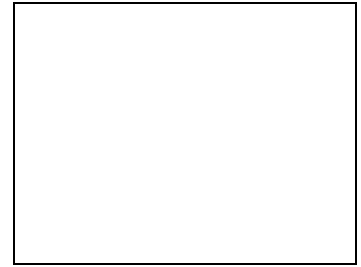




MINUTES TEMPLATE



COMMITTEE: Visitor Services Advisory Committee

Time Meeting called to Order: 8:05am

MEETING DATE: January 14, 2025

Time Meeting Adjourned: 8:58am

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

STAFF PRESENT via ZOOM: Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, Director of Culture & Tourism and David Sharpe, Visitor Services Coordinator, Deana Weatherly, Cultural Affairs and Special Events Coordinator

GUESTS PRESENT: Peter Burke, Executive Director, Nantucket Island Chamber of Commerce

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 November 12 The November minutes were unanimously approved 6-0 with a minor correction.

3 Conversation with Peter Burke Peter Burke, the Executive Director of the Nantucket Island Chamber of Commerce reported that the 50th Annual Christmas Stroll was a success – metrically. There were about 5-6,000 people on Main Street on Saturday, December 6th. He added that the power went off downtown Saturday morning until mid-day Sunday affecting stores, restaurants and lodging. Peter applauded the work of the police and fire departments as well as Shantaw who tried to schedule a Steamship Authority extra ferry to bring over National Grid electrical crews. They weren't able to get over until late Saturday/ early Sunday to help with the outage. There were also some communication issues as there was a cell phone tower off-line. Restaurants without power had to close for the night as they could not keep food refrigerated. Hotels in the blacked-out area were able to move guests to other locations. Mary commended Peter for the Chamber's effort to send out an economic survey to affected businesses. About 60 businesses responded back. Peter added the Chamber is having ongoing conversations with National Grid. One suggestion is to bring over backup electric crews for big events/ large scale weekends just like they do before big storms. Shantaw added that the town's Special Event Committee will meet in February to go over what occurred and review any changes to their emergency plans.

One other issue was Santa Claus's arrival on Straight Wharf. There were a lot of people waiting on Straight Wharf and it took a few minutes longer to clear the way for Santa. Peter was worried that people would fall into the water. Bathrooms were another issue. The Chamber Director noted that there were about 9 portapotties downtown and that was up from 4 the year before. The majority were in the Stop and Shop parking lot. Should some of them be located in other parts of the downtown. Peter added that Nantucket is still able to attract visitors even though it is expensive. There were hotel vacancies as a result of more people staying on the Cape

and taking day trips on the ferries. July and August are the exception. Liz did see repeat customers doing day trips on the Hy-Line.

Director Burke reported that the Daffodil Festival Weekend car parade registration will be changing to be open for several days instead of just the 2 hour window. The Chamber will let the public know about the change.

Peter logged off at 8:43am.

4 Director's Report Shantaw introduced Deana Weatherly who is the department's new Cultural Affairs and Special Events Coordinator. Deana briefly reviewed her work experiences. Shantaw added that she and Deana have been working on updating the applications need for the permitting process for town special events, filming and photography. There will be a public relations update to make people aware of the change. Deana is also being certified to help process passports. There were 184 passport applications in 2024. That does not include renewals for minors.

The C&T Director then reported on the Placer A.I. numbers for December. About 34,000 people visited the island and are staying about 10 hours. 42,000 people visited over between Thanksgiving and Stroll weekends with is up 35% from 2 years ago. Most flew into the island from Boston's Logan airport and many came over on the Hy-Line ferry. Cisco Brewery was still the most popular attraction. The President's visits at this time of year have become well documented that more people are showing up for the tree lighting on Friday after Thanksgiving.

Shantaw concluded her report by noting that the Nantucket Cultural Council closed their grant cycle and awarded \$5,700 to 11 island non-profits.

5 Visitor Services Coordinator Report David reviewed the statistics for December, including Christmas Stroll Weekend as well as highlighting the overall statistics for the year. There was a brief discussion about day trippers arriving at this time of year looking for things to do as the Whaling Museum is closed in January and early April and many of the stores are closed as well. David explained that he offers them self-guided walking tours to give them something to do.

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