

**Town of Provincetown
Visitor Services Board
Meeting Minutes from June 12th, 2017, 3:00 pm
Town Hall, Judge Welsh Room
260 Commercial Street
Provincetown, MA 02657**



Members present: Rick Murray - Chair, Lesley Marchessault – Vice Chair, Dan Vanwaus, Rick Murray, Bob Sanborn, Marian Peck, Regina Cassidy

Members absent: Hersh Schwartz – excused.

Meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm by Rick Murray.

Staff: Anthony Fuccillo, Radu Luca.

Others: David A. Cox – Droning Provincetown, Robin Lapidus – PBG, Tom Walter – Crowne Pointe / Brass Key Guesthouse, Michael Goff – Towleroad and Ptown Hacks, David Sanford – Crowne Pointe / Brass Key, Louise Venden – BOS, Nadine Licostie – Red Thread Productions, Robyn Bazlen-Weglarz, Robin Lapidus – PBG, Allison Baldwin – Roux, Ilene Mitnick – Roux, Candice Collins-Boden – Chamber of Commerce, Andy Towle – Towleroad, Josh Scaturro – Queen Vic Guesthouse.

Agenda:

1. Public Statements – Five Minutes Maximum. Board members are not obligated to respond to public statements.

Robin Lapidus – wants to engage in a conversation about this last week’s press regarding the videos that came out last week. Offended by the Keller reporting, words were inflammatory, the piece was hurtful and offensive; doesn’t believe what was said and written was positive. Hopes we can discuss as a group.

Tom Walter – Brass Key collected last year a little over half a million dollars in room tax revenue; doesn’t believe the Chamber video wasn’t representative of the community here; said people expect more from Provincetown, when you’re using tax dollars you’re subject to a higher level of scrutiny; video was controversial because it didn’t showcase the LGBT community in town and the Keller piece was sickening, the community here is all-inclusive and not divisive. Appreciated any marketing piece that’s done, but when using tax dollars.

David A. Cox presented statistics and analytics for the short video he produced for the Provincetown Chamber of Commerce. He said the video benefit everyone in Provincetown and received a vast positive response and that the analytics speak for themselves, especially since the video reached the same amount of insights as the Carnival 2016 video.

June 11, 2017

Report by David A. Cox

Chamber of Commerce Video Analytics Report

This report will analyze the results of the recent videos, which was produced for the Provincetown Chamber of Commerce, by David A. Cox. The results below are after the first 10 days of being made public, however because of how Facebook's algorithm works, most of these views were all within the first two to three days. These results are 100% organic.

How was the film distributed?

Original copies were strategically released in multiple locations.

Reach

Reach is the number of people who have seen this film appear on their Facebook News Feed. Since I do not have access to the analytics of the Visitors Service Board, I am giving the last numbers I am aware of.

Droning Provincetown reach on Facebook: 353,000 Chamber of Commerce reach on Facebook: 45,000 Visitors Service Board reach on Facebook: 25,000

Views

Droning Provincetown on Facebook: 142,000 Droning Provincetown on YouTube: 2,300 Chamber of Commerce on Facebook: 18,000 Visitors Service Board on Facebook: 10,000

Shares (applies only to Facebook)

Droning Provincetown: 2,400 Chamber of Commerce: 278 VSB: 155

1

Likes (Facebook only. This includes likes, love, laugh, sad)

Droning Provincetown: 1400 Chamber of Commerce: 476 VSB: 470

Negative feedback (in the form of “angry emoji” on Facebook)

Droning Provincetown: 1 Chamber of Commerce: 20 VSB: 1

What do these numbers tell us?

These numbers tell us that without any doubt the public has viewed this campaign in a very positive light. While this does not take into account negative comments that were left, the vast majority of the comments are all positive. I have no doubt that any “controversy” around this video has been mostly beneficial to the town, the Chamber, the VSB, and Droning Provincetown.

