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Minutes 11/17/2010

Arlington Scenic Byway/Tourism and Economic Development Committee

Wednesday, November 17, 2010, 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Town Hall Annex, Second Floor Conference Room

Minutes

Present: Kirsy Allison-Ampe, Bob Bowles, Roly Chaput, Carol Kowalski, Sharon Shaloo, Howard Winkler

Not Present: Tom Davison, Daniel Hodge, Michael Ginns, Diane Mahon, JoAnn Robinson, Clarissa Rowe

Observing: Laurence McKinney

The meeting was called to order by Acting Chair, Roly Chaput, at 8:25 a.m.

The Minutes of the October 20th meeting were approved with corrections.

Reports

Scenic Byway Project: Howard Winkler attended the November 9th meeting of the Battle Road Scenic Byway project, held in Cary Auditorium, Lexington. Approximately 45 people attended, four of whom were Arlington residents. The presentation reflected public input collected from all four communities. One last public meeting will be held in February. Sharon Shaloo will contact the project to get the date and will send it out to the entire committee so members can save the date to attend.

Winkler also noted that Lexington has now published a tourism brochure, the result of two years of work. It was funded with an appropriation from the town. Shaloo noted that if Arlington were to produce a brochure, the committee might consider applying to the Arlington Cultural Council for printing funds if Town Meeting was unable to appropriate funds for the project.

Town Initiatives of Note:

1. Roly Chaput distributed copies of the Public Art Survey that was developed by an informal group of interested residents. The data is being collected by Don Benjamin, a part-time employee of the Town Planning Department who is charged with - among other tasks - developing a plan for public art in town. Carol Kowalski noted that many cities and towns across the country have recognized public art as an economic and public-improvement generator. New England lags behind in its commitment to public art projects, but Arlington is investing in a study of its potential.

Shaloo noted that Benjamin teamed with the Cultural Council and Center for the Arts to do a public-art demonstration project at September's Town Day. Kowalski agreed to keep the committee informed of Benjamin's activities.

2. New Publication: Shaloo reported that she has learned of a new publication detailing the artist/cultural population of Arlington at the turn of the last century. It is being developed by the Historical Society and Dallin Museum, and will be published in time for the Dallin centennial celebrations in Fall 2011.

Winkler invited committee members to attend the next Historical Society meeting, the topic of which is "Kitchens of Arlington."

3. Web Presentation: Shaloo suggested committee members visit the Harlow Scientific website and review the "About Us"

section of the site. There is presented a good model for the way the Committee might present its mission and activities in such a way that it keeps its Mission Statement concise but then develops the philosophy under-girding that mission in a longer narrative about the committee's guiding principles and goals.

Discussion:

Project Ideas

Kirsi Allison-Ampe suggested a number of tourism ideas the committee might adopt as projects that would guide people through the town: "geo-caching" and "letter-box" initiatives (which Sharon Shaloo noted might benefit from the work Karen Dillon did on the "Art Hunt" she created); a public-art project that might be focused on mosaics to build upon the already strong foundations Arlington has in this art form; an "I Spy" Uncle Sam project, hiding small figures of Uncle Sam around town.

Allison-Ampe further suggested developing synergies with groups that are meeting in Arlington: creating, e.g., a lunch/ dinner promotion project that partners with the Boston Zydeco monthly dances at the Elks club, with the various rides sponsored by the motorcycle and bicycle shops in town.

On the subject of social media & web promotion, Allison-Ampe suggested an initiative to tag Arlington sites and business on Google Earth, sponsoring a training session so that residents could join the effort to accomplish this end. She further enumerated other web initiatives, such as downloadable walking tours, shopping guides, foodie locations, etc. She suggested a web and real-time link to other towns and cities named "Arlington" throughout the U.S., developing a visiting program to promote "All Arlington All the Time" here and in those communities, and suggested some "Shop Local" initiative (e.g., with local tokens of support). Bob Bowles commented on the overlap and differences with "Shop Arlington First."

Book recommendation: Great Good Place. Does Arlington have, or can it develop, viable "third spaces," places that are not work or home and that invite gathering and socializing.

ZIP Code Information: Bob Bowles will discuss with Chamber members ideas for an easy method of collecting ZIP codes. He will report to the Committee on Chamber suggestions. The idea will likely set a target timeframe for collecting the information, a method that requires little effort on the part of merchants, and a token of appreciation (e.g., an "I Shop/Like/etc Arlington" booster button, provided to customers/visitors/attendees for their participation).

The SB/TED committee will produce the materials for the initiative, collect the data from participating merchants, and create a report.

Adjournment:

At 8:55 a.m. the meeting was adjourned owing to a loss of quorum. Discussion of the agenda items remaining will continue at the December 15th meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Shaloo, Clerk
Arlington Scenic Byway/Tourism/Economic Development Committee

Upcoming meeting:

December 15, 2010, 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Town Hall Annex, Second Floor Conference Room