

Distinguished Visitors Committee

Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 9, 2023, 7:00 PM

Ropewalk Conference Room, 2nd Floor, Plymouth Town Hall
26 Court Street, Plymouth, MA 02360

1) Roll Call: Anticipated Attendance

- 1) Harry Helm, Select Board designee
- 2) Kim Savery, School Committee designee
- 3) Steven Lydon, Visitors Services Board designee
- 4) Evelyn Strawn, See Plymouth designee
- 5) Matt Tavares, Town Meeting Member designee
- 6) Sandra Almaguer, at-large
- 7) Margie Burgess, at-large
- 8) Scott Coogan, at-large
- 9) Len Levin, at-large
- 10) Andy Loretz, at-large
- 11) Absent (with advance notice):
 - i) Paula Harris, Chamber of Commerce designee
 - ii) Chris Talamo, at-large

2) Meeting called to order at 7:07 PM

3) Old Business:

- 1) A motion was made by Steven Lydon to vote to approve the previous meeting minutes (2/16/23); the motion was seconded by Matt Tavares; passes unanimously.
- 2) Welcome new members:
 - i) A reminder was given to newly appointed members to complete the Conflict of Interest training and any other forms provided by Anthony Senesi in the email notifying those members of their appointment to this committee.
- 3) Brief overview of the overall status and work of the committee: the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on this committee, virtual delegations, upcoming delegation visit to Shichigahama (summer 2023), student delegation selection process, elected/town official delegation selection process
 - i) A brief overview was provided of the work done by this committee over the last several years.
- 4) Re-aligning the committee:
 - i) VOTE on committee chair:
 - (1) Kim Savery nominated Andy Loretz; the nomination was seconded by Steven Lydon; the nomination passed unanimously.

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- ii) VOTE on committee vice chair
 - (1) Harry Helm nominated Steven Lydon; the nomination was seconded by Kim Savery; the nomination passed unanimously.
- iii) VOTE on committee clerk
 - (1) Matt Tavares nominated Scott Coogan; the nomination was seconded by Steven Lydon; the nomination passes unanimously.
- 5) Account: update on the current account balance (\$76,680.96).
 - i) The VSB will vote at their next meeting to add their contribution of \$5,000 for the following fiscal year (FY24).
 - ii) It was explained that although the account balance seems high at the moment, \$21,000-\$30,000 will be spent on sending the adult contingent of the delegation to Shichigahama this summer, along with an official gift. It was also noted that the \$30,000-\$40,000 for student ambassadors' flights for this summer's visit to Shichigahama will need to be covered by the account balance. The remaining balance will be needed next year (2024) when we host an official delegation from Shichigahama, which has typically cost several thousands of dollars.
 - iii) Andy Loretz was noted that the account balance is slightly higher due to the COVID-19 pandemic canceling events and negating costs of hosting delegations in 2020.
 - iv) Andy Loretz noted that while costs have continued to rise year over year for hosting distinguished visitors in Plymouth, as well as sending delegations abroad, the \$5,000 contribution from the three contributing boards has remained the same since this committee was established in 2011.
 - v) Andy Loretz will send the committee members the latest account information available within the next few days.

4) New Business:

- 1) Update on the student delegation and teacher chaperones going to Shichigahama (summer 2023)
 - i) An overview was provided for new members of the committee on the selection process for students and teacher chaperones.
 - ii) The finalized list of selected students and teacher chaperones is:

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- (1) Jonathan Bird, PSMS, grade 7
 - (2) Bridget Blaisdell, PSMS, grade 8
 - (3) Sara Deacon, PSMS, grade 7
 - (4) Lily DeMarco, PCIS, grade 8
 - (5) Samuel Emery, PCIS, grade 8
 - (6) Henry Farrag, PSMS, grade 7
 - (7) Isabelle Guenthner, PSMS, grade 8
 - (8) Sophia Kovach, PCIS, grade 8
 - (9) Violet Luke, PSMS, grade 8
 - (10) Lila Shay, PCIS, grade 8
 - (11) Jacklyn Gervias, PCIS, teacher chaperone
 - (12) Jacie Veno, PSMS, teacher chaperone
- iii) Student/Family Orientation Meeting:
- (1) The first orientation meeting for students is on Monday, March 13, 2023 at 7:00 PM at the School Department Central Office in the Mayflower Room.
 - (2) This meeting will provide important information for the student ambassadors and their families, as well as expectations for their delegation visit. Students/families will provide official documents to the committee and school department. An update on this orientation will be provided at the next meeting.
- iv) Facilitating and supporting family/student-arranged fundraising efforts
- (1) Audience with the Rotary Club:
 - (a) Kim Savery reported that she has been in contact with Jeff Cohen of the Plymouth Rotary Club, who will be coordinating a way to have the student ambassador delegation present to the Rotary Club regarding seeking a charitable donation.
 - (2) Andy Loretz noted that all student ambassadors and their families were made aware of the cost of the trip ranging up to \$4,000, and all families agreed that they were going to pay for their travel to Japan, as well as participate in fundraising efforts. Andy Loretz also reminded the committee

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that it was voted at our last meeting to provide very limited financial aid to student ambassadors on an as-needed basis.

- 2) Update on the elected/town official delegation going to Shichigahama (summer 2023)
 - i) Two school committee members will travel to Shichigahama this summer as part of the delegation. Those members will be:
 - (1) Kimberly Savery
 - (2) Luis Pizano
 - ii) Those currently representing the town in an official capacity this summer as part of the delegation will be:
 - (1) Derek Brinndisi
 - (2) A Select Board member or other individual representing the town in an official capacity to be determined.
- 3) Update on the travel arrangements from the travel agent:
 - i) VOTE to spend \$3,200 for the deposit for the delegation's flight tickets:
 - (1) A motion was made by Andy Loretz to vote to spend \$3,200 on the cost of deposits for flights for the delegation; the motion was seconded by Steven Lydon; the motion passed unanimously.
- 4) Town Flag information for Shichigahama's International Days
 - i) The Kokusaimura at Shichigahama has requested an official flag for the Town of Plymouth for their International Days Celebration, occurring in May. It was noted that we should expedite this process for them, due to delivery likely taking several weeks.
 - (1) A motion was made by Steven Lydon to seek out the correct flag, purchase it, and send it to the Kokusaimura in Shichigahama using the committee's funds; the motion was seconded by Andy Loretz; the motion passed unanimously.
- 5) Begin planning the official gift(s) to Shichigahama to send with the delegation traveling this summer
 - i) Discussion occurred regarding potential gift ideas to send with the delegation visiting Shichigahama this summer. Several ideas were brainstormed and considered. This issue will be tabled to our next meeting, where more detailed ideas can be presented and decided upon.

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- 6) Items not reasonably anticipated by the chair
 - i) Matt Tavares asked about the status and health of the cherry tree in Brewster Gardens provided as a gift/commemoration to Mayor Abe from Shichigahama. Matt will follow up with the Parks Department.
 - ii) Kim Savery noted that Janet Young (former chair of this committee) will be seeking to present to this committee a fundraising request for another organization, likely at the next meeting.
 - iii) Len Levin noted that this committee should update this committee's Charter as part of new business in a subsequent meeting.
- 5) **Next meeting date:** Thursday, April 13th at 7:00 PM at Town Hall in the Ropewalk Conference Room, pending space/time availability.
- 6) **Meeting adjourned at 8:31 PM**
 - 1) **A motion to adjourn was made by Steven Lydon; the motion was seconded by Matt Tavares; the motion passed unanimously.**