

Visitor Services Board
March 6, 2008
10:00 a.m.
Judge Welsh Room

Members present: Laurel Guadazno, Kathleen Fitzgerald, Michael Peregon, Rita “Hersh” Schwartz, Rob Tosner, Michelle Haynes and Mick Rudd.

Member absent: None

Staff: Lisa Bowden, Tourism Director;
Rex McKinsey, Harbormaster

Others: Bradley Reichard and Frank Smith, FOCUS Communications

The meeting was called to order at 10:04 a.m.

FOCUS Communications Update

FOCUS Communications: “Having worked with the town for the past two years, it is a privilege to continue to work to promote the town” -presentation of initial results of RFP and background presentation by FOCUS Communications. Media outreach efforts – advocacy and preventative media portrayal. 2006 results were exceeded by 100%, pamphlet distributed to board members.

Results: 2006 was a good year, 2007 was an excellent year. FAM trips, print circulation of materials to approximately 6 million viewers. These are unweighted numbers (no multiplier). Video, Internet, TV or cable viewers not included.

Ad equivalency – how a print story equates to an advertisement in any print media. Ad equivalency is calculated at an approximate \$700K. Discussion on whether this is a realistic figure – industry standards. The list price of advertising is generally greater than the amount actually paid. The value of editorial coverage can be much greater than other media/story coverage.

Screening of Eco-tourism VNR (Video News Report). This is already up and running on YouTube for reviewing purposes prior to final editing and production. Feedback - there is no mention of the activities on the wharf, would like to see more of that. Request that the footage of the whale watch remove their credit on the actual footage and have it run as a credit at the end. Same issue with the Banner credits.

Screening of GLBT VNR. Discussion/comments: There should be more balanced with women, the amount of drag, and include more activities of the GLBT community.

General note on revisions of VNRs, any additional clips must be of the same production quality/value in order to be used successfully.

Discussion on managing lead times for articles and the schedule of disseminating materials. Using MySpace and Facebook, using avatars (such as Chris & John, who produced cable shows here in town), as the vehicle for reaching a younger audience - this is known as social marketing. There are now two very different generations that need to be reached in very different ways.

The Tourism Director mentioned the work being completed by a PHS intern to determine the interests of young travelers through a survey being distributed to young adults via a social network.

Discussion, in preparation for town meeting, on the justification of the money spent on FOCUS v. the amount that otherwise would have been spent on advertising. The value of a third party endorsement via a story is much higher than paid advertising.

Stories are now circulating on a year-round basis for tourism in Provincetown. Social networking is a great new tool, but we don't want to leave behind those tried and true methods that are working.

Board request for a continuous loop be provided by the first week in April for the GLBT expo.

Waterfront Park

Rex McKinsey, Harbormaster

Courtesy float, gangway and marine services bid will be going out by the end of March. Sewer, pump out station engineering is currently underway. Transient, commercial fishing boats will be looked at closely. These boats are bringing visitors into town, but otherwise the town is not benefiting financially from these boats. Public Hearing on the Courtesy Float: reduced size from 70 feet to 40 feet, based on input from the community.

Waterfront Park bid was pushed out to March 20th; there are approximately 15 submissions so far. Request was made to at least one VSB member to attend the meeting that with Sandy Turner (DPW), Rex McKinsey and Lisa Bowden to further discuss the bid process. Need to choose light figures for the pump out station. Electrical fixtures will be installed.

Discussion on signage for future consideration. Signage has been created for the front of Lopes Square and for the visitors coming down the wharf: *Welcome to Provincetown*. With the electricity now, the water spigot at courtesy float will be connected to a coin meter so that it is not always flowing. Discussion on the infrastructure that will be required for the pump out station. Electrical box must be 3 feet above grade. Beautification of these structures will be a consideration.

Discussion of the use of the courtesy float as recreational, with the continuation or traditional use as commercial. Park design issues may need to address this. Discussion on the pump out station. Tanks, venting, odors, sewer connection, pump noise.

Cruise Ship Marketing

Rex, Candy & Lisa will be meeting to discuss ACCL (American Canadian Cruise Line) with Provincetown as a port of call. They will be coming in 8 times this season. This is a more upscale cruise line. The boat will be arriving at 8 am and leaving the following morning at 5 am. The boats need to be greeted and information disseminated about Provincetown. Last year, these cruisers were bused out of town for their touring. This is something to be worked on for this year. The importance of greeting passengers from the ships should not be underestimated. Itineraries are being developed with the cruise line for the use of cruise participants for both those who want to do independent touring or more guided touring. Board Chair stated it is absurd that the VSB greet people coming into town only to send them off to upper Cape destinations. It is incumbent upon the VSB to find the ways to keep visitors in town. The VSB should be very pro-active about this. Destination management services are a way to look at this. Discussion on connecting with the larger ships coming into Boston. Provincetown is on the list of historic ports from this marketing effort. The Boston marketing is aimed at the cruise ship owners, rather than the patrons.

