

Maryland Tourism Development Board Business Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, May 16, 2012
Hilton Garden Inn – Baltimore/Arundel Mills, Hanover, MD

Call to Order/Roll Call

MTDB: Paul Bales, Adolph Ebersberger, John Fieseler, John Jenkins, Peggy Maher, Khaled Said, Kathy Sher, Greg Shockley, Gail Smith-Howard, Victor Sulin, Andy Vick. EDC: Kevin Atticks, Mary Presley, Marshall Weston, David Reel; MDMO: Rachelina Bonacci, Matt Neitzey, Donna Abbott, Tom Riford, Kim Shirer. DBED: Margot Amelia, Brian Barnes, Greg Bird, Lucy Chittenden, Liz Fitzsimmons, Rebecca Goldman, Marci Ross, Rich Gilbert, Denise Reed. Guest Speaker: Victor Sulin (on behalf of Delegate Pam Beidle)

Chairman's Report

Board Chair Greg Shockley welcomed all in attendance and introduced/welcome our newest board member, Ms. Gail Smith-Howard, General Manager of the Hyatt Regency in downtown Baltimore. Ms. Howard indicated that she was looking forward to her service on the board. Greg mentioned that Ocean City hired a new City Manager and a new Tourism Director, and welcomed Ms. Donna Abbott, who was present at the meeting.

With the special session going on – that we are in a “wait and see” with the budget. We are all positive – right now no one knows what their funding levels will be. Margot ran the Star Spangled Sailabration commercial (both Visit Baltimore and the Office of Tourism are both running the commercial). Running in Baltimore, Philadelphia and D.C. and VisitBaltimore is running it everywhere else in Pennsylvania, three markets in Ohio and Northern New Jersey. This event is allowing us to put advertising in places we haven't been. He stressed that everyone should continue to work our friends in the legislature, we've taken our hits in this budget crisis and we are building back up - there is more room to grow and we need more money for advertising. Talk to legislators and ask them to continue the funding for tourism and start the conversation about State procurement process and ways to streamline. School date start issue – Comptroller Franchot weighed in and currently we are stepping back from that, keeping contacts open. We hope to start again this summer and have a few more meetings. Margot/Hannah/Greg talked to (temporary) State Superintendent (now they need to talk to the new Superintendent), talked to individual superintendents and plan to eventually talk to Teacher's Union and athletic staff. Conversations to date: testing changes in 2015 and they are aware of what we would like to see. Probably won't go back beyond Labor Day but they all seem agreeable to moving school starting date a week forward. Anne Arundel and Prince Georges County schools start on 8/22 this year and are willing to go a week later. When the time comes, we hope to have a seat at the table for this discussion.

Greg noted that terms are expiring for the following board members (some of whom will be continuing to serve until their successor has been appointed): He thanked Kathy Sher, Andy Vick, Connie DelSignore (not in attendance) and Paul Bales for their service. Greg also mentioned that Matt Taylor has taken a position in Oregon.

Board Member Comments/Highlights (not all inclusive)

Andy Vick – On Monday, they received the Governor's approval to hire Ms. Deidra L. Ritchie as the new Executive Director of Canal Place.

John Fieseler – Preparations ongoing for the G8 Summit in Frederick this weekend. Had a great meeting with OTD Staff on Sesquicentennial marketing – visitation is already increasing and they are seeing a big influx in requests for information, especially with events commemorating this September's anniversary of the battles of South Mountain and Antietam.

Gail Smith-Howard – Baltimore doing well. The hotel general managers are doing sales calls together – traveling to Chicago, New York City, Philadelphia.....not only getting word out about Baltimore but about Maryland. Business from AIBTM and lots of buzz about Sailabration.

John Jenkins – National Harbor hotels and retail doing well; business is up about 15% over last year.

Bunkie Ebersberger – CSX Intermodal delay continues. “Maryland Live” casino dry run on June 6, 2012.

Peggy Maher – Senator Cardin, Mayor S. Rawlings-Blake, Comptroller Franchot and Mark Smith, Dept. of Energy helped celebrate the launch of their first propane taxi in Baltimore. They plan to convert 50 taxis in Baltimore to propane gas. Charm City Circulator had their 2,000,000th passenger. In May, Veolia will host the Community Transportation Association of America, attendees represent agencies country-wide.