Male/Female Breakdown

Women: 60% Men: 39%

When it comes to age, the largest audience was very closely split between women and men, but was primarily between ages of 45-54. Additionally, there was a very strong audience of women ages 65+. The top locations of these views came from Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, and Florida, however based on the comments, it is clear there are views coming in from all over the world. All of these statistics were also consistent for the video on the Chamber of Commerce page.

My Recommended Action In Moving Forward

I would strongly recommend that either the VSB or the Chamber of Commerce immediately allocate funds to allow me to now turn this video into a promoted post. The results you have seen in this report are entirely organic. We have not spent a penny on advertising beyond the initial release. Based on the data I currently have access to, I can conservatively say that for every \$125 devoted to promoting the video from Droning Provincetown’s Facebook page, you will likely result in an increase of 10,000 views. I am recommending that this promotion be applied to Droning Provincetown page due to my knowledge of Facebook’s algorithm, and technical expertise, and history of interaction with fans. I can work within any budget and we can scale this at any time.

Michael Goff – believes some of the aspects he loves about Provincetown were not included in the video and would have liked to see them in there. Last time the Chamber of Commerce posted a gay-related post was in August of 2015. Believes the VSB should distance themselves from organizations that do not include the LGBT Community.

Candy Collins – Boden – Chamber Board decided to create this video and marketing campaign to entice everyone to come here, gave David Cox a list of wants to be included in the video. Never said to David not to include anything LGBT in the video and the goal was to cater to everyone and focus on the fun and beautiful.

Robyn – believes this is a video could be a disservice to the people who come here and don't know who we are; we need to work together to avoid a situation like this. Three quarters of the stakeholders in town are gay and not including anything gay in the video was a mistake.

David Sanford – when tax dollars are being spent on a video, maybe the logos of the restaurants should be left out; was taken back by only a certain restaurants being showcased in the video.

Rick Murray – in full disclosure would like to say he was approached by certain members of the community about the video and immediately contacted Candy at the Chamber. The VSB is doing the best to promote the town and respond to feedback, we give out marketing grants and cannot micromanage how the funds are being spent. Had a conversation with Staff about how grant moneys are being spent and believes there should be more checks in place and have more control over how the funds are being spent. Is worried the majority of responses to the Chamber video was from a demographic of women of 55 years or older.

Bob Sanborn – we used to spend hours over editorial contents and design and doesn't agree with designing by committee; likes how we've been doing it, giving the PBG and Chamber leeway, but also believes we should look at how we do business from now on. He suggested that the Tourism Office create/establish guiding principles going forward. Likes David Cox's video, but also believes there should have been something gay included in the video and leverage the LGBT demographic and take advantage of that opportunity. There's always controversy re: our marketing and definitely need to have some guidelines in place.

Marian Peck – heard the word divisive and we need to address the issue and moving forward find a way to handle this. Looked at the video as a niche tool to advertise to the right demographic.

Lesley Marchessault – agrees with Bob and Rick regarding the new guidelines for tourism grants, and believes we should be working together moving forward.

Dan Vanwaus – we all should be working together and represent everyone; believes the video was beautiful, but could have been more encompassing and doesn't believe it was negative.

Regina Cassidy – the two videos were very clear where they came from and who had them produced. Looked at the beauty of the video before all the talk about it. We have two distinct videos catering to two different audiences and that's how we've been doing things in town.

Rick Murray – the VSB was formed to promote gay and lesbian tourism and believes the PBG and the community were misrepresented by this video. As a proud gay man, doesn't believe the Keller piece was positive; found it negative and offensive and we need to be more sensitive when it comes to

2. Communications Agency Update – Red Thread Productions (Nadine Licostie – Principal). Discussion dependent. Motions may be made. Votes may be taken. (Requested by Rick Murray)

Nadine Licostie presentation here: <https://redthreadproductions.sharefile.com/share?#/view/s20f46bf1d6e4e218>.

The majority of the VSB agree with the messaging and the tagline “Provincetown - You Belong Here.”

