

Town of Provincetown RFQ for Disposition of Former Community Center

Milen Stoyanov
33 Franklin Street
Provincetown MA 02657

Delivered By Hand

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To: David Panagore, Town Manager
Provincetown Town Hall
260 Commercial Street
Provincetown MA 02657

I am a principal in a group of persons and businesses that are interested in adaptively re-using the building at 46 Bradford Street to create a "Provincetown International Community Center" for the purposes of providing summer seasonal housing to international workers as well as year-round facilities for housing and important community events that focus on international culture, cultural exchange, the arts, and sciences.

We have been actively helping international visa students and workers with housing and employment and cultural adaptation for more than a decade in Provincetown.

The interested parties include: Cool Travel Bulgaria Ltd (with ten offices in Bulgaria) and Cool Travel Cultural Exchange LLC (registered as a business in the U.S.), both of which specialize in organizing J1 visa exchange programs, with a primary focus on Provincetown); Pantex Agro Ltd (a large farm in Bulgaria); Milen Stoyanov (former J1 visa participant from Bulgaria who worked in Provincetown 2003-2005, resident of Provincetown since 2007, U.S. citizen since 2012, and principal of J1 Hotspot, specializing in providing services for J1 visa participants); Petar Pantov (former J1 visa participant from Bulgaria who worked in Provincetown 2006-2009, principal of Cool Travel Bulgaria LTD and J1 Hotspot); and Maria Dzhenskova (former J1 visa participant from Bulgaria who worked in Provincetown 2005-2007, principal of Cool Travel Cultural Exchange LLC and J1 Hotspot).

All of these interested parties intend to create a new entity titled "Provincetown International Community Center" for the purposes of this project.

I am authorized to submit this RFQ response on behalf of the interested parties listed above. I am the primary contact.

Enclosed with this submission is a cashier's check payable to the "Town of Provincetown" in the amount of \$5,000 (five thousand dollars).

Sincerely,



Milen Stoyanov

Interested Parties:

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Petar K. Pantov 45 Konstantin Velichkov Street, Varna, Bulgaria, +359885104833, ppantov@cooltravel.bg;
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ppantov@cooltravel.bg; Cool Travel Cultural Exchange LLC, 619 New York Avenue, Claymont DE 19703,
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The "Provincetown International Community Center" will bring new life to the community center while retaining its original spirit as a place of gathering and exchange. Our concept is to create a community center and dormitory housing for seasonal workers in the summer. In the off-season the community center will be available to help Provincetown promote events and small conferences as well as housing and event space for local non-profit organizations and businesses such as the Fine Arts Work Center, Center for Coastal Studies and others. These goals are consistent with the Local Comprehensive Plan.

Our international workers are one of our greatest assets and most critical resources. Provincetown relies on H2B and J1 visa participants to sustain our tourism economy. Approximately 1,000 young people come annually on visas to our town. Due to the severe shortage of affordable housing, these participants often have inferior accommodations with overcrowding. Sufficient housing in Provincetown for people working in Provincetown also is important for safety while commuting to and from work. Anticipated regulatory changes may require obtaining specific housing prior to granting visas, which will put even greater pressure on local businesses, especially those of small and medium size, to find suitable staff. Little effort has been made in the past to integrate foreign workers into the community or provide opportunities for cultural exchange. This community center would help to create a positive cultural experience for residents and visitors.

International workers form the foundation of and participate directly in Provincetown's economy. In addition to supplying much-needed labor for our businesses to succeed, international workers each spend thousands of dollars in town on accommodation, food, and basic needs. This is significant; it is often said that a dollar brought to a town circulates twice while a dollar earned in a town circulates ten times. Summertime work in Provincetown is a pivotal experience in the lives of our international population, and they act as host ambassadors when they return home, spreading word of their adventures here and promoting Provincetown. No amount of marketing dollars can bring the "free" publicity our town receives from these people. We need to ensure that their comments and opinions are positive. Some of them eventually become year-round residents, engaged taxpayers and business owners.

Provincetown is certified as a sustainable community, which in the minds of travelers means more than "green". Research shows that travelers want their visit to have social, economic and environmental benefit to the host community. Visitors and residents want to know that we are treating our essential international workers fairly and ethically. Provincetown traditionally has welcomed diversity of all kinds, and we believe the community center would be a successful representation of our values. By creating this community center, we are enhancing our collective portrayal of Provincetown as a sustainable and welcoming tourism destination. Provincetown always has been a place of "first arrival" and has benefited from the melding of cultures for 400 years. Integrating newcomers into the community is part of our tradition. Our international population adds vibrancy to our dwindling and aging demographics. The faces in our local school reflect diverse places of origins of the families, some of whom initially arrived on visas.

The community center structure itself is in relatively poor condition, mostly due to deferred maintenance, but it could be brought to life again with modest improvements. The present space can be adapted to dormitory style accommodation by adding partitions, restrooms and fire suppression. The first floor could house approximately 50 people. The ground floor would include a newly renovated "commons" area for general use (that also could be used as a meeting space or conference venue in the off-season), a modest kitchen, and an office for building management and service providers for visa participants. We anticipate that several jobs will be created to help manage the building and provide services to international workers. Provincetown would receive, at a minimum, a tax benefit based on room taxes for the living spaces.

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QUALIFICATION STATEMENT

The Principals

For the purposes of the "Provincetown International Community Center" project, the principals described below (in **bold font**) intend to create a new entity combining business assets and collective experience and talents.

Petar Pantov is a former J1 visa participant from Bulgaria who worked in Provincetown (2006-2009). He graduated in 2010 from the University of Veliko Tarnovo with a bachelor degree in finance, and earned a master degree in corporate business and management in 2013 from Economic University Varna. He speaks Bulgarian, English and German.

