

**Maryland Tourism Development Board Business Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 1, 2018 10:00 a.m.**  
**Loews Annapolis Hotel, Powerhouse Building Point Lookout Room, 3rd Floor**  
**126 West Street, Annapolis, MD 21401**

**Call to Order/Roll Call**

MTDB: Donna Abbott, Judy Bixler, Michael James, Bunkie Ebersberger, Cara Joyce, Rick Howarth, Matt Neitzey, Heather Renz, Vira Safai, Dan Spedden, Casey Jenkins, Erin McNaboe MDMO: Lisa Challenger, Connie DelSignore, John Fieseler, Kelly Groff, Sandy Turner  
EDC: Terry Hasseltine, Mike Haynie, Ross Peddicord, Mary Presley COMMERCE: Diana Chen, Lucy Chittenden, Liz Fitzsimmons, Brian Lawrence, Rich Gilbert, Chanda Miller, Cynthia Miller, Marci Ross, Greg Bird

**Welcome – Rick Howarth- Board Chair, Six Flags America Park President**

Rick welcomed the board and advised board members and guests of the Senate Budget Hearing and Wine Month celebration kick-off taking place in the afternoon.

**Board Member Comments/Highlights (not all inclusive)**

Casey Jenkins – asked about budget allocations and what dollar values will be going into individual areas. Casey mentioned HBCU tours which may be a good idea for Maryland to market. Liz stated that all marketing opportunities will be looked at to see what will give the greatest ROI. Casey asked to put together a committee to look for something sustainable in marketing for the African-American community. Liz stated that the board can set committees at any point. Casey asked for members to sit on the committee.

Donna Abbott- willing to support efforts to advocate for the additional funding to the budget. Rodney the Lifeguard has been retired a brand new campaign will start in March/April.

Dan Spedden- Dan asked for the board's support in a letter writing campaign to the efforts of the National Road Museum HB 290. The board voted and approved the effort.

Washington County Chamber of Commerce had its annual business awards last night. The sale of the Hagerstown Suns fell through.

Michael James- Michael discussed turbines in OC and asked for the board's support in opposing the installation of the turbines which will be detrimental to businesses.

Matt Neitzey- thanked everyone who came to the Hotel at the University of MD for the Tourism Summit. This is the first year PG County has received additional local resources for marketing which will be increased next year.

Vira Safai- Visit Montgomery does a great job of promoting the county. They have a new marketing strategy which they are excited about.

Bunkie Ebersberger- a great ally Mike Busch has made a comeback from health issues and has been voted speaker again.

Heather Renz-happy to be back in the swing of things.

Erin McNaboe-Welcomed everyone to Annapolis. A NHL pop up game is happening at the Naval Stadium. St. Patrick's Day Parade is in two weeks. The Annapolis Film Festival continues to grow.

John Fieseler-Restaurant Week is next week in Frederick.

Sandy Turner-Looking forward to Tourism Month in Cecil County in May.

Ross Peddicord- Working on rebuilding Columbia Horse Center and other projects in the state.

Mary Presley- MD Motorcoach Association is in PA because they have grown so large, but they would like to bring it back to Maryland.

Kelly Groff- They are launching a new brand next Wednesday.

Terry Hasseltine- Excited about some of the big events that will be happening around the state. Women's World Cup 2021 will be coming to Towson.

### **Executive Directors Council and DMOs (brief summary – not all-inclusive)**

Lisa Challenger –Tourism Day was well-attended and sponsorship increased. MDMO will have a retreat soon.

Mike Haynie–On behalf of Maryland Tourism Coalition Mike updated everyone on Tourism Day and thanked everyone for their participation and advocacy. MTC is seeking an Executive Director. Five new board members were brought on thus far with more to be added in the coming months and year. There will be a retreat this month. Mike suggested advocacy in support of keeping the budget funded as proposed by the Governor.

### **Chairman's Report**

Six Flags America will be opening in four weeks and a big hiring push is underway. Rick mentioned Carmen Gonzales of MD Live Casino is the newest board member of the Tourism Board.

### **Executive Update**

Regional Planning meetings began with the first one being held in February to get out in the field to get interested partners together. All are welcome to attend. Liz discussed the proposed budget by the Governor which would've provided an increase, and the DLS recommendation to flatly fund the tourism budget.

### **Staff updates:**

Brian Lawrence- Brian gave an overview of continuing efforts to increase stays and revenue through marketing and advertising and revealed the new Open For It campaign.

Cynthia Miller- August 2020 marks the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment which gave women the right to vote. Commemorative events in MD will be held. MD Historical Trust and SHA will place markers where historic events took place. Celebrations will be held nationwide.

Lucy Chittenden- FeBREWary kick-off event was held in Annapolis. Lucy discussed various related activities and efforts. Wine Trails content has been put on the driving tour page for Wine Month. Lucy touched on Frederick Douglass Driving Tour highlights which has 23 points of interest.

Marci Ross- Governor Hogan launched the Frederick Douglass Driving Tour. Rack cards have been created one is generic and has storytelling content. The office helped Talbot County tourism break ground in the new Frederick Douglass Park. The Network to Freedom Program awarded the office a grant to do a statewide video to tell an Underground Railroad travel story which the office will be working on. OTD submitted a nomination to the MD Economic Development Association for Economic Development Award based on the Tubman experience and an award was won. The award will be presented on April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Rich- SYTA is upcoming- registration is now open to get our tourism partners ready. American Bus Association (ABA) will be coming to Baltimore in 2021.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, upon a motion duly made, seconded and unanimously approved, the meeting was declared adjourned.