Khaled Said - They had the best four months since 2007. Group decision made to begin construction on the Four Points by Sheraton on Congress St. in 2013, with completion scheduled in 3 years. Also mentioned that, as a result of the Grand Prix, Baltimore hotels had about 78-80% occupancy due to race.

Kathy Sher – The National Aquarium’s new CEO, Mr. John Racanelli is settling in. Aquarium business has been up during the first quarter 22-24%.

Paul Bales – Regional airport underway – when complete, will be the closest light jet landing airport to D.C. Federal/State/private efforts underway for ferry to make connection between Ft. Belvoir and Indian Head. Lots of variables, remains to be seen if it will go through. Urban Land Institute is in process of planning 16-mile hiker/biker trail between Indianhead & White Plains.

Greg Shockley – Ocean City having a great spring. New event - Part II of the Koman Race – the Inaugural held in Ocean City had about 3500 participants/raised \$300,000. Hope to increase number to 5000 participants next yr. (in April). Lots of events coming up...cars, airshow, etc. Dew Tour, which has a large economic and P.R. impact, will be held right after the Olympics this year.

Executive Director’s Report

Margot referenced the budget document in binder which shows a 5-year track. Our goal is to get back to 2007 funding. This year we had a \$5 million Maryland Tourism Development Board fund which we were able to enhance with funds from scenic byway grants. Tourism advocates were heard. John Bohanan and his team rejected the BRFA and forced that item to go to conference. We don’t really know what happened in conference officially, but we were told that our budget has stayed at \$6 million. Currently waiting to see how the special session plays out. Margot is hoping to come out with an \$8 million line item for MTDB fully funded at \$6 million and \$2 million for War of 1812 activities. As soon as she knows something “officially” – she will let everyone know.

Margot proceeded to give a brief Sailabration overview in Bill’s absence. For the first time, both Tourism and Visit Baltimore are not directly advertising back to our websites – rather they are directing straight to the starspangled200.com website. She ran through the PowerPoint presentation showcasing the schedule of all events taking place during Sailabration in Baltimore. Many of the DMOs will be at the Sailabration villages promoting what is going on in their areas during the course of the next 3 years with the Bicentennial. Hopefully all will benefit from the economic impact. One way events are being funded is through the coin sales. Margot encouraged everyone to check out the commemorative coins.

Tourism Monitor (in binders) summary: tourism tax codes are up over 7% from last year. We are up 20% in Unique Web users on Visitmaryland.org – starspangled200.org is up 85%. Web advertising clicks are up 48%. Monitor now reflects our social media dashboard. We have a slightly larger print

advertising budget through February and continue to see a major increase in requests for information. Even though our broadcast budget is down, we are seeing an increase in calls on one of our broadcast lines. The Tourism Monitor now includes information on kiosks outside our two I70 locations. Leisure and hospitality employment is also up.

Spring Advertising – Includes TV (first time we have been on TV since 2008); radio advertising in D.C., Philadelphia and Baltimore; outdoor digital billboards in Philadelphia, Baltimore and bus shelters in D.C.; and, of course, print advertising. All of this made possible due to the byway funds, which also allows us to market byways internationally.

US Travel and Brand USA – Margot indicated that, over the last 4 years, there has been a major push for corporate travel promotion in Washington. As part of our marketing alliance with Capital Region USA, we can take advantage of their programs. For every dollar that Brand USA gets from partners like us, they get two dollars from the visa fee. Due to our close proximity to D.C., we could be one of the first trips many international travelers make. BWI update: in addition to British Airways, Condor Air is now flying into BWI from Germany – they are offering 26 flights in this calendar year starting in July.

Staff updates:

Liz Fitzsimmons - Liz referenced several ads and clips included in binder. PR team has been out generating great third party editorial coverage of the state. Camila Clark attended PowWow – noted great response to commemorations from the international audience. Connie Yingling has been busy with outdoor press. Destination Maryland went to press today. Scenic Byways will be out in July. Debuted new African American Heritage Guide at the African American Travel Conference in Baltimore last month.

