

**Town of Provincetown
Visitor Services Board
Meeting Minutes of
Monday, August 21, 2006
Judge Welsh Meeting Room**

Chairman Lynne Davies convened the meeting at 11:11 AM noting the following attendees:

VSB members: Lynne Davies, Chairman; Peter Bez, Vice Chairman; Kathleen Fitzgerald; Laurel Guadagno; Michael Peregón and Mick Rudd

Excused Absence: Hersh Schwartz

Other attendees: Bill Schneider, Administrative Director of Tourism; Peter Borrelli, Center for Coastal Studies; Candice Collins-Boden, Chamber of Commerce; Michael Glasfeld, Bay State Cruise Company; Jay Hurley, Portuguese Princess

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM. Lynne Davies introduced Michael Glasfeld from the Bay State Cruise Company. He distributed a packet to the members stating his concerns regarding the proposed regulation that could jeopardize the existence of ferry service and whale watching in and out of Provincetown as promulgated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Mr. Glasfeld's letter to "Provincetown Stakeholders" dated August 18, 2006 outlines the regulation and, should it pass as written, the sighting of a single right whale (an endangered species) in the waters surrounding Provincetown would trigger a 36-mile diameter zone through which no commercial vessel could pass at a speed greater than 10 knots. He further said that the slow down zones are called Dynamic Management Areas (DMAs) and are in addition to full time slow down periods in the region from January 1st to May 15th. The full-time slow down periods are called Seasonal Management Areas (SMAs).

Mr. Glasfeld contended that if a DMA were to be activated during the summer season, a ferry from Boston could take as long as five hours to make the crossing to Provincetown. This would probably result in certain termination of ferry service during the time that the DMA was in effect and, once the DMA was established, would be in effect for a minimum of 15 days.

Michael Glasfeld pointed out that a possible loss of ferry service as well as a possible loss of the whale watch industry could spell economic disaster for the Town. Mr. Glasfeld's mission was to encourage the Visitor Services Board (VSB) to weigh in on this legislation. The comment period runs until October 5th at which time the comments will be assessed and a decision on the proposed regulations will be made.

There are six alternative plans proposed and Bay State Cruise Company will be submitting a letter recommending Alternative 1, 3, or 4. It was deemed that these alternatives would have no effect on ferry operation and the least impact on whale watch operations as well. Mr. Glasfeld felt that if the most stringent alternative (#6) were to go into effect, it would result in an actual close down of his industry.

Jay Hurley representing the Portuguese Princess whale watch company was in attendance as well. He had just learned of the meeting that very day and wanted time to study all the alternatives and then state his opinion.

Stormy Mayo, the founder of the Center for Coastal Studies (CCS), got on the public record as advocating alternatives 5 and 6 – the most stringent.

Peter Borrelli, the director of the CCS, only learned about this meeting last night. He informed the group about the right whale feeding habits, etc. They feed on plankton which is plentiful here from mid to late December until early May. They come here to feed in early May and then travel on to the Bay of Fundy. (At

this point, Mick Rudd arrived.) The Coast Guard and NOAA patrol to protect the whales. Right whales come to MA to feed. In technical terms, it is plankton on which they feed. It's only during this time that dense patches of plankton are formed. We may have one third of the total whale population here at that time.

Chairman Davies said that this is a very complex ecological issue and as of December the right whales are coming back and we're trying to push our tourist season further into the winter season. We don't have the expertise to push one way or another. We need to have the Board of Selectmen (BOS) involved since the issue has a significant town government impact.

Motion: 1. The ADT will monitor the situation and 2. The ADT will schedule a meeting with the BOS, Whale Watch groups, and the Chamber of Commerce to discuss the entire issue of the proposed Federal regulations.

Motion: Lynne Davies Seconded: Mick Rudd Vote: unanimous.

