

**Town of Provincetown  
Visitors' Service Board  
Meeting Minutes from  
January 06, 2010 at 3:00 pm  
Tourism Office 330 Commercial Street**

**Members present:** Rob Tosner, Chair; Hersh Schwartz; James Bakker; Michael Peregon; Mick Rudd

**Members absent:** Kathleen Fitzgerald, Vice Chair; Michelle Haynes

**Staff:** Jackie Kelly, Administrative Assistant – Tourism Office;

**Others:** David Gardner; Candy Collins-Bowden; Mike Glasfeld, Bay State Cruises

**Meeting was called to order at 3:01 pm**

**1. Public Statements**

In light of news that Lake Express Ferry Company is interested in operating a high-speed passenger and car ferry from Boston to Provincetown, Mike Glasfeld of Bay State Cruises spoke as representative of the local transportation companies; Bay State, Boston Harbor Cruises, Plymouth Brockton and Cape Air. It has been reported that the Pier Corporation is planning, after their meeting on January 14, 2010, to send a letter to Lake Express that will state that the Pier Corp "enthusiastically" welcomes its application. Mike asked for the VSB's support in his position that the Pier Corp, or any Town entity, should first do serious research and consider all ramifications of such a potentially significant change, before characterizing its view as "enthusiastic." Mike's concern is that a new entrant into an already lean market, could jeopardize existing service and ultimately be a bad decision for Provincetown. He provided a history of ferry service since 1840, which demonstrated gaps in service, as well as that new entrants increase the risk that existing service is stopped or goes out of business. Mike also shared a recent news report about the financial downturn that Nova Scotia is now experiencing as a result of losing ferry service completely, having relied on it for 200 years. Mike said that it is possible that Provincetown could be in a similar situation if the two current operators, who could afford to lose only 3-4 passengers a day and still survive, were forced out by a large company like Lake Express, as well as the possibility that Cape Air, if it lost some of its summer business, might not be able to continue to provide much less profitable year-round service

**Motion: it is moved that the VSB will write a letter to the Pier Corporation, with copies to the Board of Selectmen and to the Town Manager, outlining concerns about additional ferry service to Provincetown.**

**Motion: Rob Tosner      Second: Mick Rudd      5-0-0**

**2. Tourism Director's Report (provided by Jackie Kelly)**

**Historic Walking Tour Brochure**

A draft of the Historical Walking Tour brochure was shown to the VSB, along with the reminder that they agreed that the final design fee would be more than the \$1,000 approved as initial payment. The brochure will be distributed from the Tourism Office, so there were questions about verifying historical accuracy, and whether or not permission had been granted by the owners of the featured buildings which are included in the "tour."

**Action Item:** Invite Eric Dray or a representative from the Historical Commission to provide an overview of the walking tour and to ensure that appropriate permission has been obtained regarding photos and text

before the brochure goes to press.

**Motion: It is moved to approve an additional \$1,000 to Ewa Nogiec for the design of the Historic Walking Tour brochure, with money to come from the fund already established for this purpose.**

**Motion: Mike Peregón**

**Second: Jim Bakker**

**4-0-1 (Mick Rudd abstained)**

**Room Tax Revenue:**

- Most recent room tax revenue (which is generally our highest quarter received) has been received and is down less than 2% from prior year, which validates our strategy to continue investing in our economic engine (i.e. tourism), given that anecdotally, we are down significantly less than other towns.
- Receipts were \$487,903 (down from \$497,247 in the prior year), which encompass room taxes collected during August, September and October, roughly.
- Room taxes collected for the first 6 months of the fiscal year aggregate \$986,745 and were off 3.8% for the comparable period, and for the annual 3 year average were up 1.76% to \$1,018,157, again validating our strategy of requesting an annual budget of \$450,000 to invest in tourism during these difficult economic times.
- In speaking with Wendy Norcross from the Cape Cod Chamber about context, she said that most Cape towns were off between 5% and 30%. She felt that Provincetown may not have felt the Sagamore bridge impact as much as lower cape towns (i.e. Falmouth), plus we have ferry and air service to bring tourists to town. Additionally, our events (tourism grants) are a built-in mitigator to these economic times and I believe our tourism strategy (investing in tourism) is helping to minimize the economic impact.

**Media Plan:**

- An updated copy of the approved segmentation strategy was provided to the VSB that showed we are in line with plan.
- New England Travel & Weddings: Previously, VSB approved \$2,500 for a one time insertion in this stand-alone magazine that was due to come out in March and be mailed to all Boston Spirit subscribers, plus targeted GLBT in New York and Washington DC, as well as distributed at a New England GLBT wedding show. While the wedding section will be in a separate section, the publication will no longer be stand-alone in that it will be merged into Boston Spirit's March edition. The circulation will be increased from 30,000 to 32,000, and Boston Spirit is lowering the cost of our ad from \$2,500 (which was already approved) to \$1,800.
- Recommended motion: Move to place ad in Boston Spirit's wedding issue for \$1,800 (in place of prior motion to approve ad for \$2,500 in New England Travel and Weddings).

David Gardner noted that the number of marriages in Provincetown increased by 90% from 2004 to 2009, and that the majority in 2009 came from New York and Washington DC. The Boston Spirit Wedding issue is targeted to these two markets, as well as in New England.

**Motion: Move to approve an ad for \$1,800 in the March issue of Boston Spirit Magazine, in place of ad previously approved.**

**Motion: Mick Rudd**

**Second: Rob Tosner**

**5-0-0**

**Restaurant Week Feedback:**

- At the last meeting you directed me to do an additional survey about dates of 2010 Restaurant Week, and whether to include lunch as an option. Sent out new survey, and received 15 responses, 13 of which were from restaurants (so fairly good response from restaurants). 11 of the 13 had participated in the 2009 Restaurant Week, and two did not (Sal's and Caribbean Corner).
- Survey results were split across the board with no consensus. For the Spring event, it appears that more prefer late May or early June vs April. My recommendation is either the week of May 21<sup>st</sup> or the week of June 4th.

- For a Fall event, there was more consensus. Most want to have it from November 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>, with a close second preferring Oct 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Motion: Move to approve 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Spring Restaurant Week the week beginning May 21<sup>st</sup>, and a shorter 5 day version (Fall Restaurant Fest) from November 4<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup>.**

**Motion: Jim Bakker            Second: Rob Tosner                            5-0-0**

**2010 Schedule of Events :**

- We are finalizing the 2010 Calendar of events, and will need approval to print 15,000 copies.

**Motion: Move to approve \$1,678.80 plus shipping for printing of 15,000 Calendar of Events.**

**Motion: Mike Peregou    Second: Mick Rudd                            5-0-0**

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**Approval of minutes for December 16, 2009**

**Motion: Hersh Schwartz                            Second: Jim Bakker                            5-0-0**

**4. Old Business: None**

**5. New Business:** It was suggested that the Tourism Office coordinate with the PBG to ensure the PBG will be promoting the Monumental Yard Sale.

**Motion to adjourn**

**Motion: Hersh Schwartz                            Second: Rob Tosner                            5-0-0**

**Meeting was adjourned at 4:11 pm**

Respectfully submitted,  
Jackie Kelly