

MALA Monthly Meeting Agenda

August 8, 2019
12:00pm Half Shell Oyster House

- I. Call Meeting to Order
 - Shannon Harris
- II. Approval of Minutes from July Meeting
 - Motioned by Shannon Harris, Seconded by Carol Hunter
- III. Treasurer Report & Membership Dues Update
 - \$7,677.26 in the account
 - Have deposited \$1200 worth of golf related funds
 - We have 3 teams signed up so far for the golf tournament
- IV. Golf Tournament Update – Spike
 - One of the hospitality & tourism management classes (Event Management) is handling the golf tournament as a part of their grade. The Fall semester class will be finishing where the Spring class left off.
 - We need all of your help creating teams, sponsorships, door prizes, and gift bags.
 - Our goal is to hit 25 teams.
 - Balance for our scholarship fund: \$45,000 generated from MALA and we owe an additional 15,000 to the fund. If we get 25 teams this year, then we will shave that amount in about half. We will be ahead of schedule by 3 or 4 years.
 - We need everyone's help recruiting and signing up for a team.
 - We put in a request for Windcreek to be a title sponsor. That could be huge but we still need sponsors for lunch and dinner.
 - There is a possibility we may move up that tournament by an hour.
 - You can sign up on the website www.MobileAreaLodging.com or via the flyer.
 - Payments can be made by check or through the MALA website with Paypal.

V. TID Update – Spike

- We need petitions. We have about 30% of what we need. For those petitions that are sitting with the owner waiting to be turned in, any help to get those back asap would be greatly appreciated.
- There is no time limit to get those in and make the required threshold. We need about 20 more signed petitions.
- Not sure if we will make our timeline of October 1st to start collecting. We have to give hoteliers 30 days to get their PMS systems set up before collecting can begin.
- Now the ball is in our court to reach the finish line.

VI. Wage Survey Update – Spike

*must participate in order to receive results

- People were interested in it but we could not find a third-party survey company to do it for us. They are very large and they aren't going to do a small one.
- Group Suggestions: A loans personnel service, University of South Alabama students, Spike's old HR person who has retired
- We want it to be semi-independent

VII. Rita Suiter (Hotel Specific Training) – Spike

- Suggested by Heather Lind
- Visit Mobile brings in Rita Suiter almost every year for hospitality training.
- While she is here to do a hotel specific training

VIII. MALA Website Update – Margo

- www.MobileAreaLodging.com
- It is working. You can contact us including for membership and register for the golf tournament this year.

IX. CVB Update

- David:
 - Definite: National Square Dance Convention 2023 (5,000 room nights) & Rural Waters

- SETC: Southeastern Theatre Conference for 2022 or 2023 (4,000 room nights)
 - Feel real confident we will get one of those years
- Presented to the Elks in New Orleans for 2 years from now
- Star Report:
 - Flat year to date in terms of revenue
- Marketing:
 - Collaborating on the Clotilda
 - TID Marketing Plan
 - Have influencers and bloggers everywhere
- The partnership survey was mailed out August 7th. Be on the lookout for that to give them feedback. Tell them what they need to stop doing, keep doing and start doing.

X. **Guest Speaker** – Connie Hudson, Mobile County Commissioner

- Love the exciting things that are happening in Mobile
 - The first azalea came over from Toulouse, France
- Since 2011, the occupancy rates have gone up close to 10% through 2018
- Sports Tourism has long been an important aspect of not only our community but also across the country. Even during the recession, sports tourism was one that didn't suffer any ill effects while people weren't spending money in other areas.
- For the better part of the last two decades, the soccer community has trying for more facilities. Soccer has continued to grow despite not having many facilities.
- The new soccer facility in Mobile has been about an 8 year endeavor.
 - Started the concept back in 2012 after listening to the soccer community about wanting this recreational venue. They looked at different areas where a facility could be located. It wasn't easy when looking at what would be accessible to the interstate and infrastructure that we have in place such as hotels, restaurants, & shops.
 - Location, infrastructure, and price were considerations. Another consideration was almost everywhere they looked wetlands was there somewhere. They landed on this property off of Halls Mill Rd & I-10 & I-65 with about 200 acres. Her first plan was to buy all of it. We were going

to anchor it with a soccer complex with 10 fields and 1 large championship field. They were going to pattern it after the complex in Decatur, the Jack Allen Soccer complex. The soccer community wanted something like that. They wanted top quality. That is expensive.

