



Town of Provincetown
The Visitor Services Board
March 26, 2020, 3:00 p.m.
Town Hall, Judge Welsh Room
260 Commercial Street, Provincetown, MA

The Visitor Services Board: Jay Gurewitsch, Chair; Regina Cassidy, Vice Chair; David Burbank, Clerk; Susan Avellar, At Large; Andrea Sawyer, At Large; Rick Murray, At Large; David Wilson, At Large

NOTE: THIS IS A REMOTE PARTICIPATION MEETING

Attending – Jay Gurewitsch, Chair; Regina Cassidy, Vice Chair; David Burbank, At Large; Susan Avellar, At Large; Andrea Sawyer, At Large; Rick Murray, At Large; David Wilson, At Large

Staff: Anthony Fuccillo, Director of Tourism; Nina Cantor, Assistant Director of Tourism

Public Hearing

Call to Order at 3pm

Expenditure of Town Funds Articles recommended by the Visitors Service Board

In accordance with §2-3-g of the Provincetown Charter, review Town Meeting Warrant Articles recommended by Visitor Services Board

1. VSB review of Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Article 33. Expenditures from the Tourism Fund. To see if the Town will vote to transfer from the Tourism Fund the sum of \$840,000 to be expended under the direction of the Select Board and the Visitor Services Board to fund the following expenditures which market, beautify or enhance tourism in Provincetown pursuant to Chapter 178 of the Acts of 1996:

1. \$160,000 for coordination/support of the Visitor Services Board and the Tourism Department, and costs related thereto;
2. \$450,000 for marketing, and costs related thereto;
3. \$50,000 for municipal projects, and costs related thereto;
4. \$170,000 for tourism grants, and costs related thereto;
5. \$10,000 for Beautification Committee, and costs related thereto; or to take any other action relative thereto.

[Requested by the Select Board and the Visitor Services Board] Explanation of Article 33: This article transfers \$840,000 from the Tourism Fund to cover the costs associated with the Tourism Office pursuant to the Five-Year Financial Plan for Tourism Fund Expenditures proposed by the Visitor Services Board and approved by the Select Board each year. Tourism funds are generated by 35% of the room occupancy tax.

VSB discussions on the articles on the Town Meeting Warrant members feel the Board should/are in favor of or opposed Motions may be made. Votes may be taken.

Recommend motion to recommend article 33 of the Town Meeting Warrant of \$840,000 for the FY21 expenditures from the Tourism fund.

Open to Public statements – none

Open to Board statements – none



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Recommend motion to recommend article 33 of the Town Meeting Warrant of \$840,000 for the FY21 expenditures from the Tourism fund.

JG: Motion AS: 2nd Vote: 7-0-0 via Roll Call

Public Hearing closed at 3:11

Visitors Service Board called to order: 3:11 p.m.

1. Public Statements

Bob Sanborn, Executive Director of the Provincetown Business Guild

RM will discuss the PBG's position with respect to communications. While we support public health and safety and the attempt to stay in place, there are some that are not speaking accurately and projecting the unknown which can create fear and panic. This goes without saying to be sensitive that communications can be misinterpreted.

With respect to events, members are concerned about how the virus will effect events. We can only communicate what is known. Beyond April, each event is being looked at by case-by-case basis. At this point we have not made decision about Pride or Carnival. We are staying positive on Social Media. And finally, if events are changed, does that make the grant null and void?

JG stated that the VSB will be discussing grants later in the agenda.

2. Advertising Campaign Strategy (Red Thread Productions and Tourism Dept.)

AF – presented the following:

Three to Six Month Strategy

STEPS

1. Meet with Red Thread Productions and The Spark Group to review the existing campaign, shut it down due to creative content being unsuitable as the health crises evolves, and agree on an effective forward strategy to reach visitors.
2. Craft an effective plan to best communicate with the tourist population and the general public.
3. Work with local marketing partners, the Chamber and Business Guild to coordinate an indistinguishable soft pointed messaging and marketing schedule.
4. Establish a tentative timeline that can easily be adjusted as information on the crisis progresses.
5. Reevaluate and revise tourism and marketing efforts to ensure clear and consistent and messaging can be quickly pivoted depending on circumstances
6. Establish consistent statements for the media
 - a. From an external tourism perspective, the best approach is messages stating... ***We care... and we hope everyone is safe and doing well. The Town has put measures in place following the guidelines from the WHO and CDC to control and eliminate the virus and rebound as a community.***
 - b. Event cancelations are happening and we will not focus on or pontificate any particular event and the best approach is messages stating... ***Events take months of planning and it is***



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important that the Town support and allow event planners and organizers to make the best decisions they are comfortable with at this time.