3. Visitor Services Board Seat Allocation. Discussion dependent. Motions may be made. Votes may be taken. (Requested by Rick Murray)

Please see Director's Report below.

4. VSB - BOS Joint on Monday, June 26th at 4:30 pm. Discussion dependent. Motions may be made. Votes may be taken.
(Requested by Rick Murray)

A. Selectman Andrews' concerns regarding the appearance of conflict of interest

RM wanted to let the VSB the BOS is under new Chairmanship and there will be more attention to detail moving forward.

B. Tourism Fund allocation of funds from General Fund

PROVINCETOWN TOURISM FUND 10 YEAR HISTORY

	FY 2008 - FY 2013												FY 2014 - FY 2017							
	FY 2008		FY 2009		FY 2010		FY 2011		FY 2012		FY 2013		FY 2014		FY 2015		FY 2016		FY 2017	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
TOTAL REVENUES	421,680		423,136		423,136		450,000		613,847		600,000		600,000		615,000		630,000		665,000	
Tourism Budget																				
Marketing	206,016	48.86%	206,016	48.69%	210,000	49.63%	210,000	46.67%	315,000	51.32%	320,000	53.33%	320,000	53.33%	320,000	52.03%	320,000	50.79%	335,000	50.38%
Grants	100,000	23.71%	100,000	23.63%	103,000	24.34%	108,000	24.00%	150,000	24.44%	110,000	18.33%	130,000	21.67%	125,000	20.33%	140,000	22.22%	150,000	22.56%
Municipal	22,453	5.32%	34,120	8.06%	21,136	5.00%	34,668	7.70%	39,847	6.49%	35,000	5.83%	20,000	3.33%	40,000	6.50%	35,000	5.56%	40,000	6.01%

Beautification	16,961	4.02%	4,000	0.95%	10,000	2.36%	5,000	1.11%	9,000	1.47%	15,000	2.50%	10,000	1.67%	10,000	1.63%	10,000	1.59%	10,000	1.50%
Coordination & Support	76,250	18.08%	79,000	18.67%	79,000	18.67%	92,332	20.52%	100,000	16.29%	120,000	20.00%	120,000	20.00%	120,000	19.51%	125,000	19.84%	130,000	19.55%
Tourism Total	421,680	100.00%	423,136	100.00%	423,136	100.00%	450,000	100.00%	613,847	100.00%	600,000	100.00%	600,000	100.00%	615,000	100.00%	630,000	100.00%	665,000	100.00%

Tourism Marketing Grant Analysis

Organization	Contact	FY18	FY17	FY16	FY15	FY14	FY13	FY12	FY11
Film Festival - Provincetown Int'l	Christine Walker	\$17,500	\$17,000	\$17,000	15,000	17,500	19,000	19,000	18,000
Women's Week	Jean Cassidy	\$8,500	\$10,000	\$10,000	9,750	9,750	10,000	5,000	
Tennessee Williams Theater Festival	Jef Hall-Flavin	\$8,000	\$9,000	\$9,000	6,000	6,500	7,000	6,000	3,000
Girl Splash	Lynette Molnar	\$7,000	\$7,500	\$7,500	7,500	7,500	8,000	5,500	5,000
Great Provincetown Schooner Regatta	Paul Silva	\$6,500	\$7,000	\$7,500	7,500	9,500	11,000	11,000	10,000
First Light Provincetown	PBG	\$6,500	\$6,000	N/A					
Holly Folly	PBG	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$5,000	4,000	4,500	5,000	3,500	3,000
Portuguese Festival	Don Murphy	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000	6,000	7,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Gay Athalon	PBG	\$6,000							
Afterglow	Quinn Cox	\$5,000	\$5,500	\$5,500	3,000	3,000	3,000		
Single Women's Weekend	Lynette Molnar	\$4,500	\$5,500	\$5,500	5,500	5,750	6,000	5,000	4,000
Women of Color & Friends Weekend	Lynette Molnar	\$4,500	\$6,000	\$6,000	5,000	5,750	6,000	6,000	4,000
CookOUT	PBG	\$4,500							
		\$90,500							
\$4,500 grants and above as of FY18									
All 11 grants are 68% of FY18 budget									
Highest five grants are 38% of FY18 budget									
		FY18	FY17	FY16	FY15	FY14	FY13	FY12	FY11
Grant Budget by Year		125,000	150,000	140,000	125,000	130,000	110,000	150,000	105,000
Largest Five Grants by Year		47,500	50,500	51,000	45,750	50,750	55,000	46,500	36,000
% Budget		38.00%	33.67%	36.43%	36.60%	39.04%	50.00%	31.00%	34.29%
Largest Ten Grants by Year		77,000	79,500	79,000	69,250	76,750	71,000		
% Budget		61.60%	53.00%	56.43%	55.40%	59.04%	64.55%		
Total Number of Grants Awarded		34	35	30	32	25	25	21	16
Average Grant Awarded		3,676	4,286	4,667	3,906	5,200	4,400	7,143	6,563

