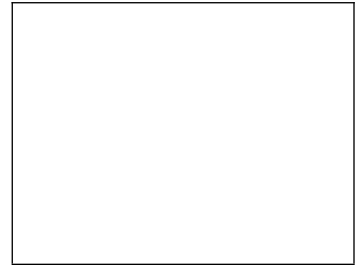




MINUTES TEMPLATE



COMMITTEE: Visitor Services Advisory Committee Time Meeting called to Order: __8:02am __

MEETING DATE: __March 9__ Time Meeting Adjourned: __8:53am__

MEMBERS PRESENT via ZOOM: Janet Schulte, Director of Culture and Tourism, David Sharpe, Visitor Services Coordinator, Josh Gray, Chair, Liz Holland, Karen Macumber, Mary Malavase, Peter Morrison and Sharon Quigley

ALSO PRESENT: James Russell

MEMBERS ABSENT: Thayer Hale

AGENDA ITEM	DISCUSSION	VOTES / ROLL CALL
--------------------	-------------------	--------------------------

1 Welcome VSAC Members	Chairman Gray welcomed the members of the committee to meeting. The meeting is held by Zoom video conference due to the COVID-19 outbreak. He then asked for a roll call of all members present. Chairman Gray then reviewed Governor Baker’s orders from March 12, 2020 suspending certain Open Meeting Law provisions in order to meet electronically instead of in person during the pandemic. Josh and Janet also reviewed the ground rules and script for remotely conducted open meetings via Zoom.	
-------------------------------	---	--

2 Approval of Minutes from February 9	The minutes from February were unanimously approved.	6-0
--	--	-----

3 Conversation with NHA Executive Director about Summer 2021 Programming and Macy Warehouse Renovations	Janet introduced James Russell, Executive Director of the Nantucket Historical Association. James began by noting that with protective measures in place, the Whaling Museum opened to the public during the pandemic when it was allowed to reopen following state guidelines. He added that Dr. Malcom McNab was stationed at the lobby front desk which gave the staff a lot of confidence. James reported that philanthropically, the NHA ended 2020 in the black. The staff took a 20% pay cut in March, 2020, but were paid back by the end of the year. In March, 2019, the museum had 20-30 visitors a day. The silver lining is that with the increase use of the museum’s digital platform, there are now 100-200 people a day visiting online on an average day in March 2021. Some of the exhibits set up for 2020 will be refreshed and updated. James also reported that the NHA received a lot of online feedback regarding the average time people are spending in the museum has gone from 1-1.5 hours to 2-2.5 hours over the last few years. The historic sites were all closed last year in order to focus on the Whaling Museum. This year, both the Hadwen House at 96 Main Street and the Thomas Warehouse on Straight Wharf will be open to the public. James noted that 8,000 people visited the Hadwen House in 2019. Craft Classes will move from the 1800 House to Greater Light. The Whaling Museum exhibits will include the Ann Ramsdell Congdon paintings exhibit in the McCausland Gallery, The Road From Abolition to Suffrage and an exhibit on the Cape Verdean community. The Thomas Macy warehouse on Straight Wharf is being renovated and will be open to the public. Director Russell thanked the Community Preservation Community for giving a grant of \$63,000 to help with the renovations including moving the HVAC and electrical systems to the 2nd floor. \$1 million will be spent overall to restore the inside and outside of the building which dates to 1847. There will be a gift shop on the first floor along with an	
--	--	--

interactive screen near the front door. ReMain Nantucket has also provided some money for the 2nd floor exhibit about climate change.

The committee and NHA Director Russell then briefly discussed marketing and managing data. The NHA has been tracking zip codes from e-mails and found that the majority come from the New York City/ Tri-State area. James expects to have more than 50,000 e-mails in 3 years. Targeted surveys can be sent to these e-mails. James added, to his surprise, that the public cable network, C-Span has been airing NHA videos that normally run on the NHA YouTube channel. This draws attention to museum and Nantucket in general. Peter offered the help of the Worcester Polytechnic Institute students who annually create reports on the island to help with analyzing the data. Director Russell noted that the WPI students have been very valuable as the NHA has submitted a graph to the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism to help target off-island visitors. The committee also discussed the current presence of the immigrant community on the island which is not unlike those who participated in the whaling expeditions of the past. Chairman Gray asked about how the reopening process have been for 2021. James noted that for now it is very quiet but that having free admission for Nantucket residents helps in the off-season as it drops a barrier.

James Russell disconnected at 8:44am

5 Director's Report

Janet reported that it has become busier in her office. The Economic Task Force has been meeting weekly and is looking to spend money on reopening streets for restaurants, placing tables outside and encouraging outdoor dining again.

The Massachusetts Cultural Council has given a \$7,500 grant to the Cultural District. The Cultural District will be updating its website and online calendar Janet would like to purchase a more robust calendar software program which can be easily accessed by a mobile app or on the computer desktop. An electronic version of the calendar will be placed at the Macy Warehouse.

The One Book One Island programming is starting up. This year's book is called The Yellow House by Sarah Broom.

The Visitor Services Director also reported that the Plastics Ban Workgroup has been reactivated and enforcement will be stepped up. The ban was supposed to start on June 1, 2020 but was not fully imposed because of Covid.

There has been talk of restarting a commuter shuttle program from 2 Fairgrounds Road to help with the planned street closures downtown because of outdoor dining. The 2FG parking lot can hold up to 800 cars.

Janet reported that she has joined the Street Furniture Group which is looking for rogue benches and planters. Janet is also reviewing public art displays using the Sparks Avenue Roundabout statue installation process as a guide.

She is also on a Land Bank Committee that approved a dog park at the corner of Surfside Road and Miacomet Road.

The Director will be participating with the Museum of African American History in a dedication of a memorial on Angola Street to Arthur Cooper, a runaway slave sometime in August or September.

Janet and David will be attending upcoming Park and Recreation Committee meetings to discuss possible summer programming at Children's Beach this summer with The Dance Festival and Nantucket Community Sailing as they seek outdoor venues in lieu of using indoor spaces because of lingering Coronavirus concerns.

Janet is also participating in Select Board planning with regard to implementing the Strategic Plan.

Liz reported that the Hy-Line can help direct people to the Macy Warehouse Cultural District kiosk and she also noted that the boat line is now fully in charge of onboard TV advertising which could help promote the Cultural District and its events.

6 Visitor Services Coordinator's Report

David reported on the February statistics highlighting the continued popularity of the online Restaurant List also noting that phone call inquiries for the summer are starting to come in. More people are asking for copies of the Travel and Lodging guide. They are happy to get the 2020 guide with the QR code sticker that will take them to the 2021 online version. Karen added with the loosening of

restrictions, there has been an increase in bookings in the last few weeks. David added that people are asking about what will be open. It is hard to tell as 10-12 stores shut and the Brotherhood restaurant closing. Karen reported that the Chamber is calling businesses to see when they will be open and if they will be running promotions.

Signature _____