7. Engage the new PR firm and digital media contractor to provide the messaging and creative assets in line with the strategy to prepare the campaigns to launch and pivot as needed.

The Strategy Three tiered approach in place

1. Go Dark

- a. Paused advertising campaign on Monday March 16th following the COVID-19 activity over weekend
- b. Met with Red Thread Productions and the Spark Group and determined the current campaign is inappropriate at this time.
- c. Course of action – Proactively prepare and craft the next campaign based on the strategy created. Create organic social media posts in the interim with appropriate message.

2. Provincetown Cares Campaign

- a. A thoughtful approach – A community coming together
- b. A message of hope and being safe and doing well – (This may include a paid interactive social media maneuver for people to share their favorite images of Provincetown and get an organic love fest conversation started)
- c. Launch TBD – Tentative date for planning purposes is May 1st

3. Visit Provincetown Campaign

- a. A wellness and healing approach
- b. A message letting the public know Provincetown is here for you
- c. Launch TBD – Tentative date for planning purposes is June 15th

In order to accomplish this we are ready to move into May and June and we have a recommended motion to \$30,000 for the digital marketing campaign.

Recommended motion to authorize \$30,000 for the Apr/May/Jun strategic digital marketing campaign

RM - Point of Order – Is Spark Group the digital media firm? JG – let's wait to discuss

AS – 2nd

Discussion:

AS asked why the date of May 1st has been chosen. AF responded that it is a tentative date... but we need to take time to evaluate where we are

RM – all set

DB – none

DW – no questions

Jay – why the wait? Provincetown Cares... can we show a thoughtful approach at SKIP and the food bank? We are showing a community coming together. AF – we will be going through others pages and can boost them



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Nadine Licostie, Red Thread Productions – Thank you Tony and Nina for three years of work. Thank you for making our work successful. We’ve done a lot getting things set for moving forward. One of my main objectives was to create a

cohesive messaging system. I hate leaving the Town in this way. Everything starts with strategy. I understand the desire for the urgent needs for businesses and I am asking for caution. And be careful of how fast we do things and think through the reactive kind of communications. But it could also be best left for a later date. A social campaign where we are putting support around the world is important and letting them know we care is important. Don’t tout what is in Town. Spark has done a good job. I wish everyone the best! Thank you for the opportunity to be part of this.

JG – Thank you Nadine. And stay safe where you are.

AF – Thank you Nadine for the things we have done together.

Jay – call to vote:

Recommended motion to authorize \$30,000 for the Apr/May/Jun strategic digital marketing campaign

JG: Motion AS: 2nd Vote: 7-0-0 via Roll Call

- **Droning Provincetown**

- Due to personal reasons David Cox, (Droning Provincetown), will not be able to deliver the holiday video

AS – asked if it would be possible that that could change? JG stated that we will still have to overcome the budget first.

And when we start April 1 with the new PR company, we can start a new year strategy.

RM – We should have multiple people in our rolodex. JG – I agree. We will have multiple people on board.

Tourism Administration

- **Communications Transition**

- AF – The Tourism Department conducted eight interviews with public relations agencies. Choosing the Public Relations agency did not require the RPF process or a committee. At this level you can choose three specific vendors that will satisfy the needs of the department and take the lowest quote. There is paper work included from ConranPR who has deep connections with the media that we can benefit from. They have a clear understanding of our type of tourism. ConranPR does a lot of destination work and will hit the ground running.

