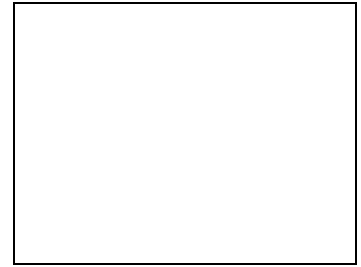




MINUTES TEMPLATE



COMMITTEE: Visitor Services Advisory Committee Time Meeting called to Order: 8:03am

MEETING DATE: April 9, 2024 Time Meeting Adjourned: 8:49am

MEMBERS PRESENT via ZOOM: Garison Beale, Sarah Bois, Liz Holland, Peter Morrison, Niles Parker and Matt Peel, Vice Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mary Malavase, Chair

STAFF PRESENT: David Sharpe, Visitor Services Coordinator

STAFF ABSENT: Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, Director of Culture & Tourism

ANTICIPATED SPEAKERS: Gary Roberts, Director, Nantucket Regional Transit Authority

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	VOTES / ROLL CALL
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1 Welcome VSAC Members	David welcomed the committee members to the meeting. He reviewed the remote meeting info and updated the committee about the new Agenda Protocol/ Public Comment rule. David then asked for a roll call of all members, guest speakers and staff present.
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2 Approval of Minutes from March 12, 2023	The March minutes were approved 6-0.
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3 Conversation with NRTA Administrator, Gary Roberts	Vice Chair Peel welcomed Gary Roberts to the meeting. Gary began by reporting that he is preparing for the upcoming season. There have been changes made at the Greenhound Bus Station. Buses will no longer park on the other side of Washington Street and will now park on the apron outside the station, doubling up in each lane. This is primarily due to safety concerns as people could not see the destination signs. The Nantucket Island Tour (NIT) buses that used the outside lane will be moved to the corner of Washington and Salem Street. NIT ticket sales will stay inside the Greenhound building. There will be 5 new electric NRTA buses and each will have a NRTA branded design wrap along the sides. The Mid-Island and Miacomet Loop buses will operate more frequently (every 10-15 minutes) as they are now smaller buses. These buses which operate throughout neighborhoods with narrow streets will now be electric, making them less noisy than the previous diesel vehicles. This should eliminate a lot of the noise complaints. Mr. Roberts added that the electric bus batteries will have a range issue and may need to re-charged quite a bit throughout the busy season. For now, they will use Level 2 chargers while they wait for the stronger Level 3 chargers to arrive later in the year. The NRTA Administrator then reported that a Free Fare Program started on April 1 st , 2024, and will run to September 30 th , 2024. A state grant of \$410,000 was awarded to help speed up the boarding process and allow the buses to complete their routes on time. They have already seen an increase in ridership. Drivers will also be tracking riders/routes with cellular tablets and will compare with last year's stats. An ad promoting the free buses will be on the radio station, as well as in the newspaper and morning e-mail news updates. Administrator Roberts noted that he has a meeting in Worcester to learn about more funding for the program. The Your Island Ride transportation service will be moving to the bus side and getting a new phone number. NRTA
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is working on improving communication with riders so that they will know when their bus will arrive. Mr. Roberts added that though NRTA secured 4 properties for staff housing, he hopes that since drivers of the new electric buses do not need a Commercial Driver's License, he will be able to attract more Nantucket residents that do not need to be housed. If this comes to fruition, it will help with possibly expanding the hours on some of the routes. Gary reported that he has had discussions with the state about restarting the commuter shuttle from the morning ferry to/from the 4 Fairgrounds Road parking lot that had run for about 4 years but was eliminated due to lack of funding. This would help alleviate work truck traffic/parking issues in the Downtown area.

Gary Roberts disconnected at 8:42am.

4 Director's Report

There was no report as Shantaw had a scheduling conflict.

5 Visitor Services Coordinator Report

David reviewed the Visitor Services statistics for March. The numbers, with help from the passport applications, are increasing with the time of the year as more people are visiting and the weather improves. The Visitor Services Coordinator noted that the office hours are Monday-Friday, closed Weekends until mid-April. He then showed the committee a printed version of the 2024 Travel and Lodging brochure that is now available in the Visitor Services office and satellite stations, and on the Town's website.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49am.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 14, 2024, at 8am.

Signature _____