

Economic Development Council Meeting
Business Summit III Minutes
March 18, 2008; 1:00 pm
Town Hall Auditorium

Present:

Members: Chairman Steve Melamed, Thanassi Kuliopulos, Bonnie Adams-Campbell

Staff: Assistant Town Manager David Gardner, Grant Administrator Michelle Jarusiewicz, Director of Tourism Lisa Bowden, Town Manager Sharon Lynn

Board of Selectmen: Austin Knight, Mary-Jo Avellar, Lynn Davies

Absent: Astrid Berg, excused; Marty Huey, excused; Michael Carroll, excused
William Dougal, unexcused; Todd Dever unexcused

Others: Candace Collins-Bowden, Elaine Anderson, Mick Rudd, Jim Bakker, Steve Melamed, Steve Tait, Bryan Greene, Robert and Ghee Patrick, Judy Cicero, Susan Avellar, Bay State Cruises, PTV

Opening remarks and introductions, Michelle Jarusiewicz:

EDC initiatives:

Adams Grant

Provincetown specific database funded through the CCEDC

Workforce Panel

January survey 437 (26% response) 843 H2B & J1 combined needs for workers; about an even split between each visa type.

Darin Janoplis, Business Owner

Jane Nichols Bishop, Peak Season Workforce

David Augustino, Cape & Islands Workforce Development

Al Roy, Career Opportunities

Teresa Lawrence, Career Opportunities

In 2000, the 66K cap came to the H2B visas; in 2004, the tally was being kept and enforced. Current/returning H2B workers in the country were exempted. Computer glitches made the counting of visa holders inaccurate. In 2005 the 66K was split; 33K in April, 33K in October. Returning worker exemptions may continue into the future. This is a current hot button political issue as part of comprehensive immigration reform and its resolution is still unclear. The H2B program is being held hostage to an immigrant amnesty program. In 2006 the exemption for returning workers was removed (reinstated for 2007, but gone again) creating this workforce problem we are currently experiencing.

10% of all H2B visa holders are part of Cape Cod's workforce.

Workforce Investment Board: History of workforce issues on the cape is based primarily on its seasonal economy, and its ballooning need for workers on a short term basis. Mismatch on Cape Cod with wages and expenses. High cost of living does not match up with the wages earned. Higher unemployment average for the Cape as compared to the rest of the state. Two events planned: May 10th event presented by the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce. The WIB will provide customer service training for employers with new, incoming employees.

Al Roy: JTech, Labor exchange services. This company runs a career center matching job seekers and employers. They also provide recruiting services. Maintains a database to facilitate workforce development; www.Capejobs.com. Self service website for employers on MA.gov website as well. March 24th Career Opportunities program being offered in Hyannis. Monday, April 14th, from 1 to 5 pm a Hospitality Services job fair will be held.

Jane Nichols Bishop, J1 and H2B recruiter.

J1 visa program offer cultural visas, rather than workforce visas. J1 visas are available for 3-4 months for work and they must travel for the last month of their visa timeframe. J1 visa holders are not tied to any specific employers, nor are there any guarantees from these visa holders. There is no limit on J1 workers. Russian workers will only be available for 3 months of work; most others are available for 4 months of work. Suggestion to pay an end of work bonus to retain J1 workers for their entire work period. Decrease in J1 visa holders as a result of the weak dollar.

There is still a draw on Cape Cod for these workers as it has the reputation of a desirable destination. Suggestion that if J1 contracts have already been executed, continue to email/contact the workers to reinforce the commitment between the worker and the employer.

DS20-19, permission to enter the country, must be presented to the embassy prior to entry. Housing will be an issue for these workers; be prepared to help these J1 workers. These workers may not be mature, given their age, and may need additional support from their employers.

Question regarding the development of innovative housing options for these workers. Payment for housing up front is an issue for these J1 workers and this can be something that an employer can provide help with that will make a difference in getting these workers: H2B as well as J1 workers. Employers must be competitive with employers throughout the United States.

Is there a tendency of the J1 visa holders to only work 1 job? Depends on the individual workers circumstances, ask why they want to come? There is no restriction on the amount of time a J1 worker can work, nor the number of jobs they may hold.

Is there a minimum salary for J1 workers? No, but they should be paid on an equal basis of other workers. If they can get paid more elsewhere, they'll go for it. There is no way to prevent that other than paying equitably.

The busing in of employees most likely will not be successful here as it is such a long drive down to Provincetown. Workforce housing most likely will be needed to meet the employment needs. Discussion on the impact of the long commute, and any potential offset/funding for transportation costs.

