

# TOWN OF PROVINCETOWN

## VISITOR SERVICES BOARD

### MEETING MINUTES OF AUGUST 8, 2000

#### Meeting Held in Judge Welsh Room, Town Hall

The following minutes are available on-line as a service and are not the official record due to changes in formatting for the Internet. The minutes may have attachments that are not included here in this format. The official, complete paper copy can be viewed during regular office hours, Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Office of the Town Clerk, 260 Commercial St. Provincetown, MA 02657.

**Members Present:** Steve Melamed (Chair), Barbara Rushmore (Vice-Chair), Hunter O'Hanian, Joan Lenane, Dana Henricksen

**Members Absent:** Rob Tosner

**Others Present:** Keith Bergman (Town Manager), Pat Fitzpatrick (Tourism Director), Rachel Crosby (Recording Secretary), Ms Collins-Boden and Mr. Harrison from the Chamber of Commerce.

**Call to Order:** Chair Steve Melamed called the Meeting to order at 11:05 A.M.

### REGULAR MEETING

**PUBLIC STATEMENTS** - None

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

**July 11, 2000** – *Barbara Rushmore moved to approve, Joan Lenane seconded and it was so voted, 5-0.*

**May 9, 2000** – *postponed until reconstructed by Steve Melamed.*

#### TOURISM DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms Fitzpatrick distributed a copy of her report and discussed the contents, including:

- visitors from a resort town in Russia looking to redevelop their tourist economy;
- meetings with the National Seashore on public forums;
- the Visitor Services Board Five-Year Plan;
- the Mayflower II visit;
- status of the Heritage Plantation of Cape Cod;
- recent visit by concierges from Boston;
- meeting of Board sub-committee on vacation packaging;
- co-op advertising discussions with the PBG and the Chamber of Commerce;
- contract for advertising with Provincetown Banner;
- changes in Town Hall front lobby – money that was to be used to redesign lobby now used to pay for Tourism Director's health insurance;
- hiring of a part-time employee (Candi McDonald) in Tourism Office;
- decrease in parking revenues from last year – possibly caused by the Shuttle, the high-speed ferries and the weather, as well as a probable decrease in tourism.

Ms Rushmore said the Beautification donation jars were showing a 25% decrease in revenue. In response to a question from Ms Rushmore, Ms Fitzpatrick clarified the offer from a town on the Black Sea in Russia to be a sister city with Provincetown. Ms Fitzpatrick also listed some of the issues behind the discussion on scheduling public forums with the National Seashore, e.g., land use, cultural heritage, environmental protection. Pat Fitzpatrick also clarified the rationale for co-op advertising. The Board also discussed how Ms McDonald's time in the Tourism Office would be utilized and she would be available when needed.

In response to a question from Joan Lenane, Steve Melamed said that he did not know exactly what the role of the Board was in Ms Fitzpatrick's evaluation as Tourism Director.

Steve Melamed also commented on a preliminary report on Shuttle ridership and Ms Rushmore added that the shuttle revenues might reduce the need for a Tourism Fund subsidy.

## **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. Vacation Packaging – Dana Henricksen suggested that the Board first determine the level of interest and need locally and reported that staff was still researching related issues.
2. Grant Guidelines – Hunter O'Hanian distributed draft recommendations for changing/adding to the Guideline language and discussed same. He also discussed a draft grant evaluation form. Mr. O'Hanian suggested discussing the recommendations, etc. at the next Board meeting.

**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COMMENTS** – Ms Collins-Boden commented that the Chamber's membership should be polled to ascertain their attitudes toward and suggestions for the Board's Five-Year Plan, including the Shuttle and the high-speed ferries. Ms Collins-Boden also commented on her perceptions that the current summer's tourism business is down. She said that the media and marketing coverage has been excellent, however.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- Ms Rushmore asked about the use of surplus Tourism funds, especially concerning using those funds for beach pick-up and other projects. Steve Melamed and Mr. Bergman clarified that the monies could not be spent until they have been appropriated. Mr. Bergman also said that there is no plan for a autumn Special Town Meeting.

## **FIVE-YEAR TOURISM FUND PLAN**

Mr. Bergman referred to a package of documents provided to the Board entitled, "Five Year Financial Plan for Tourism Fund Expenditures – Staff Recommendations to the Visitor Services Board, August 1, 2000" and discussed same. Mr. Bergman focussed on the Executive Summary, discussing in detail items such as:

- Public Restrooms funding (MPL and on the new Pier) – the Board discussed whether the restroom on the Pier will be effectively utilized. Mr. Bergman also mentioned the possibility of eventually converting Fire House #2 into a public restroom.
- Shuttle Subsidy – Mr. Bergman clarified that expansions in the Shuttle service would not dramatically increase the local fund share and also reported on discussions with Truro concerning Shuttle parking.
- Reserve fund – to be used as a hedge against bad years.

Mr. Bergman commented that it would be wise to solicit public input on the Five-Year Plan from a broad cross-section of the community.

Hunter O'Hanian complimented Town staff on their report and raised several questions/issues about the Staff Recommendations, including:

- Reconfiguring Tourism Fund financing schedules to recapture/avoid interest payments.
- Developing guidelines for use of expected Fund surpluses.
- Add sub-committee's recommendations concerning wording on grant eligibility.
- Marketing – develop survey or study to identify demographics and needs of current tourist population(s) – data would help focus use of Tourism Funds and placement of advertising. Pat Fitzpatrick commented that it may not be necessary to hire a professional marketing survey firm, as the data may be available from several local sources. Dana Henricksen agreed with the need for an objective survey by a professional firm. Steve Melamed reported on his perceptions of the current tourism demographics and said he felt marketing data was available locally and could be gathered without hiring a marketing firm.

Ms Rushmore offered her comments on the staff report, including:

- Use of funds reserved for Beautification projects. Mr. Bergman will write a letter to the Beautification Committee requesting their input on the use of the funds.
- Prioritizing development of Fire House #2 as a public restroom. Mr. Bergman commented that the Town would have to build the municipal sewer system first.
- Creating an approved alternative project list in case funds become available due to cost-savings from other projects.
- Progress on building sidewalks on Commercial, Conwell, and Bradford Streets and Harry Kemp Way.

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION & NEW BUSINESS**

- Discussed in context above.

## **CLOSING STATEMENTS**

- Next meeting scheduled for August 29, 2000 at 11:00 AM

