

MALA Monthly Meeting Agenda

February 13, 2020

11:30am Briquettes Steakhouse on Montlimar Dr.

Attendees

Spike Blackinton – Renaissance Riverview	Margo Gilbert – The Battle House
Shannon Harris – Homewood Suites Providence	Diana Moorer – Springhill Suites
John Hilliard – Mobile Sports & Ent Grp	Lex Rosenbaum – Mobile Sports & Ent
Megan Davis – Candlewood Suites Mobile	David Clark – Visit Mobile
Robin Perkins – Holiday Inn Airport	Aaron Watz – Holiday Inn Downtown
Shariya Seals – Holiday Inn Airport	Amy Angermeier – Visit Mobile
Cynthia Mitchell – Hampton Inn Downtown	Phillip Moore – AHI Properties
Audrey Ford – Hampton Inn Downtown	Lorren West - GulfQuest
Danny Corte – Mobile Sports Authority	Nick Patel – Quality Inn & Suites I-65
Catherine Mackey – Phoenix Restoration Services	Tori Glenn – Gulf Coast Containers
Shannon Collins – Courtyard Spanish Fort	James Gruenloh – Auto-Chlor
Ross Peterson – Bay City Conventions & Tours	Dustin Smith – Auto-Chlor
Steve Polche – Holiday Inn Express I-10	Chrissie Gossard – ServPro
Aaron McIntosh – Holiday Inn Express I-10	

I. Meet & Greet **11:30am**

II. Call Meeting to Order **12:00pm**

III. Approval of January Minutes

- Motioned by Catherine Mackey, Seconded by Tori Glenn

IV. Financial Report

- We have \$7,428.44 in the account.

V. Dues Invoices & Increase

- Please keep in mind that \$50 of the dues paid per lodging members only is earmarked for the scholarship fund. There is about \$1,300 already collected from the dues. As calculated by Shannon, it should be a total of about \$1,800 collected towards the scholarship fund once all dues have been paid.
- We have committed \$40,000 to the scholarship fund at the University of South Alabama particularly for the Hospitality & Tourism Management Program. That gets matched \$1 for \$1. Throughout the last 4 or 5 years, we have had a golf

tournament each year as a fundraiser for that commitment. We have until 2022 to fulfill it. We have about \$8,000 left to go. We want to make sure we get that match opportunity.

- We want to keep it local. Benefit home first.
- The amount allocated is \$4,000 per year. The university will decide whether it will be given to one student or split it between two.

VI. TID Update

- Refresher:
 - The TID (Tourism Improvement District) is an initiative that we have been working on for 7 years.
 - As long as all the hotels agree in the city of Mobile, we will tack on \$1 per room night that comes in to the city. We get all that money and we can spend it using it for marketing in order to bring business to our market.
 - It is like a tax but a tax that the politicians don't touch. When they passed the ordinance, the ordinance says they can't touch it.
- As of Monday, February 10th we received the last petition to get us over the threshold to move this thing forward.
- We had to have 50% of the hotels sign the petition and agree to it. We also must have 60% of all the room counts in the city of Mobile. Both thresholds must be met. We have 136 rooms more than what we need. Spike would love for us to be at about 250 rooms or 300. We can move this thing forward but we are still going to work on a few more petitions to protect ourselves with possible changes in ownership that may occur.
- Hotels that have not signed a petition:
 - Baymont Mobile Tillmans Corner
 - Budget Inn
 - Budgetel Mobile
 - Comfort Inn Mobile
 - The Curio
 - Drury Inn Mobile
 - Extend A Suites Mobile
 - Extended Stay of Americas Mobile Springhill

- Family Inn Mobile
- Holiday Inn Express Mobile USA Campus
- Holiday Inn Airport (Shannon is working on this one)
- Home2 Suites @ I-65 (David Clark is working on this one)
- Intown Suites
- Intown Suites Mobile West
- Port City Inn
- Rodeway Inn
- Towneplace Suites Mobile
- Tru by Hilton
- Woodspring Suites Mobile

If you have any contacts with these hotels, please reach out to Spike to assist in getting more petitions signed. But we will still be moving forward.