Comment on changing zoning by-laws to allow accessory use housing with guest houses, etc. to meet the seasonal workforce housing needs. This needs to be addressed on a long-term basis in town.

Discussion on college student recruitment issues. The need to leave before the end of the season to resume classes is one issue. College students also have the pressure to work internships rather than work summer jobs.

H2B workers can be found that can be recruited to work here on the Cape. The start dates are most likely in May and/or June, rather than in April, but they are available. Workers from the south or out west are not earning as much as the pay scale up here and she is making contacts with available workers. Contact Jane for more information.

Even if the extension for returning H2B workers is passed (unlikely), the interview dates in the Jamaican Embassy are now being scheduled for the end of June or beginning of July.

If you have an approved labor certificate, and you have various key employees, file now for the October 1 entry date. Then find the employee a winter employment position, filing a visa extension, I129, and then these workers can come back in the spring for the next season. These workers cannot leave the country once they have been extended. They can stay for up to 36 months.

Community Relations: Officer Carrie Lopes, Provincetown Police Department

1990, traditional policing no longer appropriate. Hate crime prevention program developed that has become a model for nationwide programs. No tolerance for hate crime in this town. No hate crime in town in the last 5 years. Some incidents, no crimes. In 2000, the community policing initiative was suspended. Currently this community policing initiative is being reinstated. The No Place for Hate campaign is a part of this initiative. Incidents of bias are met head on as part of the prevention campaign. Anti-defamation League collaboration in both Truro and Provincetown. Hate groups do exist on the Cape and in the State and in the country. Recent community survey conducted by the police department requesting information on bias issues; only 2 surveys were returned. 3rd Thursday of every month, meeting of the No Place for Hate Committee; everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

Attorney General's office reviews all alleged hate crime files to determine the existence of bias, which is the pivotal factor for determining whether or not a hate crime has occurred.

The protocol and system is in place to deal with hate crimes on a preventative and proactive basis, for the continued safety of our community.

There has recently been a slight increase in hate incidents and the department is working diligently to eliminate this. There is a training program in place for all incoming summer officers to detail the policies, procedures and program in place to deal with hate crimes. This training is done on a yearly basis for all summer officers.

Training and outreach is also being done with the immigrant workers to mitigate cultural differences in the effort to prevent any bias or hate issues.

May 21st training scheduled for summer police officers. Hopefully this training can be rolled out to the public via a public forum.

There are a number of identifiable tattoos associated with hate groups. These can be indicators of bias, as well as language, action or motivation.

Discussion on ways that we can respond to issues that may arise due to the lack of workforce. Training is done on tourism with the incoming summer officers by the Provincetown Chamber of Commerce. Look to experienced officers for some help and support. The Chamber maintains a very involved relationship with these seasonal officers to encourage their understanding of our town. The town police training involves introducing officers to town businesses to learn more about them. There is a large effort to help these officers learn as much as possible about the town and its businesses. Police are often the first line of contact with the public. Business owners are encouraged to also provide this support for the tourists as a line of support. Summer officer training has been expanded from 1 to 2 weeks.

Discussion on issues that cause summer officers to not return on a regular basis. Workforce housing for summer officers. There had been a house for rent in Truro for summer officers, which is no longer available. Provincetown is a small town with big issues; this is an extremely special environment. The training here will prepare someone to work for any law enforcement agency.

Discussion on the deployment of officers in Lopes Square and the perception that they are not doing anything. The expectation is that these officers are to be directing traffic, but this is an incredibly different and difficult intersection to try to manage. Not everyone can be as effective as Donald Thomas.

Discussion on the Truro details that were used in town. The staffing issues of the department require additional support from other departments. The liberal use of smiles can go far towards improving the relationship between our police and our residents and visitors alike.

Discussion on elders and disabled training for the officers. DECIDE training on personal safety, frauds and scams. Lockbox program free of charge to senior residents. Reassurance program in place for daily phone-ins. Council on Aging coordinates these programs.

Discussion on mentoring summer officers by fulltime officers. Program is in place without specific assignments. Shift supervisors act as mentors for summer officers and can also be liaisons between the community and summer officers. Positive feedback is always important. With the issue of short handedness for all employers, we will need to be especially tolerant and supportive of each other's needs.