Lucy Chittenden – showed new VisitMaryland home page emphasizing commemorations. Other changes include ability to search calendar of events from homepage, signup for newsletter from homepage and addition of social media feeds: Facebook and Twitter coming in live and constantly updating the homepage. Authentic Maryland Treasures section to change weekly selecting one photo a week from photographer submissions highlighting different areas throughout the state. After Sailabration, we will start summer sweepstakes – the first will focus on Garrett County - prize is one-week Deep Creek area vacation rental.

Bryan Barnes – Lucy played the Marin Alsop video, produced by Bryan Barnes, as just one example of videos we now are able to produce. Bryan is currently working on showcasing Maryland with other videos he has produced which include: a boating video earlier this year; video of activity in Garrett; local brewing industries video, and a video of gardens around the state (WBAL will be using some of that footage). His goal is to ensure that Maryland areas statewide are covered. All videos live-on thanks to YouTube. We continue to add marketing & communications tools to give visitors info they want in the manner they want.

Rebecca Goldman – Advertising Effectiveness Study was received well by staff within the Governor's Office. We will be doing the same kind of study with same people next year.

Marci Ross – \$2.5 million in board grant program funds are being distributed. Deadline for DMOs to submit reimbursement requests is May 24th. Call center phones continue to ring requesting information for Sailabration/Civil War commemorations which are having a huge impact on call center activity. Mason Dixon Welcome Center opening at end of this month. Working on heritage area applications, sustainable community applications, transportation enhancement applications, arts & entertainment applications as well as the grant program. In September the new Civil War Trail App will be ready and will be launched around the same time as the Civil War Preservation Trust App for Antietam National Battlefield. Our App will focus on getting people off the interstates and on to Scenic Byway trails. The Civil War Preservation Trust App will focus on the battlefield itself.

Rich – African American Travel Conference – we assisted in hosting the dinner at the Reginald Lewis Museum in April. PowWow: we had seven private sector partners in our booth this year. Virginia and Maryland shared appointment format resulting in approximately 130 appointments...lots of interest. Rich mentioned that the Mexican market has become a major opportunity. AIBTM coming up – 14 partners in our booth. Rich has also been busy with Sailabration/group tours, etc. with 120 motorcoaches scheduled to come into town during the 5-day Sailabration event.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to approve the February 29, 2012 Board Meeting Minutes.

Guest Speaker – Honorable Pamela G. Beidle, MD House of Delegates, District 32 (MTDB member)

*(Note: Due to special session, Delegate Beidle unable to attend - she gave her prepared presentation to **Victor Sulin** who gave presentation in her absence.)*

Presentation/update on activity in Delegate Beidle's district which includes Anne Arundel "West" County. Topics, just to name a few, included information and stats reflecting growth in employment, housing, new business development/expansions covering a wide range of government and private sector companies/agencies. Fort Meade growth includes expansions to accommodate BRAC/NSA/Defense/Cyber security business and information systems. In 10 years, Fort Meade workforce has grown from 35,000 to 56,000. By 2015, the number is expected to climb to 60,000. Additional information included updates on new hotels, retail businesses, highway construction and the anticipated opening of the new "Maryland Live" casino in Arundel Mills. **Her informative/comprehensive presentation can be accessed online.**

Executive Directors Council (brief summary – not all-inclusive)

Tom Riford – Tom testified seven times during session on behalf of MDMO. Upcoming events include the National Kite Festival, Blues Fest and over 87 Civil War related events in Washington County alone.

Rachelina Bonacci – Participated in the National Cherry Blossom Ceremony. Last week there was a hot air balloon festival in Turf Valley. Upcoming events include: Wine in the Woods; Merriweather concerts, golf outings and the Columbia Triathlon. \$700,000 in funds approved for the welcome center renovation.

Donna Abbott – Ocean City looking forward to a great summer. T.V. ads are running in the feeder markets, partnership with MSN and, finally, Rodney will be in town in June for the Orioles game.

David Reel – Busy time at MTC. Testified on behalf of 16 bills this session – some won/some lost. MTTTS will be held at the Cambridge Hyatt from 11/14-11/16.

Kevin Atticks – Currently 56 wineries in the state with 64 expected by the end of this year. Expecting 40,000 at Wine in the Woods this weekend. June 8-17th is Wine Week. Maryland wine will be served during the upcoming G8 Summit.

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.