- In the original plan, there was a portion of wetland area that they were going to use as natural habitat, walking trail, or golf. These were things that didn't require land disturbance. The plan was to put a water park in over 15 acres. That fell apart. She couldn't get the political support to support that idea. Had look at other alternatives.
- There wasn't a location that was better. So the plan was to build this in a phase approach instead of all at once. We needed to get it started. They redesigned with this new approach in mind. After about 5 years, she was able to get it started by purchasing the initial 60 acres of the property and get the design drawn. This was enough for 2 tournament quality lighted fields and two seated fields. That meant there would be 2 finished fields and 2 seated fields. This was part of the pay-as-you-go money. This initial design included permeable parking.
- Most recently they had another 1.5 million that could be put towards it. So they revised it to include 3 finished lighted fields and it had to be on the same footprint as before in order to avoid rebidding. That left them with the ability to do a seated practice field, a regular size standard field, and a small youth practice field.
- By January, we will end up with this completed. The entrance initially will be off of Lees Lane. They will still be working. Halls Mill Rd will have a 3rd turn in lane. They will be working over the next year to extend roads.
- They have received grants towards this effort. There has also been a lot of local community support towards this effort.
- There will be two artificial turf fields and the championship field will be one of them. It will have a better quality lighting, bleachers, locker rooms, and rest rooms. The price tag on that is 1.7million. A letter has been sent to the mayor requesting this money.
- The city will actually end of better with revenue generation from the venue than the county will.
- After this first phase is complete, they will be depleted of money that has been put aside for this project. She has been talking to people to get more funds but hasn't seen anything yet. For a regular field, it cost \$600,000. For an artificial turf field, it will run around 1.2 million.
- The first phase will be finished in January. The Mobile United Football club is the largest soccer club in Mobile County and includes about 800

members. They will help manage and operate the complex. They might have some county staff working there helping them but they will be responsible for scheduling and ensuring maintenance is performed properly.

- Comment from the audience: We need to do better as a community maintaining our parks. We can build it all day but we need to maintain them.
- Question from the audience: Have they started booking tournaments in yet?
 - No. Not yet. We don't have a management agreement set up with Mobile United yet. They are just working with her right now. They will be working on that agreement before the end of the year to get that in place.
- Question from the audience: They will not be multi-purpose fields? Correct?
 - They will be multi-purpose for lacrosse and rugby but primarily for soccer.
- Question from the audience: Hank Aaron Stadium use?
 - That is owned by the city. Had heard at one point about putting Top Golf facility there but unsure.

XI. Open forum/Attraction updates

- Ross Peterson in for Carol Peterson – Bay City Convention and Tours
 - Working hard to get the Azalea Trail festival back on the map
 - Local attractions and several hoteliers have offered Azalea Trail theme functions and prices
 - Looking for more partners to join in such as restaurants, venues, and etc.
 - Setup a web page for the two week period in an a la cart fashion. It has several restaurants and attractions on the page.
 - Highlights:
 - Special pricing, special drinks, flowers in hotel rooms, music, menus, street decorations, & with the help of partners they would love to see the city and county covered with azalea colors.
 - The website is expandable. Join with \$50 to get the website up and running.

- They are further developing their contact list. Please reach out to the them with any information.
- Keep Mobile Beautiful – the shepherds of the Azalea Trail. Will be working with them to elevate the event and make it a city-wide event. Dress in pink!
- Will approach the lodging association for help from the marketing fund
- Looking to invite those across the bay to get involved.
- Dominic Harris – zTrip Brand Ambassador
 - New Member
 - Local Cab Service
- Eva Golson – Mobile Film Office
 - Introducing the new Location Coordinator: Tommy Fell
- Danny Corte – Mobile Sports Authority
 - Lining up a record year in terms of events.
 - Working on some big events to bring in next year during late summer (not definite yet)
 - Cheer, Wrestling, Bowling Tournaments
 - Gulf Coast Challenge is coming up September 28th
 - Alabama A&M vs. Central State University
 - If anyone wants to see their schedule, they try to keep it up to date on www.mobilesportsauthority.com
 - You can call Jill Beard or Danny Corte if you have any questions.
- Maggie Thrasher – Convention Center and SMG Mobile
 - Upcoming Events:
 - August 22nd: Hosting the Mobile Chamber of Commerce Business Expo at the Convention Center
 - Saenger Theatre: Old Crow Medicine Show (September), Black Jacket Symphony (September)
 - Civic Center: WWE Live (August), Paw Patrol (September), Sesame Street (November), Mannheim Steamroller (December)

- Kate Pearson – Gulf Coast Ducks
 - New Members
 - Have rack cards
 - 10% discount for hoteliers to offer to their guests. Will be keeping a tally of the hotels that refer guests to them so that they can do promotions for the hotels too.
 - Cocktail Tours:
 - Quacks & Crafts-Brewery Tour
 - Wine Waddle-Wine Tasting Tour
 - Flocks On The Rocks-Craft Cocktail Tour
 - Hope to have the cocktail tours as a monthly thing.
 - Rolling in to the Fall: Haunted Ducks, Haunted Fort

XII. Remaining Schedule

- September – Open
- October – Attractions Meeting & Golf Tournament (October 3, 2019)
- November – Goals & Nominations
- December – FUN!!!

XIII. Adjournment