



**City of Gloucester Tourism Commission
Meeting Minutes
Monday, May 20 2019; 5:00 to 6:30 PM
Third Floor Conference Room
City Hall, Nine Dale Avenue**

1. Open meeting, select minute taker. – Kimberly Voltero will take the minutes, and Caitlin lead the meeting following the agenda.

Present were:

Commission Members: Kimberly Voltero, Caitlin Pszenny, and Doug Silva.

Advisors: Ken Hecht, Elizabeth Carey from Discover Gloucester

Others: Bob Whitmarsh,

Discussion and Introductions of those present:

Bob Whitmarsh from the Downtown Development Commission (DDC), he has been on the DDC for 10 years, & historical commission and a chamber of Commerce Ambassador. He stated there is some discussion to merge the DDC with the Tourism Commission and/or the Community Preservation Committee (CPC).

Elizabeth Carey, Executive Director of Discover Gloucester, whose mission is to market Gloucester as a premier destination with website, marketing, PR, tradeshow. Her board's vision is "We bring them here, the tourism commission should enchant them when they arrive". She is also on Mass 400, Gloucester 400, Chamber Tourism Council. She expressed interest in joining in some capacity the Tourism board. Caitlin and Kimberly shared their thoughts on what they thought was a rule against officially being on both boards, but we all agreed that someone from the Tourism Commission should attend Discover Gloucester meetings and that Elizabeth should attend our meetings in the same way that Ken Reihl, and Ken Hecht attend/participate.

Ken Hecht – Ward 2 city councilor and liaison for tourism commission till December 2019. “Want it to be a dream team, the commission should be doing”.

Doug Silva, Topside Grill, 1 year on the commission.

Rosalie Nicastro – Retired (but still working as the Board of Health Inspector.

Rosanne Cody – Volunteer for the city, organizing events like the Halloween Party for kids, August event for Gloucester 400 and special requests of the Mayor.

Joe Giacalone – Downtown Commission Chairman (DDC), here to discuss potential of merging activities.

JD McEachern – Runs local Rick, part of the 400 sports committee.

Jen Amero – Travel Agent, hospitality marketing, was Serenity Marketing Director, previously on Discover Gloucester Board, She is sending her letter of intent to join the Tourism Commission.

Caitlin Pzenny – Worked in the Gloucester Health Department, On Chamber Board, Next Generation, and Tourism Commission.

Kimberly Voltero – Owner of Plug-In Tours, a sightseeing tour company on Cape Ann, on the Chamber Tourism Council, and member of the Tourism Board.

2. Stage Fort Park – Construction Update, Attendance/Role at Opening Ceremony

Stage Fort Park Construction has been postponed to September to avoid the busy summer season. The porch will be blocked and unavailable for anyone to use in any way, but the bathrooms will remain open and functional. Elizabeth Carey said that our voices from DG and city were heard. Elizabeth shared the plans for the opening of Stage Fort Park visitor center, on Tuesday May 21st starting 5-7:30pm. All are welcome to attend and bring brochures. The three tourism commission members will all be present, and Elizabeth asked if one of us might speak on behalf of our board.

3. Progress on Recruiting Commission Members

We are still looking for energetic applicants to express their interest. Jen is in process, as she first had to disqualify herself for the Open Spaces Commission.

Caitlin expressed a warm welcome to the member of the DDC, saying that it would be a welcome merger. There was discussion in that the process of combining the commission is just a concept, as the ordinance or charter would need to be modified. There are currently 5 members on the DDC Commission, and 4 on the Tourism Commission. The process to join the Tourism Commission requires any party interested in joining to send a

letter to the Mayor, along with a resume stating their intent. Once that is received and accepted, there is an in person interview, after that successful meeting, the candidate would need to be presented to the O&A board, then the city council, and then must be sworn in and take the ethics online exam before officially being able to participate.

Doug stated that the Tourism commission would welcome new members and would recommend that any interested parties to join one of our monthly meetings, held on the 4th Monday of the Month at 5pm-6:30pm, usually in the 1st Floor Conference room.

4. Strategic Planning - Commission Objectives for next 3 months

Ken H, shared that the current mission of the Tourism Commission should be reviewed as there are 3 of the 5 pieces that are conflicting with Discover Gloucester. Caitlin and Doug suggested that our priority over the summer is to define our mission and objectives. Kimberly asked about the budget available to the commission, Ken stated there was \$4k. There was discussion about meeting more frequently if we had more objectives to accomplish. Additional discussion about the city protocol for meetings requiring agendas and discussion to be open and recorded.

We discussed waiting to nominate a chair person till we have a full board and are closer to identifying a mission objective. The three board members agreed to rotate the agenda creation, taking of notes and running of the agenda. Next meeting Doug will submit the agenda and run the meeting. (Did we decide on the note taking for next time?)

Next Agenda should include reviewing by-laws, and brainstorming objectives of complimentary groups and identifying objectives that the Tourism Commission should take on.

Elizabeth suggested that the Tourism Commission should ideally be co-owners of the opening of Stage Fort Park Visitor Center. She had 3 other suggestions to ensure that the commission become a robust commission that could support Discover Gloucester.

1. Teaching/Training Volunteers. Currently Elizabeth is doing a 101 training for the Stage Fort Park Volunteers on May 21st. Caitlin explained that the commission agreed last week to support an online training component that Carol and Corey have started working on, which could be used by all businesses with a tourist facing staff to be sure we all support and server as welcoming ambassadors.
2. Events that extend the visitor season
 1. Restaurant week, Seafood festivals, Sails and Trails, Artweek, Monthly collection of promotional opportunities

from businesses, Valentines, “Cape Ann Life” promotions with the Chamber.

3. City Infrastructure projects

1. Signage, more Restrooms

2. Changes that improve the cleanliness and walkability of the city.

There was discussion from Jen Amero about painting trash cans to make cleaning the city more fun. Finding their way is difficult, we need to make it more welcoming.

- We should think about how we work together to create events and activities that extend the season.
- How can we capture the driving groups that want to come here and not stay overnight?
- There was about \$800K in taxes collected, increasing year round tax revenues to the city.

Rosalie suggested that we consider banners like those in Ipswich to alert people driving through about the events happening in Gloucester. Discussion happened around where – rotary, Main street or Rogers street. Ken mentioned that Rogers street is the street with the most circulation. And that the event organizer would be responsible to create their own banners.

Caitlin mentioned that today there was an announcement about a ban in the signs at the rotary.

Doug and Ken suggested that we brainstorm all these great ideas, using a white board and prioritize. We need to determine what the objectives and mission are.

Joe G. The DDC may have a conflict as they are also looking at signage for Rogers, Main and Railroad. They speak to local downtown businesses. Provide (with DPW) flowers. Holiday wreaths, planters. They do not run events.

5. Other items.

Doug, our next meeting is June 24th, we would like it to be on the FIRST floor conference room if possible. We need to print the by-laws, have a white board so that we can review overlapping objectives.

All agreed it was a great discussion and vibrant meeting.

Motioned to adjourn: Caitlin

2nd: Doug

Meeting adjourned; 6:15 pm