

Provincetown Visitors Services Board

**Tuesday
August 30, 2005
6:00 p.m.**

Members Present: Peter Bez, Lynne Davies, Kathleen Fitzgerald, Laurel Guadazno, Michael Peregón, Mick Rudd (arrived at 6:45 p.m.) and Rita “Hersh” Schwartz.

Members Absent: none

Staff: Bill Schneider, Acting Tourism Director

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m.

There was a brief introduction by Lynn Davies telling the audience what the meeting was going to be about. The Board has received a lot of input from many people, i.e., set a limit on amount of grants, don't fund very small grants, include no charities, finance no grants for people who have received grants during the past years (5 yrs or 4 yrs) etc.

Lynn continued that the Board wanted suggestions from the audience present on grants. “We would like to receive constructive suggestions – not complaints. If folks could just help us understand the ways to limit this we would appreciate it.” She then said the ground rules would be that the speakers would be limited to five minutes each. She also thanked them all for attending.

At that point Lynn introduced the Board to the assembled group. The only member missing (at that time) was Mick Rudd.

Meeting Agenda

Public Hearing Tourism Fund FY 2007 Grant Guidelines

In conjunction with the Visitor Services Board's review of the tourism grant guidelines, the VSB will be conducting a public hearing on Tuesday, August 30, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. in the Judge Welsh Room, Town Hall, 260 Commercial St., Provincetown, MA 02657, to obtain public input. The following are some of the proposed changes the VSB has already received:

- A dollar cap for an individual grant -- either an absolute dollar or a percentage of total funds available.
- A cap on the number of years that any event would receive funding; option also includes reducing the amount over some number of years or to only fund a new and innovative addition or enhancement of previous event.
- To not fund events that are fund-raising activities.

- To not fund the very small grants [\$500 - \$1,000].
- To set a certain dollar amount for larger grants and a certain amount for smaller grants.
- To not have any promotional grants or to have a different sum of funds for grants.

Any person or organization wishing to be heard will be given an opportunity at said hearing. For more information, contact Acting Tourism Director Bill Schneider at 508/487-7000 ext. 536. Written comments may be submitted to the attention of the Acting Tourism Director at Town Hall.

Rick Murray, owner of Mussel Beach gym and the Crown and Anchor, spoke first and said he thinks the time period should be very open – keep windows open for a longer period. He cautioned the Board that they should go back to their mission and think about the shoulder seasons. He also mentioned that the Schooner Race on the same weekend as the Swim for life should give you more “bang for the buck.” Each application should be funded on its own merits.

A lot of the grants have been cut by the Federal government, thus the dollar amount should be opened up to the applicants. “Think about,” Rick continued, “will this bring people to town and for how long? Don’t eliminate smaller grants.” He also felt it was nice to give to Castle Hill and FAWC, etc., but there are also smaller applicants who can enhance business as well.

Richard Connolly and his partner Mike, founders of Mates Leather Weekend, also reiterated the suggestions of Rick. They have received grants since 2002 and have had an increase in their 2005 ticket sales. (Richard C. read from a lengthy, well-thought out letter to the Board.) In it he said that we know how to market and we keep ticket prices at nominal levels. Our endeavor is the best run and the best value. We have always done these weekends within the guidelines of the VSB even though he’s opposed to guidelines. He further feels that tenured grants should be based on past successes. New applications should be scrutinized based on their marketing plan and how successful the Board feels they might be. Some events fail because they’re poorly planned. ASGCC benefits from his event. The purpose of the grants is to promote business. A suggestion would be to set dollar amounts with no grant receiving more than 5% of the entire amount available.

He concluded by saying that most of these proposed changes will have a negative impact on our town. He also said that they own no property and have no interest in Town other than their weekend happening.

Lynn Mogell – speaking as an individual and also as a member of the Women Innkeepers of Provincetown started off by saying that she had a great deal of respect for VSB, etc. “I know you’re trying to take activities and see which are meaningful. The question is – how do you take such a subjective process and do it fairly?” Big thought is “How does the money improve tourism? How does the applicant bring more people to town?” She said that a marketing analysis, future projections, etc. within the application can make the applicant’s case. She continued with the suggestion that each funding be based on study. “Count up all the money in that pile and just pro-rate it.” She thinks this would be the fairest way. She feels that it’s important to have grants funded by the VSB. Bottom line: How well do the applicants present themselves?

