

Sturbridge Tourist Association
FINAL Meeting Minutes
June 5, 2013

Present: Tom Creamer (TC), Jessica MacDonald (JM), Kevin Smith (KS), Carol Childress (CC)

Resigned: Kevin McConnell

Guests: 7:00 p.m.: Barbara Search and granddaughter Hadley; Jan Chiaretto, Mark Edmonds. 7:30 p.m.: Alix McNitt

Meeting called to order: 7:02 p.m.

Barbara Search: presented STA Application #0001 and discussed quotes for designing and publishing 10,000 copies of her brochure, Town Common Walking Guide. Datzmedia design cost: \$350; Universal Tag printing cost: \$1,623.70. Total cost: \$1,973.70. The brochure is a self-guided tour highlighting a brief history of Sturbridge and 14 sites on the Sturbridge Common. CC motioned to approve \$350 from the STA Revolving Fund for design by Datzmedia in accordance with the application; TC 2nd; AIF. Barbara to return with a draft for STA to review.

Application Numbers: discussion involving adding application numbers to all applications. The words "Application #: _____" will be added at the bottom of P.2 in the 'STA use only' section. KS motion; TC 2nd; AIF.

Minutes: 4/24: TC motioned to approve as is; KS 2nd. AIF.
5/16: TC motioned approve as is; KS 2nd. AIF.

June 22nd, 275th Anniversary Celebration, pending contracts:

-TC provided follow-up on his contact with DJ. Hugh Allen will perform from 2-6 p.m. on the Common and it will include a karaoke component. Estimated cost: \$500 - \$1,200; contract is forthcoming.

-Town Crier: services typically cost \$75/hour. 3-6 p.m. Town Crier will provide opening remarks, including a history of Sturbridge, interact with people attending the celebration, and introduce the Ferko String Band. This discussion on HOLD as another guest arrived who is on the agenda.

Alix McNitt arrived at 7:30 p.m. to discuss continuing support for the Info Center, as the \$17,000 2013 appropriation falls short to meet a full year's of operating and Info Center staff expenses. There is an estimated \$3,000 shortfall, including two job ads the Chamber ran seeking part-time help for the Info Center. Alix presented one of the Boston Globe Ads, which the STA funded three times this year in an attempt to attract people from the east to Sturbridge. Alix attributed a 24-28% uptick in website hits to the BG ads.

Mark Edmonds asked how many people come through the Chamber during high-season. Alix said 24,000, plus more requests via e-mail and phone, plus there's an increase in international travelers. Alix credits the Destination New England (DNE) ads that the STA pays for the increase in international visitors.

Alix presented four proposals for the STA to consider:

Alix McNitt, Application #0002: \$3,000 to patch the 2013 shortfall, representing May and June operating and Info Center staff expenses and the two job ads. May: \$1,912.22, of which \$650 is for landscaping/beautification. KS motioned to pay \$650 of the May invoice for the beautification/grounds maintenance from 2013 Community Support account. The \$650 covers 6 months (May to October) worth of Info Center grounds maintenance/beautification. JM 2nd; AIF.

TC motion to pay the remaining balance of the May operating expenses invoice, \$1,262.22, from the Revolving Fund; CC 2nd. AIF.

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Alix McNitt, Application #0003: \$160.00 to cover shortfall for 2013 phone and mail. May: \$107.69; June: \$114.75 = \$222.44. NOTE: Although the total amount requested is actually \$222.44, Alix deducted \$62.50

from her request to reflect a credit balance on our correlating financial records. TC motionrf to approve \$160.00 from 2013 Marketing Account; JM 2nd; AIF.

Alix McNitt, Application #0004: \$5,000 STA Sponsorship for 24th Annual Harvest Festival Sponsorship in 2014. Sponsorship comes with a 20x20 tent the STA can use anyway it wishes. KS questioned income/profit of \$3,340 being generated to the Chamber as a result of this sponsorship. Alix explained that while there is profit, it's not just 'Chamber profit' as anyone who wants to place information in the Info Center is permitted to do so; also, the Harvest Festival has a large draw that is beneficial to the entire business community; and their marketing reach is far and wide, thus helping to promote Sturbridge as a destination. TC motioned to approve the full amount of the request from Special Events account, pending approval of the 2014 STA budget at upcoming town meeting; CC 2nd; AIF.

Alix McNitt, Application #0005: \$20,000 for 2014 Information Center Support. TC explained to Alix that the STA began working on its budget in early April because of the lengthy process necessary to bring the budget to Annual Town Meeting (ATM) for approval. The STA's 2014 budget is requesting approval of \$17,500 for Info Center Support, which is a 3% increase over the 2013 appropriation. TC noted that Alix could come back for any shortfalls next year, just as she has done this year. TC motioned to approve \$17,500 for 2014 Info Center support, subject to approval at ATM; KS 2nd. AIF.

