



**Town of Provincetown
The Visitor Services Board
MEETING MINUTES – August 5, 2019, 4:00 p.m.
Town Hall, Judge Welsh Room
260 Commercial Street, Provincetown, MA**

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

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

Minutes

1. Public Statements

Robert Sanborn, Executive Director, Provincetown Business Guild

- RS updated the VSB on the progress with Carnival. The guide out and the posters, rack cards are out. Everything is on track. Pre-events start a week from Thursday with the Vacay cruise ship coming in.
- The Key West Flag, which commemorates Stonewall, is coming to Ptown for the 1st time. We will use it three times during Carnival Week - Behind the Crown and Anchor, up at the Monument in the morning where the chair of the select board and will officially proclaim Carnival as Carnival week, and 3rd is the parade.
- We still need volunteers.
- We are selling the posters. And there is a great response. The official poster is the one on the guide. We also have a horizontal version with the whale at the bottom. And we have a square. We will have them at the Firehouse and will sell them during Carnival Week and at the LGBTQ center.

2. Provincetown 400 Marketing Grant update

JG shared the he, AF and NC met with Ptown 400 on July 18th to discuss the grant funding.

Discussion also included:

- There seemed to be a lack of clarity on how the funding can be spent.
- The distribution of Rack cards which are being updated and will arrive soon.
- Marketing kit – AF requested the kit so the Tourism Department can market with the correct message. Ptown400 shared that they are hiring an actor to reenact Gov. Bradford to educate tourist on a daily basis. Ptown 400 asked the Tourism department to share videos on social media, which they did.
- It seems clear that they want to use the grant funding and will use most of the funds to market their three events.

Discussion:

- AS asked that the Tourism Department all market the Ptown 400
- NC explained they will be adding the theme to all advertising
- DB asked who Provincetown 400 is marketing to. AF stated that they are marketing their events and he is not sure if they are doing Facebook advertising.
- DB asked how much of the grant money is left? JG - \$62,000



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3. Tourism Grants Review

- a. Grant Criterion
- b. Application Process
- c. Evaluation Process

Discussion:

- JG - We need to discuss the criteria. The purpose is to emphasize off season and maybe we should consider codifying it so we have a procedure in place. I thought we should put a percentage cap – no more than XX% should go toward the high season.
- RM stated that we should be less specific with constraints. For example carnival was created 30 years ago... but it was quiet during family week. It's up to the general public too. We have had discussions in the past that there are quiet weeks in the summer too. What about May and June? We should look at the EDC. That is why we hired NC to come up with guidelines that we can deliberate on.
- JG – the Select Board is requesting the terms for procedure from EDC.
- AF – there are 4 groups that give out grants. So there is some consistency.
- (Susan Avellar arrives – 4:28pm – excused lateness)
- JG – EDC does their scoring in advance and everyone knows all the scores and they give money out based on the highest scores.
- RC – (who is a member of the EDC) - We were getting mixed instructions as to what the Select Board wanted from EDC. I see there has been a change on the Board now, and they want to more information.
- JG – that is what was communicated it to me. Do we have logic of our own? There have been challenges and we are trying to make the process clearer.
- RM – We should meet with them so they can give us direction. We want to be positive and cooperate with them. There are four that are very supportive. PBG is the perfect example – I would love to get the opportunity to hear what they want us to do. I think the EDC is very different. The VSB has a different mission then EDC.
- SA – I was going to make a similar comment as RM. I see the VSB as a different entity. Does the EDC have a set criterion?
- AF - The funds from the VSB are only marketing and the EDC can be used for other things. And the consultants agree that the applicant can apply for both.
- JG - I remember there were Select Board members who were confused as to why applicants are getting money from both. This is an opportunity to clear the air.
- AS – I thought that the big snafu was that someone's grant application was late?
- RM – we have overlooked things for years. We need to maintain flexibility.
- JG – Let's have suggestions from Town Staff and meet with the EDC. I would like to consider the process of how they score people. We need to be transparent. We as a Board we need to do our homework and we have to make a decision on whether that person should be able to vote.
- SA – I am not sure that I agree.
- JG – we should be able to review scores.
- SA – Some grantees are very small events and don't score high and still create an atmosphere. They may not be a head in a bed but they are putting a bottom on a chair.



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- RC – We need everyone to do the criterion with their scores in place... The individuals turning in grants should know that it has been read ahead of time and should be able to discuss the application. The VSB needs to be prepared.

- 4. Discussion of photo shoot images from Pride, Women of Color, Rowing Regatta, Encaustics Conference, Portuguese Festival**
 - The general consensus of the VSB is that the photos were well liked!

- 5. Discussion of Local Option Room Tax Revenue**
 - a. Licensed Accommodations Trend**
 - b. Short Term Rental Tax Collected potential**
 - c. History of Tourism Fund**
 - The VSB reviewed the spreadsheets from his report
 - AF stated that some of the numbers may not be available
 - RM – The percentage trend is going down. Why is there a seat at the table for women’s innkeepers? So if we are talking about transparency - how many actual rooms are owned by women? We should have accurate information. We are always using the same numbers every year.

