

## **MINUTES of Tourism Commission meeting**

**January 15, 2015 6:00PM to 8:00PM**

### **Gloucester City Hall**

Present: Laura Dow, Tom Daniel, Carol Thistle, John Orlando, Pauline Bresnahan, Paul Fronteiro, Karen Ristuben, Catherine Ryan, Zach Sears, Laura Baker, and Peter Webber.

Also present: Joe Ciolino, Greg Verga, Linn Parisi, and Amy Beth Healey

1. Minutes of December 15 meeting approved.
2. Discussion of the Five-Year Plan

Chris Pappas of Open Door presented Phase 2 of the Five-Year Tourism Plan. Three main parts: Marketing Analysis, Marketing Initiatives, and Implementation. The overall goals of the plan are to increase all tourism metrics and meet specific benchmarks outlined in the Plan.

As commissioners received the Plan by email a few hours earlier, the chance for review was limited. If there are questions before Tuesday Jan 20 community meeting, commissioners are to forward them to Carol. The Plan will be presented as a work in progress at the community meeting, subject to revision.

Under the Plan the existing DMO would continue to function until 2015, and the new entity would assume responsibility by 2016 for trade shows, visitor's guide and other DMO functions. The new entity's main function is to market and promote Gloucester outside of Gloucester, and not to produce events within Gloucester though it might organize city-wide theme-based events. One of the main goals is to attract overnight visitors to increase hotel tax revenue, as hotel tax may be a revenue stream for the entity.

Discussion ensued regarding the Tourism Commission ordinance and what will happen to the TC once the new entity is formed. (1) The ordinance could stay in place but the TC become de-activated; (2) the ordinance could be abolished; or (3) the TC could become part of the new entity's Board. As the new entity will be formed with support from the City's Legal Dept, all options will be considered from a legal standpoint.

The new entity will have to be sanctioned by the City and by the private sector to ensure that it continues, and to ensure that it can receive funds from the City.

3. Discussion of Linn Parisi's proposal

Commission cannot hire and pay an executive director until it has been formed and then it will be a Board function. The new entity is slated to start in 2016. Until then, the TC can allocate additional funding to Linn Parisi, DMO to support specific transitional tasks. All agreed that Linn Parisi should be part of the transition team.

4. Future meetings of the TC will be 2 hours long until further notice. Next meeting is February 2, 2015. Agenda will include:
  - a. 2015 Tourism Commission Budget
  - b. Carol Thistle's recommendations for funding current DMO
  - c. Establishing a Scope of Work and timeline for the transition

- d. As part of budget, discuss funding to support media relations activities formerly done by PR for Gloucester (Warner Communications) and review Wicked Tuna proposal
5. Other business:
- a. Gloucester will participate in the **Boston Seafood Show**
  - b. The Tourism Commission will be represented by several Tourism Commissioners at the **North of Boston CVB Tourism Summit** Jan 30
  - c. The City of Gloucester will be presented with a **Commonwealth Award** from the Massachusetts Cultural Council at the State House on Feb 24 1pm (all are invited) for: Creative Community - For a city, town, or community-based organization that has demonstrated the central role of arts and culture in building healthier, more vital, more livable communities.