Recommended motion to authorize monthly retainer of \$3,333 for Conran PR annualizing at \$40,000

JG – Motion

AS – 2nd

Discussion:

RM – What do you mean by “our type of tourism”? JG – they have experience with LGBTQ experience. If we are discussing a vote for what is their experience on LGBTQ tourism?

SA – Why couldn’t the VSB be part of the decision? AF – this type of procurement is not done by committee and we followed the process. We interviewed 8 agencies and some only were LGBTQ but didn’t have the background we wanted.

Jay – PR is all about earned media. Conran PR earned media list is unbelievably good with reputable media.

SA – I would like to have had this discussion prior to this.



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Jay – Every one of these has LGBTQ interwoven. They will have the Town in front of the right people. The strategy is created through the digital media firm, and PR firm.

RC reminded the Board that the whole procurement process was explained to us prior to the decision.

Recommended motion to authorize monthly retainer of \$3,333 for Conran PR annualizing at \$40,000

JG – Motion AS – 2nd Vote: 6-1-0 via Roll Call RM - No

- **Digital Media**

- AF - The top choice was recently opened and there were still questions that need to be answered. For now, the Spark Group will stay month to month. And we can decide as we move forward or go back to the RFP.

- **Tourism Grants**

- Event cancelations and postponements
- Provisions and exceptions through FY'20 grants

Recommended motion that the Tourism Office is authorized to reimburse FY20 Grantees for marketing expenses, (within the Agreement) spent prior to the cancelation of their event due to the current health crisis.

JG: Motion AS: 2nd Vote: 7-0-0 via Roll Call

- **Town Meeting**

- The Select Board has postponed the Annual Town Meeting.

- **Website Maintenance Contract**

Bellweather - The website is live. Part of the original contract from Bellweather is do perform the maintenance of the site.

Recommended motion to authorize a website maintenance contract for \$2,550 monthly with Bellweather Agency annualizing at \$30,600

JG – motion DB – 2nd

Discussion:

RM –Can the public and Board still comment? NC – Yes, it can always be improving.

Recommended motion to authorize a website maintenance contract for \$2,550 monthly with Bellweather Agency annualizing at \$30,600

JG: Motion DB: 2nd Vote: 7-0-0 via Roll Call

Further discussion on how to update visitors on events that have been postponed or canceled. NC – suggested to tie in the message based upon the current events on the events landing page

- **IGLTA**

- International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association Annual Dues

Recommended motion to authorize \$925 for IGLTA

JG: Motion DB: 2nd Vote: 7-0-0 via Roll Call



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- **VSF meeting schedule through June 2020**

- The Select Board has suspended all non-regulatory boards meetings.
 - April 6 & 20
 - May 4 & 18
 - June 1 & 15
- JG – While all Board meetings are canceled but the Chair can request a meeting. The PR Firm should meet with us. And we have to deal with the RFP with digital media people

Board member statements

RC – Thank you and I appreciate that everyone is trying to stay on the same message. Everyone is working so hard.

SA – It would be good to get together to say thank you to the organizations that put their lives at risk every day. Make a good concrete statement for the paper.

AS – The process for this meeting is seamless. I wish we could figure out the sound issues. Happy that we are being proactive. Stay safe and be well.

RM – The PBG is doing their own PR and is sending out some information and they will roll out a video as well. A video commercial with a nice tagline. We have a couple of videographers and I will send their names to Tony to do what he feels fit with it.

DB – The Town coming together shows great effort in trying to navigate these difficult times.

DW – We (and the theater) have been trying to have a monthly/weekly meetings via zoom to keep in touch. It is important to discuss business and to be sure everyone is healthy. It's important to communicate through this period of isolation.

JG – The Town staff is doing a herculean job dealing with this crisis. Robin is on top of how important messaging is between the partners. Thank you to the Select Board for letting us meet. Thank you Nadine. She has helped put a plan together. I look forward to working with ConranPR and Spark. I am grateful that all 7 of us are able to here and healthy.

Motion to adjourn:

JG: Motion AS: 2nd Vote: 7-0-0

Adjourned 4:51

Respectfully submitted,

Nina Cantor
Assistant Director of Tourism



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