

**NEWPORT COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 8, 2006**

MEETING MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order at 12:10 p.m. by Chairperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE:

Chairperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano, Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt, Treasurer Mark Stenning, Gregory Fater, Rocky Kempenaar, Donna Olney Kohler, Brian Moore, Karen Oakley, Len Panaggio, Pieter Roos, Susan Samson, Laurie Stroll, Harlan Tyler and Katie Wilkinson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT AND EXCUSED WERE:

Lisa Gross

STAFF PRESENT WERE:

Evan Smith, Debbie Gatta, Kathryn Farrington, J. Timothy Walsh and

Mary Ann Kelly

GUESTS PRESENT WERE:

J. Russell Jackson

I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The previous meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Gregory Fater and seconded by Susan Samson. The motion passed unanimously.

II. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The treasurer's report was read by Mark Stenning. City Tax through May was up 1.93% and Regional Tax through April was up 19.59%.* The current year to date combined growth is -2.05%. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt and seconded by Brian Moore. The motion passed unanimously.

***As of this meeting date, the NCCVB had not yet received Regional Hotel Tax for the month of May from the RI Division of Taxation.**

III. STAFF REPORTS:

Chairperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano introduced Rep. J. Russell Jackson. Rep. Jackson is the new legal counsel for the Newport County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Each Staff Report will now reflect the figures of the previous month's activity.

A. MARKETING:

Kathryn Farrington told board members that the next Marketing Meeting will be held on Wednesday, September 13th at 11:00am at Sakonnet Vineyards in Little Compton. There were no Marketing Meetings in July and August. Kathryn showed the board "pay for play" envelopes advertising Newport. The NCCVB paid only for the production of the envelopes. The Marketing Department has been working on the Girlfriend's Getaway. The Marketing Department is also planning the first-ever Newport Restaurant Week. Restaurant week is a popular event practiced in most major cities across the country. It will be held the first two weeks of November and tie into the Newport Winter Package. Newport Restaurants will offer a three-course prix fix menu at lunch, dinner, or both. The Marketing Department will be representing Newport County at the Penn Station Promotion Event in New York City at the end of August. They are also partnering with the International Tennis Hall of Fame at the U.S. Open in New York. At the end of this week, visitors will begin

receiving business size cards from the information specialists in the Visitors Center asking them to visit a web site designed by BizGrader to complete a short questionnaire regarding their visit to Newport County. Kathryn passed around media reviews promoting Newport County.

B. CONVENTION & TOURISM:

Evan Smith introduced Tim Walsh, the new Vice President of Sales, who is replacing Martha Sheridan. Tim told the board that the Sales Department was awarded the prestigious Meetings and Conventions 2006 Gold Service Award by M & C's subscribers. Tim was in Texas twice in the month of July. From July 9th -11th he was in Dallas for the MPI WEC Conference and the following week he was in Austin for DMAI. The Sales Department is investigating the D3000 software program. The Financial Insurance Conference Planners will be holding a regional meeting in Newport. The Hotel Viking will be the host hotel. The Disney movie which is being filmed in Newport will produce over 4,000 room nights. America House placed a release for the Ambassador Award Program in the Providence Journal and that resulted in a meeting in Newport for next year. Damon Gordon is working on a motor coach tour map in conjunction with the city and the Newport Police Department so that all tour drivers will have one cohesive piece.

C. OPERATIONS:

Cathy Morrison was absent. Evan reported that the sprinkler work on the 2nd floor is completed and in compliance with code. New thermostats have also been installed. The outside panels are completed. Pieter Roos and Donna Kohler worked on the Human Resource Manual and have submitted their suggestions and feedback to Cathy.

D. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

With the promotion of Tim Walsh to Vice President of Sales, a new sales manager will be hired. Kathryn Farrington was the guest speaker at the National Concierge Association Conference in New Orleans. Their 2007 conference will be held in Newport and the Hyatt is the hotel of choice. Lodging bed tax figures through May is up 4%. We unfortunately have had a 30% decrease in visitor center attendance and ticket sales overall are down 10%. Ticket Sales at the

NCCVB for the Preservation Society of Newport County are down 18%. We are experiencing many peaks and valleys. Events are even or down. The Newport Gulls set a new all time attendance season record. Food tax is up 5%, but this may take a hit because of Christie's closing. There is no one reason. There were thank you notes from the city of Newport and the Fort Adams Trust in everyone's folder. Tomorrow, Evan will meet with Buddy Croft, the new director of the Newport Bridge and Turnpike Authority. The board of director's evening social will be held on September 7th from 5:30-7:30 pm. All agreed that because of fiduciary responsibilities to the six townships of Newport County, town managers and their guests will also be invited to the event.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

There were no committee reports.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Evan contacted Mystic Seaport, the Aquarium and the official Destination Marketing Organization in Connecticut researching trends and affects of the casinos on the overall Mystic tourism program. The Aquarium said they have seen minimal residual results traceable to the casinos. The Seaport said they have seen no

business from the casinos. The Destination Marketing Organization said the biggest adverse impact may be in dining and lodging. Gregory Fater made a motion to oppose gaming question number one on the ballot in November. It was seconded by Vice Chairperson Charles Vaillancourt and after much discussion passed unanimously.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

Kathryn Farrington introduced Adam McCarthy, location manager, and Colin Walsh, his assistant, who are in Newport County scouting locations for two motion pictures that are being filmed here. They are based in Middletown on John Clarke Road. They will begin filming September 12th and will continue until November 3rd. They will spend about 8 weeks shooting the film. They are looking for a large enclosed space that will fit a 40'x80' tent and they are also looking for 1950's film footage of Newport. Adam gave his cell phone number (401-225-2434) if anyone has information on locations or questions. Kathryn also told board members that this Friday Jane Pickens Theater is showing High Society in the color version at 5:30 pm. (champagne reception and the show begins at 6:00 pm).

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.