

Newport & Bristol County Convention & Visitors Bureau

DBA Discover Newport

Board of Directors Meeting

12pm – Tuesday, August 18, 2015

Held at:

Gateway Information Center

23 America's Cup Ave

Newport, RI

MEETING MINUTES:

The meeting was called to order at 12:07pm by Chairman Len Panaggio.

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE WERE:

Nancy Blount, Stephan Brigidi, Keith Chouinard, Greg Fater, Matt Gineo, Rocky Kempenaar, Duncan Maio, Karen Oakley, Len Panaggio, Barbara Pelletier, Pieter Roos, Brewer Rowe, Rusty Sallee, Marlen Scalzi, Kathleen Seguin, Laurie Stroll, Nancy Parker Wilson

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & EXCUSED WERE:

Rick Peckham, Paul Rodrigues

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT & NOT EXCUSED WERE:

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

GUESTS PRESENT WERE: Mary Shean, Lauren Carson, M.J. Walsh, Stephanie Schmidt, Nancy Scott, Ron Barr

I. PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES:

The previous meeting minutes for June 2015 were reviewed by the board. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Greg Fater and seconded by Karen Oakley. The motion passed unanimously.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT:

- Rep. Lauren Carson spoke about a new legislative commission she is chairing: Study Methods for Growing Tourism in the State of RI through Coordinated Branding and Marketing Methods. It will consist of (14) members appointed by the Speaker of the House including the Directors, or designees of all RI regional tourism centers. The commission will report its findings and recommendations to the House no later than April 9, 2016.

- **Stephanie Schmidt made remarks as a resident of Newport and neighborhood abutter to the Visitor's Center regarding proposed renovations to the outside shelters damaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2012.**

III. ELECTION:

Greg Fater asked the board to support the recommendation of the Governance Committee to appoint Keith Chouinard to fill the seat vacated by Marlen Scalzi due to her retirement. A motion was made by Stephan Brigidi to appoint Keith to the board and seconded by Duncan Maio. The motion passed unanimously.

IV. TREASURER'S REPORT:

The treasurer's report for June and July 2015 was read by Treasurer Brewer Rowe. City Bed Tax through May, 2015 was down -0.37%, YTD; Regional Bed Tax was up +33.56%, YTD; Bristol Bed Tax was down -3.37%, for a combined YTD Bed Tax, through May, 2015 up +8.13%. Brewer reviewed the revenues and expenses for the months of June and July 2015. A motion to accept the Treasurer's report for June and July 2015 was made by Karen Oakley and seconded by Pieter Roos. The motion passed unanimously.

Review of annual fiscal audit (year ending March 31, 2015) - Chairman

Len Panaggio informed the board that we received an “unmodified” report from the audit by Sansiveiri Kimball & Co. L.L.P. which is the highest mark given for performance. A motion to accept the treasurer’s report including Len’s remarks was made by Pieter Roos and seconded by Duncan Maio. Copies of the audit report will be sent to all municipalities and appropriate state offices.

V. COMMITTEE REPORTS:

A. FACILITIES:

- Stephan Brigidi discussed the Bristol Town Council meeting he attended with Evan Smith on 7/8/15. He briefed the town council that it may be necessary to eliminate the operation and staffing of the Bristol Visitor’s Center due to the budget cuts of \$290,000.anticipated in 2016.**
- Megabus to NYC reports are positive.**
- The repair of concrete walkways, roof repairs and physical upkeep of the Gateway Center was discussed.**

VI. PRESIDENTS REPORT: Evan Smith reported on the following:

- Evan reported on the RIPTA grant from the federal government to repair the 25 year old transit shelters at the Visitor’s Center damaged**

by Hurricane Sandy. He and Karen Oakley were asked in April to be part of a design review committee which met on 7/14 & 7/28. There were multiple design options developed by DHK architects with no pricing included. Evan reviewed six architectural renderings with the board. This proposal will go before the Newport City Council at the 8/26 meeting at the Pell School. Representatives from RIPTA and DHK Architects will be presenting. The federal grant will cover 90% of the cost. The additional 10% funding will have to be voted on by the city council. Discussion followed.

- The RI Division of Taxation held a vacation rental tax seminar at the Hyatt on 7/8/15 to discuss the new tax laws which went into effect on 7/1/15. We assisted the DOT in planning the event which was attended by 175 people. The new law affects Airbnb and cottage rentals under 30 days.
- The state put out a RFP for state tourism marketing and branding. Fifty-one proposals were received, read and ranked by corporate leaders, chambers and business leaders.
- World Heritage Committee has asked us to participate as a member of a collaborative effort to bring the Gold Star Status to Rhode Island.

VII. 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.

C. OPERATIONS:

Cathy Morrison, Vice President of Operations updated the Board on the current status and upcoming events in Operations.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

IX. NEW BUSINESS: Kathryn informed the board of the purchase of the Stone House in Little Compton, RI by Newport Experience.

X. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 1:08pm.

**The next Board Meeting will be held
Tuesday, September 15, 2015 @ 12pm**