

Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau

DBA Discover Newport

Board of Directors Meeting

12pm – Tuesday November 19, 2013

Held at:

The Gateway Information Center

3rd Floor Conference Room

MEETING MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order at 12:02pm by Chairman Len Panaggio.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE:

Len Panaggio, Barbara Pelletier, Stephan Brigidi, Greg Fater, Laurie Stroll, Jeff McDonough, Rocky Kempenaar, Karen Oakley, Duncan Maio, Katie Wilkinson, Matt Gineo, Rick Peckham, Paul Rodrigues, Brewer Rowe, Marlin Scalzi, Kathleen Seguin

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE: Nancy Blount, Pieter Roos

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED WERE:

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Evan Smith, Kathryn Farrington, Tim Walsh, Alyson Adkins, Cathy Morrison, Anna Duffy

GUESTS PRESENT WERE: Susan Gill of the Tiverton EDC

I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The previous meeting minutes for September, 2013 were reviewed. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Greg Fater and seconded by Katie Wilkinson. The motion passed unanimously.

II. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The treasurer's report for September and October 2013 was read by Treasurer, Katie Wilkinson. City Bed Tax for August, 2013 was up +4.76%, YTD. Regional Bed Tax was up +7.26%, YTD. Bristol Bed Tax was up +8.36%, for a combined YTD Bed Tax, through August, 2013 up +5.46%. She reviewed the revenues and expenses for the months of September and October, 2013. A motion to accept the Treasurer's report for October, 2013 was made by Greg Fater and seconded by Len Panaggio. The motion passed unanimously.

III. PRESIDENTS REPORT:

Evan Smith reported on the following:

- Evan reviewed the meals tax report he'd emailed to the directors.
- He briefed the board on the development of the new budget. He will survey local hotels for forecast figures.
- A handout was circulated for the 11/20/13 workshop and Q&A session to be held at the Visitors Center. Randy Rosenbaum, executive director of the RI State Council on the Arts will speak on

the State of the Arts Initiative allowing all original or limited edition works of art to be sold exempt from state sales tax in RI.

• Evan asked the board to approve Phase Two renovations to the Visitors Center which includes addition of more natural light on America's Cup Ave. to improve the "dark and dismal" lobby. He is seeking approval up to \$30,000. He is waiting for 3 more estimates. Greg Fater discussed capital improvements made over the last 25 years and the future of the building. Discussion followed. Katie Wilkinson made a motion to support Evan's request which was seconded by Kathleen Seguin. The board voted to approve the \$30,000. with stipulations.

• Evan highlighted three major current issues for municipal appointees:

1. The Yachting Center noise variance - neighbor complaints are not yet resolved as the city council debate was postponed.

2. The Preservation Society is appealing the decision by the Newport Historic District Commission to build a visitor's center at the Breakers.

3. The Sakonnet River Bridge tolls – the committee report will be ready in April 2014.

IV. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. FACILITIES:

Stephan Brigidi reported on the following:

• There were a record number of visitors. The Newport Visitor's Center was listed as #14 on Trip Advisor under Newport attractions. There were great reviews from this past season.

- He discussed RIPTA applying for a grant to repair the 25 year old tenting at the Gateway Center damaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. The city completed the repair to the parking lot stairs. Paint striping in the parking lot will be done. We are getting quotes and estimates on the most cost effective way to add light to the lobby of the visitor's center.
- The gift shop had \$75,000 in sales. Stephan asked the board about expanding the gift shop. Karen Oakley suggested expansion should be explored after one full year of operation. Discussion followed.

B. GOVERNANCE:

Greg Fater reported on the following:

- There was no committee meeting held.
- The next meeting is 1/3/14.

C. FINANCE:

Katie Wilkinson reported on the following:

- The Finance Committee did meet in October to review co-op and advertising. Client event taking place in December.

V. STAFF REPORTS:

A. SALES:

Tim Walsh, Vice President of Sales updated the Board on the current status and upcoming events of the Sales Department.

B. MARKETING:

Kathryn Farrington, Vice President of Marketing updated the Board on the current status and upcoming events of the Marketing Department. Successful feedback from Restaurant week participants.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

Jeff McDonough announced his resignation from the board due to personal reasons. He asked for suggestions for a replacement from Jamestown. The Volvo Ocean Race will take place in Newport in May of 2015. Laurie Stroll has been appointed by Volvo to help coordinate this key sporting event.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Len Panaggio and seconded by Karen Oakley. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 1:19pm.

**The next Board Meeting will be held
Tuesday, January 21 @ 12pm
at The Gateway Center
23 America's Cup Ave. Newport, RI**