

**Town of Provincetown
Visitors Service Board
Meeting Minutes from
November 6, 2007 10:00 a.m.
Judge Welsh Hearing Room**

Members present: Kathleen Fitzgerald, Laurel Guadagno, Michael Peregon, Rita “Hersh” Schwartz, & Rob Tosner

Member absent: Peter Bez and Mick Rudd

Staff: David Gardner

Others: Lisa Bowden, Michelle DeMarco, Dan Hoort, Don Knuutilla, and Brad Reichard.

The meeting was called to order at 10:01 a.m.

David Gardner announced that there is a plan in place for an orderly transfer of duties of the Tourism Director from him to Lisa Bowden. Everyone welcomed Lisa.

Agenda:

Public Statements occurred later in the meeting.

Winter Business Guide

Dan Hoort, owner of Somerset House, has volunteered to put together a restaurant guide for year round use. He surveyed all the restaurants and got a schedule of their winter hours. Also he has a list of which restaurants will be open on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. His compilation began as a tool for his guests to be able to enjoy the Town and know, in advance, what was open and what was closed. Dan will be putting it on his website and will also be giving it to all guesthouses in the area.

David Gardner said that last year the Chamber and the PBG did a rough guide but it wasn't nearly as comprehensive as Dan's. Dan feels that distribution is the key and he had sent one of his guides to the Banner but didn't hear back from them.

David Gardner said that the Tourism Office often gets requests which are very specific, i.e., what will be open in March, April, etc. He feels that this is valuable information and a lot for an individual to take on without compensation. Dan said he had a survey that he handed out to every restaurant, got a good response, and also got all their e-mail addresses. He intends asking participants for their updates – perhaps on a monthly basis. David said that he had worked on a guesthouse and inn list to determine who was open and levels of affordability.

We have a Panorama contract and because of it we now have distribution of our flyers in Boston. Michael P. said that this is very informational but not very flashy. He wondered if perhaps the VSB could glitz it up for a rack card presentation.

Motion: Move to contract with the Plymouth County Visitor and Service Center for the placement of rack cards.

Motion: Rob Tosner Seconded: Kathleen Fitzgerald Vote: 5-0-0.

Motion: Move to get this restaurant list to the next level for distribution.

Motion: Rob Tosner Seconded: Laurel Guadagno Vote: 5-0-0.

Motion: Draft a letter to all businesses inviting them to be included in this survey for a free listing (perhaps include Dan's survey and identify it as having been previously requested). Include restaurants, guesthouses, and all businesses.

Motion: Rob Tosner Seconded: Michael Peregon Vote: 5-0-0.

Michelle DeMarco, chair of the Disability Commission, said that her group would like to be part of this listing for any business that is handicapped accessible. Hershey S. said that there are a lot of stores that aren't wheelchair accessible - but maybe could be listed as accommodating. She described her shop's attitude toward the disabled as "sorta like curb service." Hershey has several customers who can't enter her shop and they describe what they'd like and she brings it out to them to try one, i.e., shoes, etc.

Public Statements.

Don Knuutila, representing the PBG, said that he has been getting a lot of calls from people not comfortable in Town. He does know that we're not handling things very well. "The answer cannot be that the police are doing their job." He had a long conversation with the man who did the website "Know Thy Neighbor" who was livid. Don K's question was, "How do we send a message out that Provincetown is a safe place and 'like nowhere else?'" He would like the VSB to draft some sort of statement that the PBG can release that addresses who we are - he doesn't want to get involved in solutions. David G. felt that any response should be approved by the VSB and perhaps should have been immediate. The issue has been percolating too long. The Police Dept., the VSB, and the Town need to speak with a unified voice. Also, David continued, our response mustn't be case specific.

Brad Reichard, from FOCUS Communications LLC, felt that Sharon did a great job handling it. Rob wants to reinforce the message - *no place for hate and we will not tolerate violence in any way at any time.*

Motion: Develop a concerted PR campaign to address the perception that Provincetown is no longer a safe place for visitors. (motion withdrawn)

Motion: Move that the VSB request that the Town Manager call a meeting of the VSB, CoC, PBG, and Police Dept. for the purpose of reinforcing the message of Provincetown being a non-violent community and to reinforce our community policing message.

Motion: Rob Tosner Seconded: Kathleen Fitzgerald Vote: 5-0-0.

Brad R. then said that the Pink Planet show is ready to come on the air. It is a 5 part series - Canadian broadcast - really spotlighting Provincetown for what it is. There is also a photographer, Peter Gutman who has been anxious to go into a dune shack and we're settling on a date soon for him to come and photograph the dune shacks. He will also include the art colony. Chris McCarthy, Jim Bakker, and originally Bill were planning to have a walk through art studios in an attempt to promote Friday night happenings and create an art festive environment.

FY09 Tourism Grant Agreements and Coop Grant Agreements

Motion: Number 3 should be changed so that the Town could grant the grantee to make sure that the 50% of the grant had been expended on the marketing budget.

Motion: Michael Peregon Seconded: Laurel Guadagno Vote: 5-0-0.

Waterfront Park Improvements

Alex Heilala has assured everyone that the money for the Waterfront Park is in place. Sharon Lynn said that she will clarify the issue with the BoS.

Five Year Financial Plan

This issue also gave rise to considerable discussion. Much of the talk centered on encouraging new events and also on the funding for former successful events. Rob suggested putting an ad in the Banner saying that the VSB is looking for new events and intends to emphasize or encourage NEW events.

Municipal Budget

David G. said that he will come up with some visuals for the next meeting. He's been working from our actual expenses but if we start going back and forth with nobody understanding the numbers - we'll get nowhere.

NEXT MEETING WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH @10:a.m.

Tourism Director's Report

It's about time to do a 2nd home owner's mailing and the winter guide will be great for that. The letter will say - please come visit us often, etc. It was very well received last year and some of the recipients asked for copies of our calendar for their friends. It's also available on our website.

Lavender magazine picked us in the top 50 of desirable vacation spots.

Lisa has compiled all the feedback from the tour guides luncheon. She would like an agenda item at future meetings so that we will have more to work with at a future meeting.

Approval of Minutes – October 16, 2007

Motion: Approve the minutes of the regular VSB meeting of October 16th as written.

Motion: Michael Peregon Seconded: Laurel Guadazno Vote: 5-0-0.

Motion: Approve the minutes of the VSB Executive Session of the October 16th as amended.

Motion: Hersh Schwartz Seconded: Rob Tosner Vote: 5-0-0.

Old Business

Hersh S. has successfully begun placing art in empty stores. It is a much appreciated service that she performs.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn Gaudiano

E. Rogers Gaudiano

Approved by _____ on _____ 2007

Rob Tosner, Chair