It appears that ACCL will be much like Cape Air and Bay State Cruises in that they are looking to partner actively with the town to the benefit of both. Request made to the board for assistance with the itineraries that are being created for the cruise ships. Michelle and Hersh volunteered. Harbormaster has requested that the beach bags request also include approximately 200 additional bags that can be given to out of his office.

Best Read Guide

Authorization requested for the payment of \$8,916 for services for the Best Read Guide. This is approximately \$600 over the amount in the budget.

Mick moved the approval of the contract for Best Read Guide Distribution and Publication Service

Rob 2nd. All vote to approve, 7-0-0

Beach Bags

Beach bags, under \$1/bag. Approximately 1000 bags will be ordered. Exact same bag will be printed. Is this enough? Board decided upon 2,500 beach bags.

Rob moved to approve the expenditure for up to 2500 beach bags. Mick seconded. All vote to approve, 7-0-0

Freeman Street Building

Discussion on utilization of Freeman Street building. BoS will be meeting on Monday to discuss this issue. Placement of the Tourism Office in that building is a possibility, but it would be more important to use the facility to generate revenue for the town by a commercial application.

Discussion held on the accountability of FOCUS Communications and their RFP. This needs some additional review by the board and perhaps a sub-committee. FOCUS contract runs through June. Michelle Haynes expressed concern about the possibility of “double-dipping” by FOCUS with both PAAM and the VSB. Mick volunteered to work with Michelle.

Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve minutes for the January 10, 2008 meeting, moved by Mike, Hersh seconded. All vote to approve. 5-0-2 (Mick & Kathleen abstain).

Motion to approve minutes for the January 30, 2008 meeting moved by Mike, Kathleen seconded, all vote to approve 6-0-1 (Mick abstains).

New Business

Mick Rudd distributed report regarding the H2B Visa situation. Thanks to those that made the travel to Washington, D.C. (Cape Air and American Airlines), for making the travel possible. All business owners are going to be responsible for getting their own workers this year. Recruitment efforts are going out West to the ski resorts, whose season is ending, to recruit workers – these are primarily housekeeping workers. Their current visas have been extended and therefore are available. Discussion on this issue regarding impact on businesses, the lack of recruitment of workers, need to look to Puerto Rican workforce, as they are U.S. citizens and therefore do not need to apply for visas.

The Tourism Director advocated for Provincetown at the Governor’s Conference regarding workforce issues and as well as keeping informed on the response from the tourism industry. The town survey was at least a beginning and this will be a hot topic at the upcoming Business Summit. It can be used as the basis of an action plan.

MOTT & the Governor’s Conference on Tourism

Governor’s conference – annual report distributed to Board by Tourism Director. The State is rolling out a new ad campaign marketing MA as a gay friendly destination. Suggestion to write a proactive letter thanking the governor’s chief of staff, Joe Landolfo, thanking him for his participation in the conference and invite him to come into town for a meeting. Copy Sarah Peake as well. Contact Workforce Investment Board, Dave Dogestino. Rob will draft a letter in recognition of this being part of the conference.

FY 2009 Grants to the BOS

Discussion of new events, BoS recommendations, events that capitalize holidays/weekends that are not currently being used. Board wish to develop a list of open weekends to develop new events each year - currently beyond the capacity of the VSB at this time due to event planning being an immense, logistical nightmare. Advertise or solicit RFPs for event planners to come forward to fill those open times with events. Consideration to shift funds out of the grant budget to fund and seed new events going forward.

VSB Name Change

Change name from Visitors Service Board to Tourism Board or something that better reflects the function of the board. The process of a name change involves the enabling legislation that formed the board.

State of the Town Address

On March 31st the Town Manager will hold a public forum and a State of the Town address to explain the implications of the town budget.

Discussion on board calendar. What is the best time to hold meetings? Thursday afternoons work, 2 pm? Tuesdays at 3 pm? Wednesdays? Need to look at afternoon available times for rooms to hold the future meetings. Next meeting: March 19, 3 pm. Will confirm.

Provincetown listed in New York Times book, 1000 Places to See Before You Die by Patricia Shultz.

Motion made by Michelle to form a subcommittee to review the RFP of FOCUS to determine how they have met the stated objectives and to discuss a strategy for moving forward on public relations. Rob seconded, all vote to approve 5-0-0 (Hersh & Laurel left meeting early)

Jonathan Santy has volunteered to help out on the tourism section of the town website. Contracted services are available with Chuck Anzalone. Beau Jackett is also helping as he can.

Motion to adjourn made by Mike, 2nd by Kathleen. All vote to adjourn, 5-0-0.

The meeting adjourned at 12:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Germain

Amy Germain

Recording Secretary

Approved by _____ on _____ 2008

Rob Tosner, Chairman