

SIMSBURY TOURISM COMMITTEE
“Heritage, Charm, Invention”
Simsbury Public Library Barnes Room
725 Hopmeadow St.

Monday, May 18, 2015 6:30pm

Meeting called to order at 6:40pm.

Attending were: Dominique Avery, Pat Carbone, Rick Wagner, Diane Phillips, Barbara O'Connor, Kathy Oakes, Steve Mitchell, Charmaine Seavey, Joyce Howard, Paulette Clark, Kevin Gray, Sally Summa.

Friends of the Library Charmaine Glew and Ann Wallack welcomed the group and gave a history of the Book Sale that takes place every September. This sale has become an attraction to Simsbury as well as the major fundraiser for the FOL. Thousands of people come to the sale, travelling from areas like New York and Virginia as well as local residents. The sale is promoted to book dealers within 100 miles, and on national websites for these library sales. Tourism will provide a one-page insert for the mailings that go out, promoting hotels, restaurants and other things to do in Simsbury besides the sale.

The sale raises \$35-40,000.00, helping to provide for the programs and activities provided by the Friends.

Minutes of the April 20 meeting were approved.

CO-CHAIR'S REPORT

Dominique reported on the State Tourism Conference. She is working to get our area and activities included on the state's website calendar. The committee hosted a table at the Triathlon this year. It was a festive event on a lovely day. There was a discussion with Jeff Dorneburg of the Economic Development Task Force on the new town website, reiterating the need for an easy to navigate Tourism section. We will need to add birding activities to the site, as these generate visits to the town. This year's Hometown Heroes were reviewed.

NEW BUSINESS

The group discussed the possibility of a temporary visitors center at either the current Chamber of Commerce location or the Historical Society. Rick Wagner described some projects currently being discussed by the Historical Society. After much discussion, Steve Mitchell made the following motion:

The Simsbury Tourism Committee supports locating a temporary Visitors Center at the existing Simsbury Chamber of Commerce office; to use \$5,000 in funds allocated to the Tourism Committee in the next town Budget (FY15-16) to help fund a part-time staff person to assist the Chamber's Executive Director with Chamber and town outreach, and to help the Chamber function as the town Visitors center while a permanent hub/visitors center is being established, as well as pay for added signage to the existing

Chamber/Watershed signs to identify it as the location of the Visitors Center. The motion was seconded by Barbara O'Connor, and approved unanimously, with Rick Wagner abstaining.

OLD BUSINESS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

- A. Simsbury Souvenir Update: Kathy, Barbara, Joyce and Dominique will meet as a subcommittee with some possible producers of the souvenirs.
- B. Restaurant Update: Barbara made progress on the list. Additional suggestions will be incorporated.
- C. Hopmeadow Brochure: Joyce is having reprinted in time to use funds from this fiscal year.
- D. Hudson House-nothing new
- E. Town Website/EDC Task Force/Tourism Website were discussed as part of Co-Chair's Report
- F. July Cessna Convention: Kathy is helping to get information together for the group.
- G. Innovators Fair was well received in town.
- H. May Bike Month: Calendar on Town website
- I. Bridge of Flowers has many activities coming up, as the baskets and plants go in over the next few weeks. Tootin Hill School has a fundraiser there May 29th; June 10 is date for Burgers on the Bridge.
- J. Millwright's will be having dinners at the Community Farm to benefit Gifts of Love.
- K. WNPR Faith Middleton's Food Schmooze Martini Bash is at the Riverview June 19.
- L. Veterans Memorial Groundbreaking is May 25th after the Simsbury parade.

OTHER UPDATES

Steve reviewed developments concerning the route of the East Coast Greenway. At the next meeting we will discuss a letter supporting the Greenway going through Simsbury and Bloomfield.

Kevin Gray asked about interest in a project being considered by the Historical Society: Christmas Markets on the Society's grounds. The group was enthusiastically supportive.

The next meeting will be held at 7:30pm at the Simsbury Free Library and hosted by the Simsbury Cemetery Association. A tour of the cemetery will precede the meeting at 6:30pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:11pm.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara O'Connor