Partners in Tourism

Candace Collins-Boden, Chamber of Commerce; Lisa Bowden, Tourism Director; Mick Rudd, VSB; Don Knuttela, PBG

Candace:

Each of these groups meets 2 times per year for the last 3 years to coordinate the promotion and marketing efforts for Provincetown. There is a lot of state support for marketing. The annual Governor's conference is exceedingly helpful. MassPort sponsored trips have also been very helpful. With the soft dollar, we may be seeing a greater amount of domestic tourists this year. AAA has been getting a huge increase in the amount of travel requests. New emerging international markets are also being developed (mostly out of Asia). Motor coach travel will most likely be increased

as well. Public transportation is of immense importance to our tourist economy. The internet has expanded the marketing of the town. Travel writers hosted and brought here are providing a huge service to the tourism industry and the marketing of town. Public transportation, public services such as restrooms and trash pick up will impact tourism. There is the need to fund the articles at town meeting to provide essential services to support the tourism industry. Concern aired about the potential customer service issues that may come about due to the lack of a large enough workforce. The importance of being surrounded by one of the greatest national parks in this country. The National Park Service does a huge amount of marketing and provides busses to transport its visitors around to the various locations of interest in this area. We need to build on the relationship with this largest of partners in our community. MacMillan Wharf reconstruction, wastewater treatment, Lopes Square, PAAM, PTC, Library, Seashore Point, Waterfront Park, the development of Fisherman's Pier.

Don:

30th year of PBG. Market to Gay and Lesbian markets, much organizing within the business community. In the past 10,000 issues of a marketing magazine. New initiative is to write a 48 page, editorial style magazine to promote Provincetown. Over 25,000 have been distributed so far. Development of an in-town map of PBG member businesses. Over \$100,000 worth of advertising in gay & lesbian publications. New website design initiative. Cooperative marketing: G&L Expo in NYC on April 5 & 6, bags to be distributed at the expo. 3000 bags are going to be distributed. PBG visibility at other travel shows through the country. National advertising, 800 phone numbers, website hits. Targeting specific cities to promote Provincetown to. The specialness of Provincetown as being an open and accepting community to and for gays. Continue to direct visitors to Ptown.org. 30th Carnival this year. 2 yard sale weekends Memorial Day and in November. Holly Folly in December. New initiative - Cabaret weekend to be held on the same weekend as single women's weekend. PBG funded by the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce for the first time this year with a \$5000 grant.

Discussion on the targeting of marketing to the GLBT tourist rather than to Cape residents. Use of the Cape Cod Chamber e-news blast suggested.

Mick:

VSB as the policy board, in its 11th year, that oversees the tourism budget garnered from the room tax revenue. 1st tourism board on the Cape whose goal is to reinvest tourism dollars to further promote the tourism industry in town. The coordination of efforts of all of the marketing arms that exist in town so there is no duplication of effort, more comprehensive and more effective over time. VSB, in these times of financial duress currently spends 49% of its budget goes to marketing, 24% goes to grants to promote events of organizations and people, 19% to administration, 8% supporting municipal budgets, 1% beautification. The grant process and training and support for events are an important service that the VSB provides to ensure that each grant is a successful experience, from its marketing to its outcome. International Film Festival is one of the VSB grant recipient. Schooner Regatta is another grant recipient. Next regatta likely from Gloucester to Provincetown on the weekend after Labor Day.

Lisa:

The offseason is the busy time for marketing purposes. Discover New England and PowWow trade shows, etc. Formation of next year's marketing plan. Stretch the dollars and get the best bang from the buck. Launch of April 1st advertising campaign from the state department of tourism. State is now going to be marketing as a gay friendly travel destination for the state as a whole. Work with the PBG, Chamber and the Tourism office will continue to collaborate for the best results for everyone.

Discussion on considering collaboration between and among all of the cultural organizations as well as these business organizations.

Discussion on partner relationships for marketing and promoting Provincetown. For example Cape Air and Bay State Cruises can partner with the Tourism Office to fund an advertising budget.

Discussion on grassroots development of identifying the goods and services that our next generation of visitors will want and what will keep them coming back. Family Week as the vehicle for developing a whole new generation of visitors to town. This is very important to the development of our tourism future. Family Week is one of the fastest growing promotional weekends being held in town.

Discussion about larger groups wanting to come to Provincetown, but the town not having the facilities to accommodate them. There are requests, but most groups want to remain in one self-contained place. The Chamber is actively working to try to change this paradigm to encourage large groups, especially in the off season. Provincetown is a small, walking town and having group participants at separate lodgings should not be an issue. PBG is also working on this, again, especially in the off season. Gay Pilot's Association holds its annual meeting here. Fantasia Fair is a large group meeting that lasts for 9 days!

Discussion on the needs of tour operators and development of international tourism.

Everyone is looking forward to Spring and our upcoming season. Thank you.

Summit ended at 4:39 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Germain

Amy Germain
Recording Secretary