- We have created a corporation. We will manage this money. The city collects it for us. They take 1% processing fee from it. Then it comes to Mobile Area Lodging Corporation. We have to choose a board. Start looking for communication. It will be coming out. We have to vote on a board and set a budget. We have a CPA firm that is engaged with us. This firm will manage the business of the corporation. They will make sure we get budgets out in a timely manner. They will make sure we get notices out for meetings. They will ensure that we stick to all bylaws that are out there. They will do our annual audits. They will make sure all the reporting goes to the city and county. It will probably be well over a million dollars a year that we get to use to marketing and bringing in new business to our city.
- The work begins now actually.
- Timeline:
 - Next Week: Submit a draft to the city. The city will then post the public hearing notice for 20 days.
 - Then there is a public hearing at city council. That is around March 10th.
 - The city council will vote on it. Once it is voted on, there will be a 30 day protest period.
 - After the protest period, the ordinance does go in to effect. That could be around May 1st.

- We will give hoteliers 30 days to get their PMS set-up for the assessment.
- June 1st: Projected to be collecting
- We have to collect for a few months before we have some money. Looking to do some cool stuff by next Mardi Gras with some money in the bank.
- If you or your owner are interested in being on the board, then please be on the lookout for that communication. There will be a vote. This is all run by hotels that have the assessment.
- The board consist of representatives from 3 districts (Tillmans Corner, Beltline, Downtown), a city person, a restaurant representative, the president of MALA, & the president of the CVB.

VII. **Guest Speaker** – John Hilliard, VP of Sales & Marketing for Mobile Sports & Entertainment Group

- John Hilliard, Lex, Ari Rosenbaum, and Keven Bryant started the company over 2 years ago when they found out the BayBears was leaving.
- They have seen good things, bad things, and have learned from it. Looking to moving forward and bringing in as many events to the city as they can.
- John is homegrown. He graduated from Mobile College. They are all about the city. They work with Mobile and Baldwin counties.
- They have been working with the Mobile Sports Authority. They have brought them the Babe Ruth tournament for August.
- They are working on bringing other types of events next year.
- Today starts their baseball season with Murphy High School and B.C. Rain. The stadium is now their home field. This weekend kicks off their college season with Bishop State playing Central Alabama in a game. They have over 40 high school and college baseball games.
- They have tournaments coming throughout the summer. There will be close to a 100 youth baseball travel teams and tournaments coming in. They will be coming from Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Mississippi, Louisiana, and all over the country.
- They are looking at 3 or 4 local music promoters. They are hoping to have a concert there at the stadium this summer. The venues they have in town include Soul Kitchen (1500), Saenger Theatre (2500), the Mitchell Center and The Wharf (about 10,000). They are the only venues along the gulf coast from about New Orleans to Jacksonville that has 3,000 to 6,000 venues for music.
- We are the owners of the Halloween and Christmas light shows. They bought that. That will be starting October 1st. They will be looking to add some lights to it.

- They have facilities at the stadium. They have weight facilities, meetings, and parties. They can go from 12 to 250 people. They have had Austal use the hold stadium for over 2,000 people for a company party. They had softball games and bounce houses. They are working with local charities. They have had car shows, walks, runs, and festivals.
- They pay the rent for the stadium. They make money from the parking, ticket sales, and concessions.
- They are trying to involve as many local companies as they can such as their ice cream and coffee providers.

VIII. CVB Update

- David:
 - There has been a lot of coverage of the Clotilda. National Geographic is doing a 24-page story in February. That is a about \$15 to \$20 million dollar opportunity nationwide thanks to the state department of tourism. You may have also seen Anderson Cooper in here all of last week for the 60-minutes. That story is going to air over the next 60 days. It is great visibility to our city.
 - If anybody has been to the Equal Justice Initiative Museum in Montgomery, then that is what they think the Clotilda will do for Mobile. It may drive a million visitors a year in to our city. The Montgomery Museum got about 450,000 visitors in the first year. It drove \$104,000 hotel nights to the market.
 - We are working on collaboration for a quick attraction. It can make an immediate impact to your hotels this year. So stay tuned.
 - The Star report has been pretty good the last 6 weeks. It wasn't so good last year. We were only up .1% revenue. With the things we have going on and what they are working on, they believe we will drive some better results this year.
- Amy Angermeier:
 - Jerry Bousard came back with 3 RFPs. It was a DC group that is really hard to get in on. It was a successful trip.
 - We are up 15% for leads for the year. Our lead room nights are up almost 15% too year over year. Last year was the second highest year we have ever had. We are trending well.
 - They are hiring a sales manager. If anyone has any resumes that you would like to forward to Amy, then please do.

