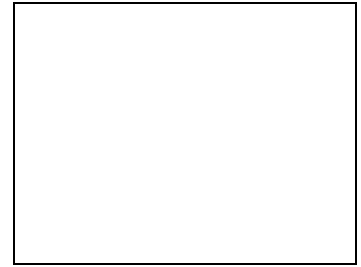




MINUTES TEMPLATE



COMMITTEE: Visitor Services Advisory Committee

Time Meeting called to Order: 8:01am

MEETING DATE: November 12, 2024

Time Meeting Adjourned: 8:45am

MEMBERS PRESENT via ZOOM: Mary Malavase, Chair, Matt Peel, Vice Chair Garison Beale, Liz Holland and Niles Parker

MEMBERS ABSENT: Peter Morrison

STAFF PRESENT via ZOOM: Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, Director of Culture & Tourism and David Sharpe, Visitor Services Coordinator

AGENDA ITEM

DISCUSSION

VOTES / ROLL CALL

1 Welcome VSAC Members David welcomed the committee members to the meeting. He reviewed the remote meeting info and the new Agenda Protocol/Public Comment rule. The Visitor Services Coordinator then asked for a roll call of all members, guest speakers and staff present.

2 Approval of Minutes from September 10th and October 8th The September minutes were unanimously approved 5-0. The October 8th minutes for approved 4-0 with Matt Peal abstaining.

3 Report on Economic Impact of Travel Chair Malavase introduced the report and noted that it was 99 pages and very detailed. Shantaw added that this report reviews the state's 16 regional tourism councils of which the Nantucket Island Chamber of Commerce is the local RTC. She and then reviewed the details asking to focus just on the 14 pages that include Nantucket numbers. \$546.2 million was generated in 2024 of which \$17.1 million went to local taxes and \$32.4 went towards state taxes. The Director noted that there is a significant decrease in 2024 figures so far. Air travel is down. Hotel and short-term rentals are also down 9.8%. That could be attributed to several hotels being offline during that time as the Veranda House was being rebuilt after the fire in 2022 and the Beachside Hotel was being renovated and finally reopened in mid-August. The Nantucket Inn was also renovated under new ownership. Shantaw added that she has spoken to several general managers/ hotel managers and they say that they are having a good year overall. Arts/ Entertainment/ Recreation was also down 5% in 2023 and about the same in 2024. In general, travelling to Nantucket costs more. Day Trippers were down 6.7%. Room occupancy revenue was as follows: 2021, \$7,980,000; 2022, \$1,219,800; 2023, \$13,237,000 and 2024 \$13,676,000. Mary added that as a former innkeeper she keeps track of the local rooms tax (6%) and reported that for Fiscal 2025 quarter ending September 1st, (June, July and August) \$6,000,000 was collected. It was \$7 million at the same time in FY24 and \$6.7 million in FY23. The report is posted on the Town of Nantucket website as well as the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism website.

4 Director's Report

Shantaw began by reporting that Deana Weatherly has started as the new Event Coordinator for the department. The position had been transferred back from the Police Department. Deana will hold some public info sessions and there will be a public relations push to bring awareness to the changes.

The Director then noted that the 2025 Cultural Council Grant has 28 applicants and it usually takes 2-3 meetings to review to determine which island non-profits will be awarded.

Shantaw then reported on the Placer A.I. numbers for October. There were just over 40,000 visitors to the island last month. That is an increase of 6.8% from 2023. Most people are coming from Boston and using the Hy-Line ferry. Cisco Brewery and the Brotherhood of Thieves restaurant were the most visited locations. It is noted that more people are travelling to the island for Halloween. Shantaw met an English family of 5 who dressed up for the day. The Children's Beach sound system was used to help with the costume contest on Main Street prior to the parade. The Chamber provided a stage for the contest. She also wanted to give a shout out to the Inquirer and Mirror newspaper who had partnered with the event.

5 Visitor Services Coordinator Report

David reviewed the Visitor Services statistics for October. The numbers are consistent with last year. He then added that the office hours are now Monday – Saturday and closed on Sundays. The office will be closed on Thanksgiving Day and will be open Saturday and Sunday of Stroll weekend. The Straight Wharf Kiosk and Airport desk are now closed for the season and most of the seasonal staff have left for the winter.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 10th right after Christmas Stroll. It was suggested to have Chamber Director Peter Burke be the guest so he can give an overview of that event weekend as well as how businesses and especially restaurants are doing overall for the year. Liz added that reservations on the Hy-Line fast boats are very strong for that weekend. Sunday, December 8th is nearly sold out going off-island.

The committee then briefly discussed the absence of a Nantucket Lodging Association group. They have not been active. It is hoped that the group could reform so that the Culture and Tourism office along with the Chamber of Commerce could share information on a monthly basis as they did in the past. The Travel and Lodging brochure was started by the NLA and continues to be produced between C&T and the Chamber.

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