5. Tourism Director Report

A. Approval of media placements, brochures and trade shows-- Tourism Director recommends media placements, brochures and other collateral to promote and market Provincetown as a tourism destination, or town representation in trade shows.

➤ **Red Thread Brand Positioning**

- Central Brand for Provincetown Tourism
- Marketing Strategy
- Rich Pool of Content
 - Process
 - Current Challenges
 - Achieving Success
 - Competitive Landscape
 - Provincetown Message Platform
 - Creative Concepts

B. VSB Administration

➤ **Milo Interactive LLC**

- ProvincetownTourism.org
- Annual Hosting \$478.00
- Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) Certificate \$270.00
- Domain Registrations \$50.00

Move to approve \$798.00 for Milo Interactive LLC.

Motion: BS Second: LM 6-0-0

➤ **Afterglow 2018 Tourism Fund Marketing Grant**

- Afterglow Festival was awarded a \$5,000.00 for fiscal year 2018
- Afterglow Festival is requesting pre-disbursement of grant funds

- To see if the VSB will motion and approve early disbursement

Move to allow pre-event disbursement of tourism grant funds for Afterglow Festival for FY18.

Motion: BS Second: RC 5-0-1

Discussion: LM asked me whether we do this every year. TF clarified and said yes. RM said Afterglow is the only grantee we're giving funds to in advance. LM, DV and RG said if this has been done in the past it wouldn't be fair to deny them the funds in advance now, but we should look at changing this looking forward.

➤ **Visitor Services Board Composition**

- Town Meeting Warrant Article
- Crafting for discussion with BoS

DRAFT

Town Meeting Warrant Article

To see if the Town will vote to amend its vote under Article 64 of the April 5, 1999 Annual Town Meeting relative to the composition of the seven-member Visitor Services Board as follows:

Change one member nominated from the Arts Community to read, one member nominated from the Arts, Culture and Heritage Community, which shall be filled by the Board of Selectmen after inviting nominations from the following arts and cultural organizations in Provincetown:

- Provincetown Art Association and Museum
- Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum
- Provincetown 400
- Provincetown Historic Celebrations
- Fine Arts Work Center
- Provincetown Theater

- Change one At Large member to one At Large member with a focus on Accommodations, which will be filled by the Board of Selectmen after inviting applicants and interview for the open seat;

Change one At Large member to one At Large member with a focus on Food & Beverage, which will be filled by the Board of Selectmen after inviting applicants and interview for the open seat ;

Change one At Large member to one At Large member with a focus on Retail Shops, which will be filled by the Board of Selectmen after inviting applicants and interview for the open seat;

or take any other action relative thereto.

