

SIMSBURY TOURISM COMMITTEE

"Heritage, Charm, Adventure"

Scheduled at the Simsbury Historical Society- Ellsworth Center

Tuesday, Jan. 22, 2019 7:00 pm Meeting Minutes

Meeting was moved at the last minute to Simsbury Public Library Wagner Room when we discovered dangerous ice conditions in the SHS Parking lot which made it impossible to get into the building safely

Attendance: Dominique Avery, Joe Buda, Paulette Clark, Sheree Landerman, Liz Petersen, Diane Phillips, Sally Summa, Charmaine Seavy and Eric Wellman

1. Meeting was called to order at 7:12 pm.
2. Minutes from December meeting were reviewed, moved by Liz, seconded by Joe and approved unanimously.
3. Joe welcomed 1st Selectman Eric Wellman & Tourism Committee Liaison who asked the committee to 1) Identify one key recommendation from the committee's Vision 2020 Tourism Goals presented to the BOS that we are passionate about 2) Make a proposal for a Visitors Center - i.e. should there be one and where should it be. In the light of the Chamber's plans to try to find a place to move once again, the BOS is prepared to fund the right VC proposal whether it be online, with the chamber, or with a local business or stand alone. There was considerable discussion. Dominique pointed out that we've tried 4 different models over the last 20 years - a location in the Arts Exclusive Gallery in the Ensign House (town contributed \$10 K a year); at the Sew Inspired Quilt Shop in Fiddler's Green in 2005 in a tax rebate arrangement; no physical Center just a phone ## with messages answered by committee volunteers and distributing brochures; & since 2015 at the Chamber. Eric says the BOS wants community consensus on the choice. Sheree Landerman brought up the CT 169 Passport idea started by historian & author Martin Podskoch model as a great way to get visitors to town, although she was disappointed in Simsbury's submission. It will be an **Action Item** on next month's agenda
4. Old Business and Working Team Updates:
Events: Trail of Thanks update: Presentation was made to the BOS. Next stop to get permission from Wetlands Commission re Tariffville & Town Forest Trail stops; Joe and Eric agreed that the MLK celebration was outstanding; **Outreach:** Dec. was very slow at the Visitors Center & Hand Drawn map/passport proposal will be an Action Item next month. **Recognition:** We briefly discussed beginning program

of honoring town individuals or groups who've done outstanding work promoting town Tourism, Eric thought it was a good idea **Governmental:** a) Eric said he will get us an update on Kiosk relocation; c) Joe reported on his 1st meeting at Central Regional Tourism District as Simsbury rep. He explained its structure which favors large towns in the CT River Valley from Torrington to Hartford and not small towns, but he's working to change that & is on PR comm. State gives \$400,000 per region but has not released the \$\$ yet for this year. There was discussion on apparent move toward dropping the Still Revolutionary slogan. **Special Projects:** No update on Tourism Hub for Air Lingus in Jan's absence; some discussion on getting a committee together to work on Camp Ground.

5. **New Business:** a) Eric gave an update on **cell phone coverage**. There will be 5 Verizon boosters - 2 are operational, another coming on line at end of Jan. at the Maple Tree. Rep. Hampton and Eric are making this a priority and want to get other providers like Sprint on board b) Joe said because of the FOI prohibition in meeting in groups, we are giving up on the **Team Structure** for committee work

6. **Quick Updates.** Dominique reported the Facebook post on 350th Celebration in 2020 got very high engagement and great enthusiasm. She asked who people could contact if they want to volunteer. Eric mentioned that there's a vacancy on the new Economic Development Commission & asked for a volunteer

8. Adjournment was at 8:22. Next meeting is Tues. Feb. 19 at 7:00pm at the Simsbury Historical Society's Ellsworth Center.

Submitted by Dominique Avery