

Maryland Tourism Development Board Business Meeting Minutes
Friday, February 24, 2017 @ 11:30 a.m.
Rams Head On Stage
33 West Street, Annapolis, MD 21401

Call to Order/Roll Call

MTDB: Donna Abbott, Judy Bixler, Bunkie Ebersberger, Alan Friedman, Hale Harrison, Rick Howarth, Casey Jenkins, Cara Joyce, Senator James Mathias, Erin McNaboe, Candace Osunsade, Dan Spedden, Ali von Paris MDMO: Lisa Challenger, Ashley Chenault, John Fieseler, Connie Del Signore, Greg Pizzuto, Sandy Turner EDC: Wini Roche, Amy Rohrer, Roseanne Souza, Susan Zellers COMMERCE: Greg Bird, Lucy Chittenden, Liz Fitzsimmons, Brian Lawrence, Chanda Miller, Cynthia Miller, Marci Ross

Opening comments and introductions – Rick Howarth, President, Six Flags America and Board Chair

Rick Howarth, Six Flags Park President and Board Chair, greeted board members, et al, introduced new board members Candace Osunsade and Casey Jenkins and turned the floor over to Erin McNaboe – board member and meeting host.

Welcome – Erin McNaboe, President, Rams Head Group

Erin McNaboe, Rams Head Group President and board member, welcomed everyone to the Rams Head On Stage and gave an overview of upcoming events and background information about the venue including its establishment in 1997 with a goal of having 100 shows per year and now boasts almost 400 shows per year.

Meeting minutes approval

The board unanimously approved meeting minutes from the June 15, 2016 board meeting.

Board Member Comments/Highlights (not all inclusive)

Senator Jim Mathias- Senator Mathias thanked everyone for everything that they and discussed the proposed sick leave legislation, Airbnb, Uber, and the overall legislative session as it relates to the tourism industry.

Rick Howarth – There are five weeks until the opening of the 2017 season. They are in the midst of hiring 2,000 people for the season. The tallest ride on the property is being built and will open late May early June.

Donna Abbott- Donna discussed being a part of the state procurement process as part of a committee to review proposals of companies in an effort to hire an advertising agency for OTD. This week Ocean City was ranked 10th out of 25 on a list of best beaches in the country.

Ali von Paris – Maryland Day is March 25th and their second to third biggest selling day of the year. A Maryland cookbook is being developed. Wine on the Water at Kurtz Beach will be happening in April or May showcasing the industry.

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

Amy Rohrer– The Senate Finance Committee heard a bill Maryland Hotel Lodging Association proposed to regulate short-term rentals. Among other items, the bill would require registration with the Comptroller's Office and would ensure short-term rentals follow current discrimination laws.

Wini Roche- Legislative session as been a busy time. MTC has been meeting with many legislative members to get the message out about tourism and in promotion of the MTDB budget. The advocacy meetings have involved local stakeholders. Fact sheets have been created to show statewide and county economic impact for representatives. A bill giving DMO's voting rights at MTDB board meetings will likely pass. Wini discussed the status of other bills introduced affecting the industry. Tourism Day is next week. MTC is preparing for the advocacy portion of the day. The Governor, Comptroller and Senator Kasemeyer will attend and receive an award.

Connie Del Signore – Connie discussed SB0087 which will give DMO's voting rights on the tourism board has passed in the House 137-1 yesterday and has not passed in the Senate. Senator Astle has put forth a bill to enforce the collection of lodging taxes from Airbnb's like hotels and distributed in the same manner.

Roseanne Souza-Tourism scholarship applications are available. MD Tourism Education Fund has great partnerships with Visit Annapolis with breweries and Maryland Hotel Lodging Association. The state helped to create two classes-Hospitality Maryland Style and Maryland Smiles. There is a need for Maryland ambassadors.

John Fieseler – There are three different bills that would affect breweries in the state and their tap rooms. People are excited about Guinness coming to the state. One specific piece of legislation would exempt them from a 500 barrel a year cap which puts the rest of the breweries at a disadvantage. Hoping that the Brewers Assn. of Maryland bill proposed passes which will still help Guinness but level the playing field.

Chairman's Report

Rick updated the board about the flat MTDB budget that was proposed by the Governor keeping in line with budget proposals of past. Copies of the MTDB strategic plan report revised during September's retreat and a legislative bill tracking report are provided in meeting materials.

Executive Update

Liz mentioned that the board meeting will be atypically brief as it was being held in conjunction with the Senate budget hearing scheduled in the afternoon. The budget has been steady at \$8.25 million and there was a minor reduction in the OTD budget, primarily due to reimbursable funds from the Federal Highway Administration for commemorations being depleted and reduction in salaries. One item from the strategic plan is that we need to be doing a better job of telling the story of tourism. Everyone on staff has been given the permission to speak whenever they can and they have been. The office created reference cards with talking points everyone can use and refer to and are provided at tables. Liz queued the Business People video which began taping during the Tourism Summit. The video will be sent out during Tourism Day. Tourism Tax Codes show good news across the board. The Economic Impact Report from the 2016 Fleet Week and Airshow showed that it helped move the needle in generating revenue in FY17 and attracted 300,000 people. Twenty-six percent of visitors were from outside of the state. The economic impact was \$16.4 million and visitor spending generated \$1.4 million in state and local taxes. Liz reminded everyone that reports are available on our website. FeBREWary has just ended and was successful and March is Wine Month. The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center will be opened March 10th after fourteen years of work to make it

happen. A video was shown created in conjunction with its opening. A business data analyst will be hired – recruitment is underway.

A new private sector partnership grant program will be put out and guidelines introduced.

Staff updates:

Brian Lawrence- FeBREWary was kicked off in Annapolis. The Governor attended to introduce the month-long event. Businesses created packages and OTD readied for the event by advertising in advance via various channels and outlets including The Washingtonian and on digital platforms. Brian showcased a few developed creatives. Brian discussed his role in the Harriet Tubman Visitor Center grand opening activities. The Spring Co-Op is in the midst of being produced and an effort to revamp the Destination Maryland guide is underway. Brian announced Leslie Troy's new position as Communications Manger overseeing PR efforts for the dept.

Lucy Chittenden-The website has information about FeBREWary and there has been tons of traffic resulting from searches. Cupid's Curse and Love on Tap are two big events associated. There are two seasonal sweepstakes for Love on Tap and the Maryland Craft Beer Festival.

Marci Ross-A tremendous effort by tourism industry partners and OTD led to a successful FeBREWary. Marci gave word about the kick-off event being March 3rd for March as Maryland Wine Month in Annapolis. The Governor has been confirmed to be there. Invitations for the grand opening of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center have been sent out. Marci stated that anyone who hasn't received an invitation should let her know. It was a statewide effort to get the Visitor Center opened on March 10th and between the public-private sectors. Marci discussed details of the private sector partnership grant being introduced including that the threshold on the cap has been raised from \$50,000 to \$75,000. It will be a direct match grant program with guidelines only going to DMO's.

Cynthia Miller- Cynthia discussed the Maryland night at IPW 2017 and her role in bringing the event to life. OTD, DMO's and National Harbor are hosting Maryland Welcomes the World the evening of June 3rd. IPW will be held the first time in D.C. this year. Materials were provided with information on event details.

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.