The Visitor Services Board representative composition will be as follows:

1. Arts, Culture and Heritage
2. Provincetown Chamber of Commerce
3. Provincetown Business Guild
4. Women Innkeepers
5. At Large - Accommodations
6. At Large – Food & Beverage
7. At Large – Retail Shops

All seats on the Visitor Services Board are appointed by the Board of Selectmen upon recommendations from constituencies or applicants.

(Submitted by the Visitor Services Board)

BS – believes the At Large positions should be at large and not represent certain constituencies. Would like to see an Innkeepers slot and had a question about Women Innkeepers and their membership. RG clarified WI include 4 inns and that Women’s Week will be produced this year and the WI’s marketing is done towards all women. BS believes we should keep on having women-events and market towards women, but it seems we’re giving preferential treatment to those 4 inns members of the organization.

MP – believes the VSB has always been a well-balanced board.

C. Marketing & Advertising Insights:



by Margot Bigg, Luke Bujarski + Skift Team

"MOST DMOS ARE TELLING THE SAME STORY, TRUMPETING THEIR BEER SCENE, THEIR FOOD SCENE, THEIR NEIGHBORHOODS. AS A RESULT, DMOS MUST WORK HARD TO DIFFERENTIATE THEIR EXPERIENCES. BUT DO DMOS HAVE THE CONFIDENCE AND WILLINGNESS TO OWN THE TEXTURES AND EDGES THAT DEFINE A CITY'S CULTURE AND MAKE IT TRULY DIFFERENT?" - GREG NEWLAND, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS, TRAVEL PORTLAND

Executive Summary

Destination marketing is a changing landscape. Technological innovations and emerging trends in content marketing and data analytics are paving the way for numerous exciting opportunities for those working in the destination marketing space. Programmatic

advertising is making automation and targeting easier, and a number of key players in the travel tech space have released solutions specifically designed for use by DMOs and convention visitors bureaus (CVBs). Facebook's dynamic ads are yielding good returns and some DMOs are implementing video (and, in some cases, virtual reality) marketing strategies, refining how they work with influencers and exploring opportunities for partnerships with online travel agencies (OTAs).

However, in some instances, DMO funding models are starting to shift from publicly funded operations to public-private partnerships, providing key tourism industry players with more autonomy in the destination promotion landscape than might otherwise be possible under fully governmentally funded and executed programs.

Moreover, many local and regional governments, notably in the U.S., have been considering or executing strict budget cuts for destination marketing initiatives, citing perceived concerns about the value of such organizations in generating tourism revenue. Because of this climate, DMOs are faced with a number of challenges, from leveraging data to justify their advertising spend to reimagining what role they play in the overall promotion of their destinations.■

Bloomberg
Business

Four Seasons CEO Sees ‘Airbnb Effect’ in Luxury Hospitality

Kim Chipman, Bloomberg

- Jun 08, 2017 12:00 pm

“At a time when most hotel CEOs say Airbnb isn’t a threat at all, Smith is one of the few who seems to be paying much closer attention than most to its potential impact on his company’s business.”

— *Deanna Ting*

[Four Seasons](#) isn’t taking [Airbnb’s](#) push into high-end lodging lightly.

“I would be naive to say that we aren’t being mindful of the Airbnb effect,” Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts Chief Executive Officer Allen Smith said in an interview about the Toronto-based company’s history and future outlook. “It’s just another example of the speed in which the market is changing and the manner in which we need to be prepared to respond to it.”

The five-star hotel chain created six decades ago by Isadore Sharp continues to expand worldwide while working to preserve its top-tier reputation in an industry increasingly driven by millennial expectations and tastes. The company, jointly controlled by Microsoft Corp. co-founder Bill Gates and Saudi Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal, has introduced a mobile app that will include a chat function and plans a guest recognition program to bolster loyalty. In an era where plush bathrobes and free high-end toiletries are standard, the focus must be on refining guest service and staying on top of emerging trends, including the rapid ascent of digital disrupters, according to Smith.

