

**TOWN OF PROVINCETOWN
VISITOR SERVICES BOARD**

MONDAY, JULY 25, 2005

JUDGE WELSH HEARING ROOM

Chairman Lynne Davies convened the meeting at 11:00 a.m. noting the following attendees:

VSB members: Lynne Davies, Chairman; Peter Bez; Kathleen Fitzgerald; Laurel Guadazno; Michael Peregon; Hersh Schwartz

Absent VSB Member: Mick Rudd (excused absence)

Other attendees: Bill Schneider, Acting Tourism Director; Michelle Jarusiewicz, Acting Assistant Town Manager and Grant Administrator; Winthrop Smith, Economic Development Task Force

Recorder: Cynthia Curran

The following are meeting minutes, in brief:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 7/11/05

MOTION: Move to approve the minutes of the July 11, 2005 VSB meeting.

Motion by: Peter Bez **Seconded by: Michael Peregon** **Yea 6 Nay 0**

Chairman Davies reported that at a Grant subcommittee meeting last week possible topics for a public hearing were discussed. These included:

1. Dollar cap for individual grants.
2. Cap on the number of years a grant could be given.
3. Establishing requirements for a public relations plan for the event receiving the grant.
4. Establishing a checklist of all necessary information for a grant application.
5. Requirement that all grant applications be complete.
6. Schedule a grant assistance meeting in November or December to allow potential applicants a chance to ask questions.
7. Requirement that applicants supply 9 or 10 copies of their grant application.
8. Grants cannot fund a fundraising event.
9. Small grants would not be given. Only large events would be funded.
10. The grant money would be divided into two groups, one for large grants and one for small grants.
11. No grants would be given at all. Instead the money would be used for other things. Or perhaps the total amount of grant money would be reduced.

Peter Bez noted that not all of these would be the topics of discussion at the public hearing (such as requirements for number of copies and a checklist), but were ideas for the VSB to consider. He said the hearing would be in the beginning of September. The grant information meeting would be in December and the deadline for grant applications would possibly be extended until January 15th.

Michael Peregon had a question about money that had been granted, but then not used. Lynne Davies said that in the future if there is leftover money, it will be advertised and additional grant applications will be solicited. Michelle Jarusiewicz said that a procedure will be established for additional funds. Ms. Davies added that the funds could also possibly be rolled over into the next fiscal year. Bill Schneider and Michelle Jarusiewicz will work on a draft of the advertisement for the Public Hearing and possible dates for it. They will report back within the next two meetings.

Next Ms. Davies presented the goals for which the VSB needs to establish a calendar.

1. 5 Year Plan – September
2. Marketing Plan – September
3. Branding - August
4. Strategic Staffing – August 22
5. Grant Guidelines – October to BOS
6. Grant Awards – January or February
7. Grant Public Hearing – September
8. Grant Informational Meeting – November or December
9. Financial Guidelines – December or January
10. Procedures and Guidelines – December
11. Ethics Meeting - September or October
12. Historic Trail – open meeting in November
13. Contract Renewals
14. Travel Writers

Michelle Jarusiewicz gave some additional information on the time line for the 5-year plan. She said that the VSB should have a public hearing on its plan before they present it to the BOS by November 1st. The BOS will vote on it by November 30th. There may still be changes before the Town Meeting in April. Although some decisions can't be made until the staffing situation is resolved, some pieces of the plan can be worked on. Bill Schneider will begin working on the marketing plan.

Lynne Davies said that the VSB still needs to work on branding as part of our goals and to respond to an EDTF request. Ms. Davies said it should be a unified effort including the PBG and the Chamber of Commerce.

Regarding the Ethics meeting, Michelle Jarusiewicz said that the Town Counsel will probably hold a meeting, which will be open to all boards and committees to review the subject.

Michael Peregón wondered if the Historic Trail was something that could be in place by the next tourist season. This is unclear because it is not known what it will entail. It was suggested that there be an open meeting to solicit ideas. Michelle Jarusiewicz said that the Town Meeting approved the funds, but she has not been able to find out what the original vision for the Trail was. She said that Keith Bergman may have more information and she will keep searching.

Lynne Davies asked Bill Schneider to put together information about marketing contract renewals: when they are due and the cost. Mr. Schneider said he would have the current costs, but they will have to be re-negotiated for the next fiscal year. This information should also include trade and travel shows.

Michael Peregón brought up the possible conversion of the Boatslip to condos and the loss of revenue to the Town. Lynne Davies said there are similar problems all over the Cape. She said that people have tried to change the State law to allow taxation of short-term condo rentals. This has not been successful in the past, however, there is new effort Cape-wide, to push this issue through the State legislature, as it has now become a very big economic issue for the Cape.

The subject of Strategic Staffing was raised next. Lynne Davies said that it must be looked at in the short and long term. Bill Schneider said that the work he is doing is definitely more than a half-time job, and could be a full-time job. Lynne Davies said that advertising is important for tourism growth, but professionals say that the three most important focus for enhancing tourism should be a public relations, travel and trade shows, and having a web presence. She said that a public relations firm would aggressively & proactively advertise the Town through articles contacts with travel writers, TV features, etc. She has heard of Michael Patrick Communications, which works on the Cape. She said that any firm chosen would have to understand the uniqueness of Provincetown and be familiar with Gay & Lesbian tourism. Ms. Davies estimates the cost would be about \$1200. a month or \$14,400. a year. The cost of a PR firm might be deducted from staffing expenses or come out of marketing. Ms. Davies also thought there should be an RFP for an advertising designer who would design ads as needed on a yearly contract basis. Bill Schneider said that a PR firm would not replace the Tourism Office. For example, the Tourism Office would write a press release and then the PR firm would see that it was widely distributed.

