

SIMSBURY TOURISM COMMITTEE
"Heritage, Charm, Adventure"
Simsbury Inn (moved from Flamig)
Mon. June 18, 2018 7:00 pm Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Dominique Avery, Joe Buda(Chair), Pat Carbone, Sheree Landerman, Jan Losee, Elizabeth Peterson, Diane Phillips, Charmaine Seavy, Rick Wagner and Guests Eric Wellman, Lori Lubetkin, Mark Lubetkin, and Steve Mitchell

1. At 7:07 Joe called the meeting to order and suggested we all introduce ourselves to First Selectman Eric Wellman.
2. There were no minutes from the May meeting at the Gifts of Love Community Farm where no action was taken since there was no quorum.

3. Update on Chamber's Seward Johnson Sculpture Art Trail:

Joe reported on the resounding success of the Art Trail as evidenced by: the 10 thousand printed maps that were gone in 3 weeks requiring the printing of 8,000 more; the Simsbury Historical Society is filled with visitors; downtown is seeing many more people than usual walking & taking photos. The committee agreed that the Chamber did a phenomenal work and it's a real home run for an idea conceived by Ferg Jansen! Joe reminded us that Garden party is Friday hosted at SHS by the Chamber from 5-8pm. Joe asked us to think of ideas of what we could do next year? Lori Lubetkin added that another sign that of the trails success in bringing people are the calls from people who want to bring in group tours.

4. Old Business and Working Team Updates:

Team A Events Updates: a.) Dominique reported on the committee's successful participation with the Library on the Volunteer Fair b.) on the success of the 6/9 Open House Day at the Visitors Center, the Flower Bridge, the Ensign House lecture at the Library, the Storyteller's Cottage and the tours at SHS and Red Stone Pub c.) Update on the Opening of the Simsbury Meadows Ticket Booth d) Plans for a Flea Market/Farmers Market at Simsbury/Granby border at Town Line Village e.) Likely opening of Newgate Prison in July. And Kathy Oakes update of the restaurant list on the town's Visit Simsbury section.

Team B Outreach: Lori's Visitor's Center report included an update on # of visitors and callers most of whom were inquiring about the Simsbury Art Trail including several about bringing tours to the Art Trail and Burgers on the Bridge. Mark Lubetkin owner of Red Stone Pub gave the committee an update on his efforts to get final approvals for his horse and carriage ride proposal. In addition

to not having final sign off from Zoning, there have been numerous difficulties getting permission from the state for the portion of the ride on Hopmeadow which is a state road. The message that he wanted to send was that everyone is enthusiastic about this, more than about anything he's seen before because of its likely impact on town economic development.

Team C Recognition: No discussion.

Team D Gov't & Team E Special Projects: Former Tourism chair Steve Mitchell gave a brief review of the well attended meeting on the planned Simsbury to Bloomfield section of the East Coast Greenway meeting at Tariffville School. It's expected construction will start in 2019. That leaves only the connection from the Cracker Barrel Pub to Curtiss Field left. Jan Losee updated successful efforts to create hubs including Simsbury for travellers from Scotland, England & Germany and how the last 3 months have put together wine, beer, & chocolate trails etc. She stressed that Simsbury needs to work with the whole Farmington Valley as a Hub. She said it will be harder with the demise of the Farmington Valley Visitors Assoc. which was due to lack of funding from towns.

5. New Business: a. After mentioning that Steve Antonio will head Simsbury's 350th Planning Comm., Joe presented Tourism's ideas & priorities to encourage economic development to Eric Wellman, committee liaison and 1st selectman. After explaining our process, Joe listed them including: Better defining what Simsbury is known for i.e. nature activities like biking, hiking & kayaking; making us a town for all seasons by developing winter events; making it a hub for the Farmington Valley; improved cell phone reception; additional & more cohesive signage; welcoming flower baskets; need for more bathrooms, food stops & bike parking off bike paths; encouraging Heublein Tower visitors to come to Simsbury proper; urging Land Trust to encourage out-of-towners to access their trail; creation of campsites; creating a "downtown hike": improving access to the river; and making Tariffville into destination point.; and creating a Passport to Simsbury for the 350th celebration.

b. After some additional input from members, **Eric thanked the committee for its work, and suggested that we refine the ideas further for presentation to the entire Board of Selectman** to get their buy-in as soon as possible. He recommended putting the ideas in three buckets: 1) What can the town do without any dollars; 2) Which ideas requires town staff time like Heublein Tower or bike path signage; and 3) which require allocation of town dollars. He stressed that we need to get any items that impact the budget in before January and that we include a specific \$ amount. There was discussion about when best to meet

next, whether there should be a July meeting and how soon we could present to the BOS.

6. Adjournment was at 9:05. Next meeting is Mon. August 20 at 7pm at Flamig Farm.

Submitted by Dominique Avery