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Town of Stafford
Events & Celebrations Committee
Warren Memorial Town Hall
1st Floor Conference Room

Special Meeting
Monday, January 9, 2023
7:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Brian Jakusik, Brian Goepfrich, Jodi Harmon, Phen Harison, Rey Fabrizio, Chelsea Bellefeur, Laura Lybarger, Cassandra Forsythe

Members Absent: Beth Stringfield

Others Present: Alycia Johnston, Amber Wakely (*Town Representative*)

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting began at 7:01 PM.

2. Committee member introductions

The committee conducted introductions for all members.

3. Review the committee's charge and goals

Amber reviewed the current goals and objectives for the Committee. Amber clarified her role on the committee, indicating she would be the Town Hall Representative. Her role as a representative on the committee is to assist boards in making appropriate decisions in the planning and logistics of events overseen by the Committee. For example, ensuring site locations have appropriate infrastructure and that the event will have applicable town staff, i.e. (Police, Fire, and Parks staff). Amber indicated that she would be able to provide answers related to town logistics and help the board find reasonable solutions.

Amber informed all that we need to select one committee member to fill the role as temporary Committee Chair, and one Committee member to serve as a secretary of the committee. Questions about the positions were answered by Amber Wakely regarding the direct role responsibilities.

4. Appoint temporary chair

5. Appoint permanent recording secretary

Brian Goepfrich made a motion to nominate Brian Akusik as the 1/9/23 Temporary Committee Chair. The motion was seconded by Chelsea Bellfeur. The motion was voted on by all present members and approved unanimously.

Brian Akusik (Brian A.) was selected by the committee to serve as the temporary chair until the formalized vote was organized by the Committee.

Brian Goepfrich volunteered to record meeting minutes for the 1/9/23 meeting, until a formalized vote was organized by the Committee.

6. Discuss existing events and explore new functions

Brian A. asked Amber W. about previously hosted activities and past event sponsorship opportunities. Amber explained past sponsorships were derived from numerous town businesses, like fireworks sponsor Stafford Saving Bank. Amber also discussed past sponsorship opportunities related to the town's 300th anniversary in 2019, prior to the pandemic.

Jodi Harmon asked questions regarding proposing new events and the process of approval. Amber W. explained that new events can be proposed to the Board of Selectmen for approval, particularly those with large supporting budgets. Financial discussions continued, differentiating how the Committee and utilize both sponsorship/fundraising dollars and those allocated under the fiscal year budget.

Brian A. proposed that the group create a mission/vision statement to help guide the committee's work. In a roundtable discussion, members shared why they joined the Committee. Brian Goepfrich recorded responses, which will be utilized to craft a mission/vision statement. A discussion and statement formalization will take place at the next meeting.

Committee member responses included:

- Pride and love of the Town of Stafford, CT.
- Getting involved in the community.
- Developing activities for the youth of Stafford. Motivating youth to do well and providing youth with safe activities in town.
- Helping business flourish and get attention at events.
- Developing tourism that brings business into Stafford.
- Changing previous reputations, Stafford has had.
- Building collaboration between other community partners and civic organizations.
- Improve the quality of life of residents of Stafford.

Chelsea B. recommended the Committee inventory all town events, municipal and civic driven, during the calendar to ensure we do not duplicate work or waste resources.

The Committee discussed creating an inclusive town-wide calendar that would identify all events and their respective date, hosting organization, etc. The committee would need to seek information from businesses, the Town, Clubs, and organizations in Stafford. Members further discussed the ability to share information with residents and help build awareness for activities occurring in Stafford.

It was proposed by Brian G. that all events be recorded in a spreadsheet with known dates and the groups responsible for running the events.

Amber W. notified the committee she would create a Google Drive for the committee that would provide a space for electronic documents to be stored. In addition, she would upload a previously organized event list and compile information regarding previously hosted town events.

Community-Wide Cleanup Day

Amber W. provided a summary of the event and how it was previously organized. Amber W. indicated that it coincides with Earth Day. It was proposed by the committee that three different color bags be collected for recycling, deposits, and garbage. Members discussed the possibility of collecting returnables with deposits during the event and utilizing funds for future Committee events.

Brian A. and Chelsea B. recommended creating T-Shirts for the event, and that money could be raised from a Sponsorship. It was recommended by a member to approach USA Hauling trash company about possible sponsorship.

It was suggested that an art contest at the schools could provide a design for the shirt and engage more individuals in town. Outreach should begin with the Superintendent's Office and then further discussion with the Stafford Art Departments. Amber W. provided context that if the event were to have shirts, the Committee should solicit three price quotes from different vendors.

It was proposed by members that a competition be created to collect as many bags of trash as possible. Concerns regarding all individual's physical abilities were discussed, and it was recommended that for each bag of trash brought to the Town Hall, a participant would receive a raffle ticket for a prize. Members discussed collecting possible prizes from local businesses or sponsorships.

To assist in offsetting event costs, the Committee discussed recruiting the involvement of solar panel companies, energy efficiency solution companies, and/or similar industries to advertise, sponsor, or table at the event.

Cassandra F. had to leave the meeting.

Brain A. asked what communications/media look like for the Town of Stafford. It was indicated that Rotary could provide a list of media sources that they used to communicate events. Mentioned media included the Journal Inquirer, Patch, and radio stations in Willimantic and Storrs.

Laura L. arrived at the Committee meeting.

Following the discussion regarding Community Cleanup, the committee reviewed other events and new ideas.

An event could be held at the town's skating rink. Possibly contact minor league hockey teams to participate. Concerns regarding parking were brought to the committee's attention, and a logistical plan would need to be created.

A sledding event was discussed, and the event would be dependent on snow. Concerns regarding liability were also addressed regarding injuries.

Discussion regarding a possible Polar Bear Plunge that could be created as an annual event in the future. Jodi Harmon proposed this event. Event funds use to raise money for the Stafford Recreation Program Contacting Polar Beverages to sponsor the event. Proposed event to be held in March Time: 2024. The committee recognized that there is not enough time to plan the event for 2023.

7. FY 2023-2024 budget request

Amber W. reviewed the proposed budget for the committee. Please see attached document. The committee did not have any questions regarding the proposed budget.

8. Discuss committee chair for appointment by the Board of Selectman

A committee chair was not appointed at this time.

9. Set 2023 calendar of meetings

Amber W. informed the Committee that they would need to select a meeting time. Discussion followed, and Brian A., Temporary Chair, motioned for the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM at a Town Hall to be the official committee meeting time moving forward. Brian G. seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Next Committee meeting will be February 14th, 2023, at 6:30 PM, in the 1st Floor Conference Room at Town Hall.

Members were reminded to collect information about events currently going on in town for the 2023-2024 year.

10. Adjournment

Committee Meeting concluded at 8:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian J. Goepfrich
Interim Secretary
Town of Stafford of Events and Celebrations Committee