IX. Sports Update

- Danny Corte:

- It has been great working with John and Lex (Mobile Sports & Entertainment Group). A lot of people were worried when the BayBears left. From their point of view, they believe we can have a greater economic impact with the BayBears gone. It opens up a minor league stadium during baseball season. Everything had to be scheduled around the BayBears schedule before. It prevented them from going after certain tournaments. Mobile Sports & Entertainment group has been great to work with. They have been talking with them on and off for the last 6 months. They have a few things in the works that hopefully will come to fruition. So, they are looking forward to continuing to work with John and Lex.
- They are coming up on their busy season between now and the end of April. They have about 10 events coming up. Between now and Thanksgiving, the number is 16 events. Plus they are looking to bring in another 15 events in to town.
- It has been great for them to work with the Mobile Lodging community and hope to expand.
- If you want to know what specific events are coming up, go on their Mobile Sports Authority website at MobileSportsAuthority.com. They try to keep that updated as best as possible if you have a question about a contact. Some events use third party, some go straight to the hotel, and some go through them or Visit Mobile. It is different for every event. If you have any questions, feel free to call the office or email Danny at Danny@mobilesportsauthority.com.
- Jill Beard, their marketing director, couldn't make it today. She is down at the chamber for a seminar.
- One of their board members, Nick Patel, is here. He is the treasurer. He is the Shannon Harris of the Mobile Sports Authority.

X. Open forum/Attraction updates

- Ross Peterson – Bay City Convention & Tours

- Flyers: Mobile Azalea Trail Festival
 - In the past, this brought in a bunch of motor coaches as well as individual travelers and tourist.
 - Carol Peterson started pushing this to get going again about 3 years ago. They have partnered with Keep Mobile Beautiful, several hotels in town, and most of the attractions. This includes special pricing, azalea themed functions and specials.

- They have flyers to take back to your properties. They are kicking off on the 12th of March. Sandy Stimpson may be there when they do the opening of “Paint the Cannon”. Go to MobileAzaleaTrailFestival.com for updates.
 - This is the first year that they have brochures. Keep Mobile Beautiful received funding from the Marketing Fund to get the brochures up and running.
 - It has been in the closet for 25-30 years. So they are hoping to get it going and it gets better each year.
 - This is rebranding of something that had existed before.
- Lorren West – GulfQuest Maritime Museum
 - They are now open every Thursday until 7pm, Saturdays 9am – 5pm as well as Tuesdays thru Fridays.
 - They do a tremendous amount of business with holding events up on their 3rd floor that offers beautiful views of the Mobile riverfront. If you know of anybody looking to hold an event, please give them a call.
 - They are also pleased to welcome a Coast Guard cutter coming in to port and docking with them in conjunction with Visit Mobile. That will be free access. They are coming in Sunday through Wednesday. That is February 23rd – 26th.
 - They can do tours for you.
- We have member guides available for this meeting. The member list will be updated soon to include some newer ones.
- March Guest Speaker:
 - Our guest speaker for the next meeting will be our regional Expedia representative. They will give us a report on the Mobile market.
- April Guest Speaker: Ed Bushaw
 - He is with the South Baldwin Chamber of Commerce. He has been on this major project over the last year for collecting wages in the hospitality industry statewide.
 - Our information adds to his study and we can get a wage survey done for our market in particular.
- May Guest Speaker: TravelClick

- Spike is working with David to try and get someone here from Str. Also working on getting someone from Alabama Travel Council, State representative, and Alabama Hotel & Restaurant Association.

XI. Adjournment

XII. Remaining Schedule

- March 12th : Leah Garey, Regional Expedia Representative
- April 9th : Ed Bushaw, Wage Survey
- May 14th : Sherry Walker, TravelClick
- June 11th : Open
- July 9th : Open
- August 13th : Open
- September 10th : Open
- October: No Meeting (MALA Golf Tournament)
- November 12th : Goals & Nominations
- December (TBD): FUN!!!

