

## SANDWICH BUSINESS GROUP

### MINUTES

January 5, 2009

#### ATTENDING:

Ben Adriance, Don Brown, Patsy Carega, Susan Davies, Julie Deak, Diane Johnson, Sue Lirakis, Nancy Papp, Lisa Scott, Don Sutton, Sarah Zuccarelli

Chairman Don Brown called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m. at Mocha Rizing.

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the December 2008 meeting were approved.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

Julie reported that at year end we have a balance of \$2,430.92. All bills have been paid. The treasurer's report was approved.

#### EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Recap of Christmas in the Village

SBG contributed to the costs of the horse and carriage ride. Don Sutton's experience was more people in the gallery than in past years but virtually no sales. The Garden Club pleased with number of people. Julie reported 130-150 people came to the Historical Society. Saturday was much better attended than Sunday. Patsy reported wonderful atmosphere. The horse and carriage was a great idea. Susan reported that the ladies aid luncheon had a better year than last year. Diane had 50 people come through her shop. Diane kept the comment cards and said the respondents loved the gingerbread contest, horse drawn carriage rides and the overall atmosphere. Nancy reported a good turn-out at Mocha Rizing and applauded Diane for the extensive write up and publicity. Maybe next year we will give the driver a little more direction regarding stops en route. Should we consider asking him to return on Sunday afternoon (12-3:00)? Nancy will bring a report of finances for the next SBG meeting.

Other events that we can support with volunteers and publicity: Winter Carnival (weekend of February 7th ) and The Sled Dog Race (weekend of February 20-22nd ).

#### MARKETING COMMITTEE UPDATE

2009 Brochure: Don B reported that Janina Lamb's proposal for her involvement in graphic design is to charge the group a flat fee of \$1,000. Creating the back panel for use in bulk mailing will take a fair amount of work. She has three quotes on printing 25,000 copies this year. The best price was Keystone Press who printed last year's brochure: \$1,953 plus \$72 for a plate change. Last year we paid \$1,600 for 20,000 copies.

After discussing Janina's proposal, it was moved, seconded and approved to retain Janina as our graphic designer for the 2009 brochure. Don, Lisa, Susan, Diane and Patsy will coordinate pictures and colors for the 2009 brochure.

Annual dues: Don B. reported that there is no formal proposal at this meeting, although, because of the increase in cost of the brochure he is anticipating approximately \$15 increase in membership to \$90 for basic membership.

Web Site: Don Sutton did some homework on web site enhancements. He met with Aidan McHenry. Aidan feels that the web site is reasonable and sees no obvious negative aspects. Aidan and Don's son, Eric, reinforced that Metatags are important for the web site and every web page: title, key words and descriptions are important. Too many words in Eric's terms "waters down the juice" and is not compelling. Have relevant content and links. One way links are even better than two way links. 29 SBG businesses have web sites and only three have links back to SBG. Aidan said the web sites are important for every business. One suggestion is for SBG to offer a page as an internal link for businesses. From a marketing perspective people want to see a shopping cart. Pay pal is a resource. Don talked with both Aidan and Eric about blogging. Aidan didn't think that blogging per se adds a lot. The other aspect of blogging would be relevant articles about the town that could be compelling information that Google would pick up.

Aidan said that with respect to marketing, the web site is less important than other efforts to draw people in, e.g. bill boards. Aidan is not a web designer. If you're going to get a web designer you have to pay for it and be sure to review their portfolios first. Don S. asked Aidan about Google ads. Since Discover Sandwich is not a merchandising site, Google ads would not work for us and would cost a lot of money. We would get charged each hit. For individual businesses it might be a different story.

Compelling content is Don's biggest take-a-way. Posting videos is good. Lisa: do we have one of the horse drawn carriage? Google's clients are those people who are looking for information.

Don Brown asked Don Sutton for his recommendation. Don S. indicated he is working on Metatags and he would suggest posting articles and archiving them, e.g. Diane's column describing Christmas in the Village. Don S. would be willing to continue as web master under these circumstances.

Do we want to offer a web page on the Discover Sandwich site for members? We agreed to explore the details of what would be involved. Members of the marketing committee will develop a proposal to bring back to a future meeting.

Bob suggested that we have an informal session re: web site design. Those who have some experience either constructing their own sites or contracting the service could share lessons learned. The idea sparked Lisa's suggestion that SBG offer something similar to the chambers' "After Hours" sessions. Bob was asked to organize one on web site design.

#### TOWN OF SANDWICH MASTER PLAN QUESTIONNAIRE

The stated purpose of the master plan process is to identify critical issues facing Sandwich over the next 20 years. The criteria for submitting ideas are to offer three unambiguous, concise and forward thinking suggestions. The SBG subcommittee of Patsy, Julie, Don S and Lisa submitted their recommendations:

Collaboration/cooperation – including town government

Definitions – clearly understand those that apply to our town

How important is it that we encourage businesses in town...?

A lively discussion followed, and it was agreed that SBG's role would be to weigh in from the standpoint of what is best for businesses in town. With that in mind the following recommendations quickly surfaced:

Collaboration/cooperation among all town entities

Parking

Broadband access

Sarah announced that the Master Planning Sub Committee has called a meeting at 4:00 p.m. January 6th at Town Hall to hear the presentations of three consultants who have submitted proposals to do strategic planning. She encouraged members of the SBG to attend.

Bob noted that there was a lot of interest and evident energy expressed in the topic and wondered if it might be fruitful to schedule another discussion of the business community's interests in the master planning process. Nancy P. offered to host an evening "After Hours" session for this purpose. We agreed to wait until after the February meeting to schedule this session. As chair of SBG, Don B will talk to Town Hall re: the Master Plan.

**SBG ANNUAL MEETING JANUARY 28th**

The format will be similar to last year: 6:00 p.m. start time, light dinner fare and a short business meeting. Lisa will send out post cards. Don will send email notices. \$15.00 per head. Don B. asked for 30 copies of last year's Annual Meeting Minutes and Treasurer's report for handouts.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next SBG meeting will be February 2, 2009 at 8:30 a.m. at Mocha Rizing.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bob MacArthur