future sessions will connect directly to the sound system.
* A **clearer introduction** will establish:
* The history of the Downtown Overlay District (established 18 years ago).
* The Vision Plan’s alignment with existing zoning and town goals.
* The concept of *“possibility, not prescription.”*

1. **Public Safety and Messaging**

* Members agreed to tie recent accidents to the need for pedestrian safety measures and to reclaim Main Street as a **community-centered, not commuter-focused**, corridor.
* The phrase **“Embrace the inconvenience”** (borrowed from Concord’s planning model) was cited to encourage residents to see traffic slowdown as a positive sign of vitality.
* The committee will frame congestion and slower traffic as evidence of a **“healthy, vibrant downtown.”**

1. **Future Engagement**

* A **bibliography of source materials** (including economic reports, planning references, and housing legislation) will be compiled for public access.
* The team will continue outreach to **town committees** (e.g., Complete Streets, Planning Board) to coordinate on shared goals like safety, zoning, and infrastructure.
* The next **public forums** remain scheduled for:
  + **October 1 – Groton Center**
  + **October 8 – Grotonwood**
  + **October 15 – Prescott Community Center**

**To-Do List**

* Update the **book signing flyer** for consistent font size and improved layout.
* Edit **Michael Clark’s presentation video** to remove the Q&A portion for reuse at the October 1 forum.
* Compile a **bibliography** of reference materials to support the vision presentation.
* Arrange pickup of **GrotonFest materials** (banner, posters, flyers) from Joni’s home.
* Coordinate pickup of **two folding tables** from Karen for the GrotonFest booth.
* Strengthen the **introduction to the public presentation** to clearly explain the project’s goals, history, and community-driven foundation.
* Emphasize in all outreach that the **Downtown Vision Plan** represents *possibilities*, not final plans.