Alix is to return on July 10th for an STA Work Session to present her proposal for marketing strategies, as \$20,000 was budgeted for Chamber marketing; and \$10,000 was budgeted for STA marketing. Also, at that time, the June Info Center invoice can be firmed up and revisited.

June 22nd, 275th Anniversary Celebration, (Cont'd):

Muster: CC contacted Doug Quigley regarding a muster on the Common; however, he has other obligations. CC contacted Kim Adams, the Volunteer Coordinator at OSV to see if there might be any volunteers who would be interested in assisting/working with the town. Kim indicated that the people who do this are actually not volunteers but paid staff. CC asked Kim if she could ask staff if they might be interested in organizing/presenting a muster and we would pay them. On 6/5, CC had a phone message from Ms. Adams, indicating that OSV did not want to be "the middleman" on this issue but if I contacted her back, she'd be happy to post on a notice on bulletin board that we're seeking participants, so CC returned a call and left a phone message for Ms. Adams indicating such. TC will contact Jim Donahue. \$500 was set aside in case participation can be found.

DJ: 2-7 pm, set up at 1:00 p.m. Approximately \$1,500.

Town Crier: 2:00 p.m. until... - set aside \$500.

Magic World: CC contacted Magic World of Shrewsbury, MA, to request quotes for: a face-painter; a balloon-twister; a bouncy house; and a roaming magician. Quote was \$1,425, with a 1/3 down payment. CC retained Magic World, obtained the contract, it was reviewed and executed by Shaun Suhoski, and Jean Joel cut and mailed the check. The balance of \$1,000 will be due on 6/22/13.

275th Anniversary Pins: In early May, Lorraine Murawski (LM) sent a quote/company name to CC. CC contacted LM to order the pins and they will arrive no later than June 20th. The pins are gold-colored, consisting mainly of the town's colorful logo and under the logo says 275th Anniv\$1.30 per pin for 500 pins. They will be handed out for free as memento of the celebration.

Additional ideas: a dunk tank; CC to check on cost and availability of dunk tank, and other items that could possibly enhance the celebration.

TC to contact stilt walker; Chris Rovezzi has agreed to set up on the Town Common and sell food. He is to obtain his own permits and bring his own pop-up tent.

JM was checking into an ice cream truck – Eric Cassim – TC to contact him.

TC has experience in using the Town Common, and he outlined his vision for arrangement of all activities on the Common.

Other:

-TC to help set up stuff; Select person Priscilla Gimas to assist.

-275th Anniversary application has been completely filled out, executed and submitted to the Rec Committee for use of the Common.

-TC to contact Center of Hope for banners, which should have logo on it.

-JM to contact Stephen Fox and/or Alix McNitt regarding any existing banners the STA may own.

-CC to send TC .jpg of town's logo for Center of Hope.

-TC to check Center Office and Town Hall basements for any banners.

-CC created double-sided flyer for event, one side which depicts the Merchant's Gift Cert Contest.

-CC had Globe Sign create two 275th Anniversary signs for the Info Center Ladder Sign.

-CC will pick up the sandwich board and letters and place it on the Common to announce the event.

-CC worked with Susan McDonough on creating ads in the Southbridge News, Tantasqua Town Common and Sturbridge Times.

All expenses will be paid from the 2013 275th Anniversary Account.

Regional Antiques Guide: CC presented two mock-ups of the final drafts. Two suggested edits from members: 1) add blue dots onto the Sturbridge portion of the regional map to indicate lodging locations listed in the guide; 2) color the border (the current border is white) around the town of Sturbridge so it jumps off the page. Discussed how many to publish; originally going to print 10,000 but the STA members plan to divide labor, visit each antique store, and present them with 250 of the guides for their stores, which will quickly use up the 10,000 guides. CC to obtain quote for 20,000 guides, so hotels, merchants and others may have copies for their use. TC motion to set aside an additional \$2,500 from the 2014 Marketing budget; JM 2nd. AIF.

Treasurer's Report: the original STA plan was to postpone the Anniversary Celebration until 2014; however, the 275th Anniversary Celebration has come together, which includes the Merchant's Gift Certificate Contest. CC, Treasurer, is to present housekeeping recommendations at the 6/25 meeting, regarding the STA's working budget and funds to encumber for approved projects, as we near the end of the fiscal year.

No new business.

Next meeting: 6/25/13, 7:00 p.m., Conference Room 1.

JM motion to adjourn; KS 2nd; AIF, 4-0. 9:55 p.m.