The question was raised about using grants to pay for certain expenses. Michelle Jarusiewicz said that grants could not

be obtained for operational expenses. They can be obtained for special projects like the Historic Trail.

The discussion returned to the staffing of the Tourism Office. Right now Bill Schneider is working there half time. The BOS has approved the staffing until October. Lynne Davies passed out a handout entitled "Town of Provincetown Tourism Function and Resources Tactical and Strategic". This listed the tasks of the Tourism Office and the resources for doing the tasks. The VSB came up with five possible resources for performing the tasks:

1. Tourism Office – full-time
2. Administrative Assistant – half-time
3. Public Relations Firm – contract
4. Grant writer – as needed
5. Advertising Design Firm – contract

The VSB went through the handout and designated who should do each task, using the above list. Lynne Davies will go over the results and reorganize them to give a better idea of the staffing needs.

Lynne Davies said that the web site should be up by the end of this week. .

Michelle Jarusiewicz said that the VSB had previously indicated that bus tours were very important and the VSB expressed interest in hiring someone. While she agrees they are very important, she does not agree that someone needs to be hired separately. Bill Schneider said that bus tours could be handled by the Tourism Office.

Peter Bez brought up the subject of additional public restrooms. He said that if the firehouse was made into restrooms, it could possibly also be a staffed information center. Michelle Jarusiewicz said she thought that idea had been suggested before. Michael Peregon suggested turning the building into a Laundromat with the proprietor required to provide public restrooms. Lynne Davies said she has heard that restaurants may be required to upgrade and expand their facilities now that the sewer system is in place. She also indicated that there was some discussion of selling the property to offset Town budget crunch. Because of all the discussions currently occurring around the Firehouse, the VSB agreed to table the issue for a couple of months to see how things shake out.

Public Statements.

Eddy Fallas, owner of Shirts'n'Stuff, said he was concerned from previous comments that bus tours were not seen as important per an article in the Cape Codder, which quoted the former Tourism Director. Bill Schneider assured him that the Tourism Offices realizes that bus tours are very important and he is diligently working on enhancing the tour bus business. Mr. Fallas said that the cruise ship, which was in Town recently, was a big boost to his business. He thought that the Tourism Office should pursue hosting more cruise ships. Ms. Davies agreed and explained the past reasons why this hadn't been pursued and Hersh Schwartz said that in the past, the passengers on the ships have all been bussed to Hyannis, bringing no benefit to the Town. All agreed that this has changed and that we should be actively courting the cruise ship business. Lynne Davies assured Mr. Fallas that the VSB was committed to supporting the tour bus and cruise ship business and would work diligently with all concerned to make it happen.

Other Business

Bill Schneider brought up some marketing projects that he has been working on. He said that there is a web site which helps distribute press releases over the Internet.

MOTION: Move to approve the amount of \$125.00 to join PRNewswire.

Motion by: Peter Bez Seconded by: Laurel Guadagno Yea 6 Nay 0

Mr. Schneider had distributed copies of some new ads that will be used. He also suggested that for Instinct magazine it would be better to use a larger ad with fewer insertions.

At 12:58 p.m. Peter Bez recused himself from the discussion and left the room.

MOTION: Move to approve the amount of \$300.00 for the Graphics Group for the design of recent ads.

Motion by: Lynne Davies **Seconded by:** Laurel Guadazno **Yea 4 Nay 1**

Hersh Schwartz said that she had reservations about trying to attract 18 - 20 year olds to Provincetown. She felt that with younger people there is a greater risk of drug and alcohol use and consequently more accidents. Lynne Davies said that the ads were aimed at young people in general, not just 18 – 20 year olds and that it was a small percentage of the ads. Kathleen Fitzgerald said that often people form a sentimental attachment to the Town if they come when they are young and then return because of that attachment.

Peter Bez returned to the room.

Bill Schneider said that a deposit was needed to reserve a booth at the Gay and Lesbian Expo next March. He suggested keeping the same booth as last year. The VSB should begin to think about booth design, staffing and transportation.

MOTION: Move to approve the amount of \$5250.00 for the total fee for the Gay and Lesbian Expo and \$1500.00 for the deposit now.

Motion by: Michael Peregon **Seconded by:** Peter Bez **Yea 6 Nay 0**

Next Mr. Schneider distributed several nature-oriented magazines that he had received. The members were impressed with them and Mr. Schneider will begin to negotiate with the magazines. He had also researched advertising in the Boston Phoenix. There are three opportunities for advertising 1) a display ad; 2) a banner ad on their web site; 3) sponsorship of their three back-to-school concerts for college students. Because of lack of time the discussion was tabled for now.

Winthrop Smith who is on a subcommittee of the Economic Development Task Force presented a list of ideas which may be relevant to the VSB. He invited members to attend a meeting the next day at 10:30 a.m. to give feedback. He said the EDTF would like to work with the VSB.

NEXT MEETING: Monday, August 1st - 11:00 a.m.

The next meeting will be a one-hour meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:19 p.m..

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