



December 20, 2013

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**Re: Downtown Marketplace Coordinator**

Dear Libby,

It is my pleasure to deliver the work of Acktown. The assignment of The Downtown Marketplace Coordinator (dba Acktown) was to initiate a participatory public process to develop a sustainable management structure for Downtown Nantucket with the goal of improving the year round vitality of the business, residential and cultural climate.

With the help of a steering committee made up of business owners, residents, leaders from the non-profit community and members of the municipality, Acktown defined its mission simply – *Make the Downtown Business District More Accessible More Often to More People.*

In order to do this, the following focus areas were developed and pursued:

1. INCREASE DEMAND – Create more reasons for being downtown and more reasons to visit Nantucket.
2. ALIGN INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS – Getting to and from downtown should be easier and safer for all. Creating more public spaces downtown to serve the community is a must.
3. RE-PURPOSE ORGANIZATIONAL ASSETS – A new operational model is needed to support and represent tourism, commerce and recreation which will efficiently and effectively coordinate services, events and experiences for residents and visitors alike.

Highlights from the June 2013 report (Phase ONE) include:

1. Adds \$20,000,000 to the island economy and approximately \$300,000 to the tax-base within the first 12-18 months. Plan suggests a 2-3% annual growth rate over 5 years.
2. Increases annual visitation by a modest 5% in the first 18 months, delivering an additional 16,000 visitors in the shoulder seasons. All new events – designed to be accessible to residents – were informed by focus groups and other methodologies representing the wants and needs of full-time residents.

3. Better utilization of existing public and private spaces to deliver arts, entertainment and recreation to all. Pursue creative solutions to procure and develop downtown waterfront parks, amphitheaters, higher learning centers and light industry (including local arts and crafts).
4. Develop an organizational model charged with supporting economic development and enhancing the experiences of residents and visitors by combining existing public and private entities.

After delivering the Phase ONE report, Acktown was charged with the following:

1. ORGANIZATION IMPLEMENTATION – Research potential barriers at the Town, County and State level for proposed entities and infrastructure. Understand legality of proposed entity.
2. FUNDING MECHANISMS – Assist the Town of Nantucket and Chamber of Commerce to understand implications of merged entities including the study of bylaws, contracts and new board formation. Support continued study of Business Improvement District as required.
3. TEST EVENTS – As feasible, test pocket park series and other free events as outlined in the June report. Observe existing events.

Phase TWO deliverables included:

1. A review of best practices from other communities including Cape Cod, Plymouth County, Aspen, Vail and New York City. All have merged public and private resources including Chamber, Visitor Services, Economic Development and other organizations to the benefit of the community.
2. Provided Bylaws, contracts and other documents to the Chamber leadership and town management. Offered to coordinate calls or visits from other community managers and board members.
3. Funded and delivered free children's book readings and folk music pop-up events in coordination with the NHA, Dreamland, Bookworks and Town of Nantucket.

On October 9<sup>th</sup> Nantucket's Board of Selectmen held a workshop session to discuss the potential benefits of combining public and private entities to manage tourism, visitor services and park and recreation. While no decision was to be made at the session itself, Acktown was later informed by the Chairman that the Town of Nantucket will not formally pursue such a merger at this time. The Chairman suggested continued dialog with all parties and the pursuit of other means to deliver the products and services outlined in the report.

Kindest regards,

Richard Turer