

NEWPORT COUNTY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

TUESDAY, August 21, 2007

12:00PM

Held at the Gateway Information Center

3rd Floor Meeting Room

MEETING MINUTES:

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

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE:

Chairperson Jeanne Marie Napolitano, Mark Stenning, Lisa Gross, Len Panaggio, Katie Wilkinson, Brian Moore, Susan Samson, Karen Oakley, Lori Stroll, Shirley Mello, Donna Kohler, Pieter Roos, Charron Reed

BOARD MEMBERS EXCUSED WERE:

Rocky Kempenaar, Gregory Fater

STAFF PRESENT WAS:

Evan Smith, Kathryn Farrington, Debbie Gatta, Ellen Crawley,

MaryEllen Fitzpatrick

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE:

None

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE:

Jon Nelson

I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The previous meeting minutes for June 12th were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Karen Oakley and seconded by Katie Wilkinson. The motion passed unanimously.

II. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The financial report for June was read by Mark Stenning. City Bed Tax for May, 2007 was up 13.69% and Regional Bed Tax was up 9.34 % for a combined YTD. growth of 12.61%. Mark reviewed the revenues and receivables for the month of June, 2007. A motion to accept the treasurer's report was made by Susan Samson and seconded by Brian Moore. The motion passed unanimously.

III. STAFF REPORTS:

A. CONVENTION & TOURISM:

Evan Smith, reported for Tim Walsh, about the NCCVB efforts to host the Familiarization Tour for Meeting Planners from throughout the United States starting August 19th – August 21st. Numerous events were planned to showcase Newport as a meeting destination. A focus group was held at the Hotel Viking with some of the meeting planners to brainstorm how to best market to them. This was the first time the FAM Tour was held during summer season. Evan stated the appreciation of the Hospitality Partners working together to create this event and make it a success.

Bookings were down and the number of room nights was up for July. As for the number of leads they were up compared to last year at this time.

Business booked for July was from numerous organizations resulting in 4502 total room nights with an economic impact of \$1,277,584.00.

The number of Tour Operator leads was up compared to last year's numbers in

July. The number of room nights was down compared to last year at this time. Tour Operator leads were up compared to last year in July.

B. MARKETING:

Kathryn Farrington, Vice President of Marketing, introduced MaryEllen Fitzpatrick, the new Communications Manager and reported on the following:

- 1. Marketing Department has been brainstorming to update GoNewport.com website with changes to home page and expanding advertising for YourNewportWedding.com to outside of Newport County.**
- 2. The 2nd Annual Newport Restaurant Week, November 4th – 10th, sponsored by ABC6, Grey Goose, Newport Daily News, Restaurant Review, Rhode Island Monthly.**
- 3. The Winter Package Program, November – April, will have some changes with more focus on the website component.**
- 4. NCCVB hosted the National Concierge Association this week and event was very successful.**
- 5. The next Marketing Meeting will be on Wednesday, September 26th at Norman Bird Sanctuary.**

C. OPERATIONS:

Evan Smith, President & CEO, reported for Cathy Morrison, Vice

President of Operations that floor traffic is up 17% YTD. A possible new record may be set. Ticket sales are up 16.5%, another record breaker if trend continues. The NCCVB recently hosted a successful event with the Board of Realtors of Newport County on the 1st floor Information Center.

D. PRESIDENTS REPORT:

Evan Smith, President & CEO, reported Meals & Beverage Tax was up 5.14% and Middletown Meals & Beverage Tax was up as well at 15.76%. He continued to report on the following:

1. Renewals for board appointments are due for the 10 Municipal appointees in September, 2007 and for the 5 industry appointees in October, 2007.

Letters have been sent to the 6 towns requesting their review and action.

2. Evan will interview today with Joe Baker from Newport Daily News

about a story featuring tourism and economic growth.

3. The press stating Astor's Beechwood was for sale.

4. September & October the largest amount of cruise ships arrivals. A schedule was provided. Tender problems caused the loss of 4 arrivals of Royal Caribbean ships resulting in lost revenue.

5. The City of Newport plans to hire an Economic Development Officer. He has been asked to join a 6 member panel to review the resumes that have been received.

6. Two articles were presented for review. One article although Evan agreed with most, one paragraph was disappointing and he will respond. The other article was positive concerning an accident a visitor had and the favorable medical treatment she received. .

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. FINANCE COMMITTEE:

Mark Stenning reported that there was a Finance Committee meeting on August 7th. Two requests for funding were agreed to be presented to the board for approval:

1. A request from Admiral Thomas Weschler for funding from the NCCVB for expenditures from the 2007 Tall Ships Event, in the amount of \$9700 was reviewed and discussed. A motion to approve the funding of \$9700 was made by Mark Stenning and seconded by Karen Oakley. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Two proposals in the amount, not to exceed \$26,310, for improving our existing computer system were presented and explained with graphics by Jon Nelson, IT Consultant for the NCCVB. A motion was made to approve the funds, not to exceed \$26,310, by Mark Stenning. The motion was seconded by Len Panaggio. The motion passed unanimously.

MEDIA PLACEMENTS:

Oregon Times, The Jewish Press, Lavish Magazine, Canadian newspaper group

INFORMATION CENTER:

The total number of visitors to the Information Center for July was 40,471, up 15.49% from last July. The total number of visitors to the Information Center for the year was 174,981, up 16.42% compared to last year at this same time. The main source of visitors still comes from New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey and Rhode Island.

V. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

It was suggested that any Board of Director's member that wants to continue serving call Evan Smith anyone council appointed contact the chairman of the council indicating that you would like to continue to serve. Decisions will be made in September.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

Lisa Gross announced her new employment position and resigned from the Board of Directors. A gift of appreciation was presented to her.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion was made to adjourn by Len Panaggio and seconded by Katie Wilkinson. It passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 1:28pm. The next NCCVB board meeting will be Tuesday, September 11th at the Gateway Visitors Center, 3rd floor meeting room.