“If you don’t, the risk is that the relevance of your brand diminishes over time regardless of what a great company this is,” Smith said last week from the restaurant at the closely held company’s Four Seasons hotel in Toronto.

LUXURY DEAL

Smith’s comments are a departure from the party line typically espoused by upscale hotels — that Airbnb Inc. opens up a new market but doesn’t compete directly with them. The San Francisco-based firm moved closer to becoming a full-service global travel company in

February when [it bought Montreal-based Luxury Retreats](#), a manager of high-end rentals and services, in a deal valued at \$300 million. It marked the home-sharing service's biggest acquisition yet.

Luxury rentals are a main growth area for the vacation market, which has seen online home-sharing companies muscle in on traditional lodging providers.

Airbnb's push into the space gives it further potential to "capture the millennial category at all price points," Jan Freitag, a senior vice president at Hendersonville, Tennessee-based STR Inc., a hotel data and analytics firm. The customer who initially used Airbnb to save money now sees the option to splurge, he said.

RENTAL COMPETITION

The Luxury Retreats purchase puts Airbnb in competition with Four Seasons' own rental service it operates through partnership with its private residential owners, allowing the company to offer a more secluded setting for resort guests.

"It's a very important part of our business and something that we want to continue on," said Smith, 59, former head of Prudential Real Estate Investors who was appointed Four Seasons CEO in 2013. He oversees the company's growing number of properties, which now stand at 105 hotels in 43 countries.

Of the 33 Four Seasons-branded private residences worldwide, 17 participate in the company's vacation rental program. The hotelier expects further rental growth as it adds resorts to its roster, including a recently opened property in Anguilla and an upcoming project in Los Cabos, Mexico.

Airbnb also has the potential to influence pricing across the board.

"Ours is a business of supply and demand, so anything that introduces additional supply tends to put pressure on rates," Smith said.

The Four Seasons CEO also foresees Airbnb becoming a bigger player in providing services as opposed to just accommodations.

MEANINGFUL FORCE

"Will they match us head to head in terms of service quality? Probably not," Smith said. "That's pretty hard for people to do, but I wouldn't underestimate their ability to get pretty close. I think that they will be a meaningful force that we have to reckon with."

One looming question is whether Airbnb ultimately positions itself "to control hotel inventory that they can then distribute," Smith said.

"They are a distributor of inventory, however you want to describe it. Whether it's in someone's home or it's within a hotel it's all the same in many respects," Smith said. "I don't underestimate at all the impact they'll continue to have on the marketplace, whether it's at the more mid-market or the higher end of the market."

If Airbnb goes public and begins to feel more pressure to boost growth, the easiest way is to allow regular accommodations on its system, according to Freitag.

“The scary scenario for the hotel industry is for the millennial user who is used to using the Airbnb app to book their accommodations to not have to leave that walled garden and suddenly have the full travel experience,” Freitag said in an interview.

Meanwhile, Smith said he can’t point to any business the company is losing because of Airbnb and that he is fully confident in Four Seasons’ outlook.

“There’s ample opportunity for us to grow in a meaningful way, but it’s not growth at any cost,” he said.

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6. Board member statements:

RC – asked where we’re standing with the Towleroad proposal. TF clarified Nadine Licostie from Red Thread had a conversation with Towleroad to see what we can do with them, but Red Thread is just developing a brand positioning and media strategy and media buys. NL of Red Thread we could use the proposal and use it for a Fall / Winter campaign and let the data tell us whether it’s been a successful campaign. We also need to build content to be inline with the medium and the goal of the campaign.

BS – asked TF to reach out to Ragnar Relay Race and follow up on the reason why, if true, RR is not interested in returning to Provincetown in 2018.

MP – none

LM – none

DV – none

RM – none

7. Approval of Minutes. Discussion dependent. Motions may be made. Votes may be taken.

Move to approve the minutes from 5.23.17.

Motion: BS Second: LM 6-0-0

Motion to adjourn.

Motion: BS Second: DV 6-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 5 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Radu Luca