5 – Director’s Report

- AF – Budget- There will be more funds because the short term rental tax will be collected. It may take a year or two to know how it will turn out but we hope to still expect 35% to be deposited into the tourism fund.
- JG - planning a budget based on a guess is a bad idea. Let’s wait at least a year.
- AF stated that we can only work within the \$750,000. JG questioned why we only ask for \$750,000.
- AF explained that we take the 3 year average and we spend the money as it comes in. We are starting this year on a budget of \$750,000 with \$219k in the account. The first deposit will be in September and then December. \$776k will go into the fund. So we can be a bit more aggressive. We have an opportunity right now.
- RM – I agree that we should be more aggressive.
- The Board all agrees to be aggressive with budgeting.
- AF – shared a draft of the budget to help everyone with the thinking process. By the end of November our numbers need to be final.
- JG asked the VSB to review the draft and see what the numbers could look like – blue sky.
- AF – It is always grey but the account that we have control over is marketing. The spreadsheet for the rest of fiscal year FY20 shows how much is available. Then we added \$350,000 so we have \$352,187. VSB has authorized 12k for NYT; 13k for digital advertising; 40K radio. The 2020 budget is reflected in the 5 year plan.

(David Wilson – left at 4:30 – excused exit)



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Media placement

- AF - We are waiting on the final plan. We would like to recommended motion to authorize \$15,000 for Red Thread October, November , December Digital Media Buy with The Spark Group

Motion to authorize \$15,000 for Red Thread October, November, December Digital Media Buy with The Spark Group

Motion: DB 2nd: RC Vote: 6-0-0

Discussion about sponsored digital advertising:

- JG asked if we were also advertising geared toward women.
- AF reviewed the media buy for the year. Then discussed Pride Media. The audience that reads Advocate is stronger. It's an "everything" publication and the ads will be in all publications. There is a \$25,000 budget for all of the sponsored digital media.
- RC –We should focus on women coming all year. Not just events. It's inclusive all year. AF agreed.
- AS – Is this in addition to what we have budgeted? AF – no.
- SA – How does it drive women here in January/Feb/March? RM – it's smart to do 6 months in advance.
- AF – last year we did Yankee publishing (New England traveler), Cape Cod.com and Towleroad. We can wait if we want to.
- (RM – left at 4:55)
- The Board decided to table the topic.

4th of July

- Bob Littlefield contacted our office and the PBG and Chamber and is preparing a presentation/proposal for the Recreation Commission and Select Board
- He is asking if the VSB would have any position, pro or con, with these recommendations.
- His presentation/proposal will include:
 - Ramp up of the annual Fourth of July Parade by co-branding it with the 400th anniversary theme
 - Moving it to either Friday July 3rd or Sunday July 5th
 - His concern with having the parade on Saturday July 4th is "the possible misfortune in 2020 of the Fourth of July falling on a turnover day. In terms of running a parade could be a disaster, both in attendance and getting units to come here from any distance. The last time the parade was on turnover day, attendance was cut in half, down to about 15,000."
 - When he said "ramp up the parade" what he means is:
 - Expanding the parade by getting more floats from in-town as well as other Cape towns
 - Securing more marching bands
 - Extending an invitation to the Wampanoag
 - Working through state government to secure other units such as the state police ceremonial 50-state flag regiment.
 - It will still be the Fourth of July parade, but it's more accurate to say it will be "sub-branded" with the 400th anniversary.



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- Branding as the 4th of July celebrating the 400th anniversary would be more effective to bring marching bands from other states, like Indiana, to participate in the celebration the Pilgrims.
- JG suggested he should speak with rec and SB first so we know what we are marketing.
- DB – great opportunity to brand them together.

Tourism Marketing Organizational Structure

- AF and NC met with Acting Town Manager David Gardner and reviewed structure and bidding process for each contracted vendor
- Preparing Job Descriptions and bids for each category with scope and anticipated cost/annual expenditure

Board member statements

RC – thank you – I have learned a lot more. What I am taking away is that we need to be more active with the 400 advertising.

SA –We need to move forward with the 400. According to the Boston globe tourism is down. So we need to keep pushing forward with 2020 to make sure people want to visit.

AS stated she read the same article. It was 2 fold and they spoke about room tax too. I think the room tax is good but this may effect what pool of money you have to work from. I'm concern people will rethink coming here.

DB – I am excited about the process. And I like numbers. Everything should be about the 400.

JG – I am disappointed about the 400. I thought there was progress at the meeting but I guess we need to move forward.

Motion to approve the July 8, 2019 Minutes

Motion: RC 2nd: AS Approved 5-0-0

Motion to adjourn at 6:05

Motion: RC Second: DB Motion Approved 5-0-0

Respectfully submitted,

Nina Cantor
Assistant Director of Tourism