Gabby Hanna, representing the Provincetown Film Festival, said she realizes granting funds is a big responsibility. The Film Festival does advertising all over the world. The Provincetown Business Guild uses its money for Holly Folly, etc. These are important things to look at when you give grants. She doesn’t think grants should have caps. They should be looked at individually. She also felt that the Board should support fund raising grants. All these things bring people here. Small events are important, too, and they only ask for small amounts.

Don Murphy, representing both the Portuguese Festival and the Schooner Regatta, handed out

prepared material to the members of the Board. He thanked them for holding this hearing. His hand-outs outlined his events and he shared them with the Board. Portuguese Festival is a great festival and has been going on for 50 odd years. In the last 9 years it has become the Portuguese Festival (combined with the Blessing of the Fleet). He felt that Provincetown's heritage is one of our most important assets. He gets support from over 80 businesses. The Lions Club puts on the Food Court which is another indication of the level of support. The Festival is run with a completely volunteer staff. There are thousands of donated man hours – which are all volunteer. Their web site didn't cost them a cent; it was a volunteer function. Everything is volunteer! His organization receives funds from many, many organizations. Everybody gives whatever they can.

Don continued that the Tourism Fund is part of our fund and leverages that. Again, people aren't getting paid and they do it because they want to. Their main problem is in not calling volunteers – so many want to help. It's a great problem to have. Don then hopped to the Schooner Regatta which is only 4 years old and compared it to the Portuguese Festival which is 58 years old. He said that the Schooner Regatta is in the developmental stage. They are resource-limited because they have a smaller base of support. It is basically supported by people who have a love of sailing. The opportunity is there and we just have to reach out; there is a lot of work to be done.

Don went on to say that the biggest change is on page 10 (of his brochure). “The Tourism Fund is the primary investor in the Schooner Regatta – so your role here is a heavy one with lots of decisions to be made.” Citing page 11 he told the group that the grant is used in the following calendar year thus making it difficult for any heavy planning. We're supposed to start working on the regatta a year ahead so that's an issue you need to think about. We have to promote early; so you've created a model – *if you don't use it – you lose it*. That's an issue. He then launched into a branding dissertation but by that time his brochure had made the points he reiterated.

Mick Rudd came in at 6:45 p.m.

Hunter O'Hanian, director of the Fine Arts Work Center (FAWC), said he shares the difficulty of granting guidelines. His FAWC receives 30 or 40 grants so he knows how difficult funding can be. He suggested being very clear in tying the VSB mission to your review criteria. “How does it serve the mission? Place as few limitations on the grants as possible (multi yr, etc)” and lastly, “I think you should be very clear on what should be excluded – and the rationale for this.”

Two other observations from Hunter: “Because it's a small town – you might want to consider an independent review of your guidelines – someone who doesn't know the people involved – you can probably pay someone to have this objectivity.” He suggested looking at other agencies that make decisions i.e., Associated Grant Maker – Court St – Boston – who advise people on how to award grants. Hunter said they often bring clarity to the review process.

Everyone in the audience who wanted to be heard had been at this time.

Mick Rudd, one of the VSB members, said that Jay Critchley went to his office and Mick interviewed him. Basically, Jay's concerns are two fold – 1st timing – having to pull together all the grants at one time in the year. He hopes he's not extrapolating. One of the ideas that was floated was to divide the grant application into smaller segments, i.e., early Spring needs might have different guidelines. Break them up into seasons. Mick said to take him with *grano salis*. He suggested that Jay e-mail his concerns to the VSB.

2nd concern is whether long-standing events that might be fund-raisers were his major concern. Jay said that he had had a great spread in the NY Times last Friday about the swim. Nothing runs on

automatic pilot – there is always preparation. He does a lot of work. Jay said that the events should be thought of in a broader sense.

Lynn Davies concluded the meeting by saying that there will be another session after Labor Day. In summing up what the audience had to say she felt that “you basically want us to leave it alone with some tweaking of the process.” She felt the Board had received some very interesting ideas here. She promised that the Board will be putting all your suggestions together and will present it to the BoS. The grant applications will begin November 15th and be decided by Jan 15th. Sometime in late October there will be an informational meeting for all grant applicants. We will be here to help you and want to enhance your initiative. There’s a lot more to be done. She then thanked all for their valuable inputs.

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Evelyn Gaudiano

Evelyn Rogers Gaudiano

Approved by _____ on _____, 2005.

Lynne Davies, Chair