Maria Dzhenkova is a former J1 visa participant from Bulgaria who worked in Provincetown (2005-2007). She graduated in 2009 from the University of Veliko Tarnovo with a bachelor degree in cultural ethnology. She speaks Bulgarian and English.

Milen Stoyanov is a former J1 visa participant from Bulgaria who worked in Provincetown (2003-2005). He graduated in 2006 from Burgas Free University with a bachelor degree in computer science. He has lived in Provincetown since 2007 and became a U.S. citizen in 2012. He speaks Bulgarian, English and Russian.

In 2008 Petar and Maria founded **The Cool Travel Company** (doing business in Bulgaria as **Cool Travel Bulgaria LTD**, registered in the U.S. as **Cool Travel Cultural Exchange LLC**) ("Cool Travel"), an agency specializing in organizing student exchange programs for J1 visa participants ("Work and Travel"). Cool Travel is the fastest growing work and travel agency in Bulgaria. In its early years the agency placed approximately 50 Bulgarian J1 visa participants in the United States. Currently, Cool Travel annually places more than 1,000 Bulgarian J1 participants in work situations in the U.S., including approximately 200 students in Provincetown (representing half of the estimated Bulgarian J1 students in Provincetown). Cool Travel has ten offices in eight major cities with more than 35 employees. As a reliable and innovative business, Cool Travel promotes Provincetown as the best "Work and Travel" destination in the United States. Cool Travel provides orientation information at group sessions in Bulgarian cities before J1 students arrive, and it continues this process after they come to the United States. Many Lower Cape Cod businesses have consulted with Cool Travel, because of their unique experience, regarding effective ways to interact with international workers.

Beginning in 2010, Milen has been the local coordinator for Cool Travel in Provincetown and Cape Cod. He has coordinated accommodation, transportation, health insurance, cultural adaptation and related matters for approximately 1,000 international "Work and Travel" participants. He also manages several rental properties inhabited by J1 visa participants.

In 2013 Petar and Maria founded **Pantex Agro Ltd**, a 1,850-acre farm in northeastern Bulgaria that grows wheat, corn, barley, maize, sunflower seed and rapeseed.

In 2016, Petar, Maria, Milen and Boyan Gadzhev founded the business **J1 Hotspot**, an international student community center located in the center of Provincetown. The business provides a variety of services (airport transportation, assistance with accommodation, health care information, tours, cultural events) for international students. J1 Hotspot is available to the international population and all sponsor agencies to ensure a good experience for all participants.

Redevelopment Team

In addition to the individuals and entities described above, the redevelopment team includes the following dedicated professionals.

Regina Binder has lived in Provincetown for over 40 years and worked here since 1990. She introduced the local historic district, served on the Historic Commission for 10 years, was Building

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Committee chair until term-limited, and was a member of the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Planning Board. She was a member of the last LCP Board and then chaired the board responsible for implementing the Local Comprehensive Plan. Binder, in partnership with Tom Boland, redeveloped significant Provincetown properties including the Eastern School House, Brass Key, and Whaler's Wharf. Together with Jim Vincent and Elizabeth Debs, she has formed Front Street Consultants to assist property owners with regulatory, design and environmental projects; they are working on several town projects. She earned a BA in Art History from Vassar College and a Master of Science in Historic Preservation from Columbia University School of Architecture.

Elizabeth Debs, Architect AIA, has been involved in architecture and planning, community development and nonprofit work for over 25 years. She has worked in real estate development, as director of a community organization, principal of an architectural practice, and most recently started teaching in the Interior Architecture Department at Rhode Island School of Design. Elizabeth is on the Advisory Group for the American Institute of Architects' Housing and Community Development Knowledge Community. Elizabeth earned a BA in Philosophy from Vassar College and a Master of Architecture from Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

William N. Rogers II, PE, PLS, has been a professional civil engineer and land surveyor in Massachusetts for more than 40 years. He is based in Provincetown and has done hundreds of structural projects and building renovations similar to the community center (e.g., Crown & Anchor). He has significant experience with Zoning Board of Appeals applications, Planning Board matters, and Conservation Commission issues. His firm also has architectural designers.

John Thomas has lived in Provincetown for more than 20 years. He is an advocate for international workers and cultural diversity, and is a musician and event producer of important annual community-based events (WorldFest, Provincetown's International Cultural Festival; Celebration of Life; Great Music on Sundays @5). WorldFest, created in 2011, is designed to provide opportunities for international workers, residents and visitors to learn about each other through music performances and information exchange.

Relevant Business Experience

The principals have been engaged collectively in international businesses for more than a decade, first as J1 visa participants and then as creators and owners of companies that administer student cultural exchange programs that have provided positive experiences for thousands of students from Europe, many of whom have worked in Provincetown during the summer season. The Cool Travel and J1 Hotspot businesses are expanding rapidly, with an increase in client-students, relationships with Cape Cod businesses and landlords, and other entities to ensure ongoing success experientially and financially. The "Provincetown International Community Center" is a logical extension of the work they have been doing for more than a decade. They are in a unique position, based on their lives and business experience, to create a facility that will meet a critical housing need for an international population as well as cultural opportunities for all.

Financial Ability

The principals have the financial ability to create and manage the "Provincetown International Community Center". Their financial ability is based on their collective business acumen and assets, the continued trajectory of healthy growth of their associated businesses (Cool Travel and Pantex Agro), and recent productive discussions with Seamen's Bank representatives regarding various options for financing. Sufficient funds are generated by the principal businesses to commence the project while continued funding is established. The principals will create a new entity from funds generated by their existing businesses. The principals will determine with Provincetown officials whether to lease or purchase the property to optimize mutual benefit. The new entity will be a natural evolution of the principals' passions and business goals in enhancing quality of life for the international population and the communities in which they reside.