Bill Schneider said that the next VSB meeting is scheduled for Sept 5th. Since we have a deadline of Oct 5th to respond to the regulation, Mr. Schneider suggested the joint meeting with the BOS be scheduled for September 11th.

Motion: The ADT will monitor the impact of the proposed regulation and come up with an alternative to give to the BOS. (In this endeavor he will be working with Michael Glasfeld, Peter Borrelli, and the whale watch groups to formulate a proper response for the BOS.)

Motion: Lynne Davies Seconded: Mick Rudd Voted: unanimous

Approval of Minutes – August 7, 2006

Ms. Fitzgerald said she noticed one typo – "ruff" data instead of "rough" draft.

Motion: Accept the minutes with the one correction.

Motion: M. Peregón Seconded: K. Fitzgerald Vote: unanimous.

Tourism Director's Report

The report was a two-page memo dated August 21st that had been handed out prior to the meeting. It detailed Public Relations and Marketing efforts made by the ADT.

Video News Release (VNR) – Review Rough Cut

The purpose of this VNR is to attract other news media to come to town. Mr. Schneider cautioned the group to keep in mind that this is a work in progress. The group received it enthusiastically. Mr. Schneider said that it would be widely used to promote Town. Candi Collins-Boden of the Chamber of Commerce said it shows great support of cultural things.

Bathroom Signage Initiative

One comment was made in regard to this subject: Mr. Peregón mentioned that there are still no signs announcing restrooms on Commercial Street next to the Portuguese Bakery.

Five-Year Financial Plan

The ADT recommended that the September 5th meeting would thoroughly discuss the five-year financial plan. Basically it is a level funded recommendation. Mr. Schneider recommends a broader approach for garbage, restrooms, etc. He would like to really look at everything so we can look at alternatives. Maybe it makes more sense to contract for the summer. For some of the services, i.e., Waterfront Park, maybe hire a landscaper? Also, the Barnstable County Department of Community Services may be able to help with regular maintenance of Lopes Square, the Waterfront Park and islands. Instead of buying benches, the ADT suggested having these items donated, with the purchase price to include the cost of maintenance. There are creative ways to help provide the services but not bankrupt the town. What we really should be doing is to look at the overall needs and send out Requests for Proposals (RFPs). The amount given to Beautification was also discussed.

A certain amount of infrastructure is needed to be supported by the Town. Candi and her staff at the Chamber of Commerce hear complaints all summer long. We don't have an infrastructure that is tourist supporting.

Mr. Bez said that state grants are not available for committees but you need a specific project to get funding. He asked Mr. Schneider to request the grant administrator attend the next meeting.

Boston Globe Article on Broadening Provincetown's Appeal

It was a good model on how important it is to develop strategic plans to manage the media.

Motion: Approve the purchase of six one-half page ads in ARTnews with the added value components (web links, subscriber mailings and reader service listings) for \$14,850.

Motion: Peter Bez Seconded: Michael Peregón Vote: unanimous

Fire Station #3 Scheduling

It was suggested by the BOS that the ADT take over the scheduling of the much-used Fire House in the center of Town. Ms. Davies feels it would not be wise use of Mr. Schneider's time.

The ADT responded by saying he felt it would be a great opportunity for the Tourism Office to parlay the communication about events with organizations wishing to utilize the building. There's a way to negotiate this. It won't involve a lot of the ADT's time and maintenance will be the main issue. Use of the facility would require a \$50 deposit and that amount would be forfeited if the Fire House were left in an untidy state.

Motion: Effective September 15, 2006, the Tourism Director will take over the scheduling of Fire Station #3 in the center of Town.

Motion: L. Guadagno Seconded: M. Peregón Vote: unanimous.

The Adams Grant task force has a brochure that is to be distributed – sooner rather than later. Ms. Davies said that the VSB has to keep moving forward with what we are doing. When the Economic Development Council (EDC) comes to us to ask for advice, then we can work with them.

Adjournment happened at 12:25 PM.