



Maryland Tourism Development Board (MTDB)

Business Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 19, 2020

10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

In attendance:

MTDB: Judy Bixler, Delegate Wendell Beitzel, Ashley Chenault, Bunkie Ebersberger, G. Hale Harrison, Michael James, Casey Jenkins, Cara Joyce, Candace Osunsade, Dan Spedden, Cassandra Vanhooser

DMO: Greg Pizzuto, Al Hutchinson, Amanda Fenstermaker, Amada Hoff, Becky Bickerton, Cat Herbert, George Cooley, Heather Tinelli, Jana Carter, John Fieseler, Kat Stork, Kristen Goller, Mary Wagner, Sandra Staples, Sandy Turner

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS: Kevin Atticks, Executive Directors Council, Mei Collins, Marriner Marketing, Ruth Toomey, Maryland Tourism Coalition

COMMERCE: Tom Riford, Liz Fitzsimmons, Cynthia Miller, Lucy Chittenden, Brian Lawrence, Rich Gilbert, Marci Ross, Rianna Wan, Greg Bird, Julia Bouie

I. Chair Welcome and Call Meeting to Order

Judy Bixler, Board Chair, called the meeting to order. Service citations for departing Board members: Carmen Gonzales, Maryland Live, Monroe Harrison, Gaylord Hotels and Ali Von Paris, Route One Apparel, have been issued thanking them for their contributions to the MTDB. Ms. Bixler welcomed new MTDB members:

Ashley Chenault, Chief of Tourism, Recreation Parks & Tourism, Charles County
Juan Carlos Linares, General Manager, Tanger Outlets® National Harbor
Albert A. Spence, President, A.S. Midway Tours and American Bus Association

New members provided the Board with background information about the work performed in their industries.

A motion was made by Michael James and seconded by Juan Carlos to approve the September 10, 2020 minutes. The minutes were unanimously approved.

II. Executive Director's Report: Liz Fitzsimmons, Managing Director, Office of Tourism and Film

Assistant Secretary Tom Riford Remarks: Assistant Secretary Tom Riford thanked everyone for attending and extended a warm welcome to present and new Board members thanking them for their willingness to serve

and help to push the industry forward. He also conveyed to the group that 2020 was an incredibly difficult time for the tourism industry with the most number of jobs impacted by Covid, yet according to the Department Of Labor, tourism jobs led in every region of the economy in rebounding in the last five months. Tourism is an important industry and he looks forward to the turnaround for the industry. Assistant Secretary Riford highlighted important initiatives happening recently:

1. The Department of Commerce Annual Report (52 pages) was just published, to review the report, visit <https://Commerce.maryland.gov/FY2020>.
2. On November 17, Governor Hogan announced another Commerce initiative, *Innovation Uncovered*, highlighting Maryland's Future 20 Start-Up Companies. More at <https://open.maryland.gov/innovation>.
3. Covid 19 Financial Relief - A big part of Commerce jobs over the last several months has been assisting the Governor with providing financial assistance and relief to small businesses in Maryland. The Governor just announced a quarter billion dollar relief package for businesses throughout the State provided through Commerce and our sister agencies.
 - 2nd round Covid 19 Relief Grant funding which ran out of funds leaving 5,400 businesses without support. These businesses were eligible to receive funding in this 2nd round.
 - 50 million in funding provided for districts; these funds are marked for restaurants and must be distributed by December 31.
 - The Maryland Small Business Development Financing Authority (MSBDFFA) : 5 million for business loans specific to the economically disadvantaged.
 - The Arts Council Emergency Grant: 3 million for a third round of funding for the arts.
 - Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development: 20 million for entertainment venues.
 - DMO funding: (\$2 million) as well as other funding opportunities; please visit our <https://govstatus.egov.com/md-coronavirus-business/financial-assistance> for more information.

Ms. Fitzsimmons opened her remarks with a reminder of the shared vision and mission statements aligned by the Board and OTD staff.

Vision Statement: Maryland leads the way as one of America's most exciting, diverse and welcoming destinations - creating memories and experiences for visitors worldwide to enjoy.

Mission Statement: Maryland tourism stimulates and drives Maryland's thriving tourism economy, with a primary goal of creating a great place for all Marylanders to live, work and play.

Ms. Fitzsimmons remarked that our staff has continuously leaned in and today you will hear from OTD staff on specific topics bringing attention to the work of OTD. Copies of presentations were emailed prior to the meeting. A new unit, Strategic Partnerships and PR was recently formed and is led by Cynthia Miller who will

kick off our presentations. She thanked Greg Bird and Julia Bouie for technical and logistics for the meeting. The presentations flowed in the order below:

Strategic Partnerships/PR highlights

Cynthia Miller, Director, Strategic Partnerships and Public Relations

Tour of the New OTD Website

Lucy Chittenden, Assistant Director of Interactive Services

EOC Report - Spring/Summer Campaigns

Brian Lawrence, Assistant Director, Communications & Marketing

Open for the Holidays

Rich Gilbert, Travel Trade Sales Manager

Graduation Chesapeake Storytellers/Hospitality Training Moving Forward

Marci Ross, Assistant Director, Tourism Development

Update on the C&O Canal Research

Rianna Wan, Research Analyst

Governor's Grant, Annual Report, Open Road

Liz Fitzsimmons, Managing Director, Department of Commerce Office of Tourism and Film

Ms. Fitzsimmons mentioned the Destination International – National Resident Sentiment Study received just this morning, a copy will be sent to everyone. There is a call to action for deals for Open for the Holidays, and the self entry portal for deals provided to our industry members to submit their deals. She also thanked everyone for their time and attention and thanked the presenters and all OTD staff for working to keep Maryland “Open for Tourism”. Board Chair, Judy Bixler thanked everyone for their work and stressed that it is important to thank those who are instrumental in getting results for us. She asked the group to write letters to the Governor and Secretary Schultz. Addresses will be provided for your convenience shortly.

III. Open Discussion

Legislation Discussion Meeting: January 5, 2021 (tentative date): The MTDB would like to plan a discussion call for legislative priorities for the upcoming session for Board and trade associations members. Julia will send a google poll soon to determine a date that works for everyone.

IV. DMO Report Out

Greg Pizzuto provided a summary of DMO pivots to keep the economic engine of tourism going i.e, working with Rich on deals, local cybershopping. All DMOs have been coming up with great ideas with the Heroes grant is helping a great deal. Ruth Toomey, provided an update for MTC. The annual meeting was recently held. She is not sure at this point what Tourism Day will look like, however it's been a good year for MTC. Casey Jenkins, remarked that Baltimore recently lost a real jewel, Shannon Cottman and a virtual tribute concert will take place on 12/21. Casey was asked to send the link to Julia.

Next meeting:

MTDB General Business meetings and Board Update call dates for 2021 are a part of your meeting packet. Please place these dates on your calendar. Thursday, February 18, 2021- Next General Business Meeting

Adjournment: Board Chair Judy Bixler called for a motion to adjourn. Casey Jenkins provided a second to the call for the motion to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 pm.

Note: Once the Board Chair calls for a motion to adjourn, another Board member must make the initial motion to adjourn to be seconded by another Board member.