

Marketing & Events Committee Meeting Notes
November 30, 2018 ~ 8:30 a.m.
Meeting Location: Commerce One, Room A ~ 901 Saginaw St.

Members Attending: Valerie Allen, Peggy Rau, Becky Hortop, Michelle Judd

Absent: Tyler King, Christine Schwall, Mike Murray, Andrew Heppner,
Laura Horwath

Also Attending: Suzanne Maxwell, Matthew Kowalski

Introduction of New Committee Member

The Marketing and Events Committee welcomed Becky Hortop, Market Manager at City Market. Becky provides a background in Marketing, especially on a community level. Picking up where Erin left off, Becky's goals and focus remain consistent with the group.

Survey Review

Kowalski and Judd lead the group in reviewing the Downtown Bay City survey sent out after last months meeting.

Seeking age demographics, the survey yielded over 70% of the respondents identifying as 40+. This does differ from our Facebook analytics that show 25-45 being our highest users. Most of the respondents to the survey came via Constant Contact e-mail, rather than social media, which could explain the difference.

Over 85% of survey participants live within a 25 miles or less radius to Downtown Bay City. Over 70% of survey participants visit Downtown Bay City everyday, every week, or every 2-3 weeks, so our respondents are regulars to Downtown. Restaurants, shopping, and events were the main reasons for participants visits.

It was insightful to see which events were most attended; Fireworks festival was an obvious top event, but Sundays in the City wasn't far behind, followed by Sidewalk Days, St. Pat's Day Parade, Wednesday Concerts in the Park, and Holiday Open House as the favorites. Most of the "other" text responses had dealt with Art festivals, which had been omitted from the options, as there was a limited number the survey service allowed.

The 3.9/5 rating is was somewhat lower than our Facebook rating of 4.4/5, but possibly presented a more honest answer at an anonymous glance, rather than displaying any displeasures publically on Facebook. Over 90% of participants were somewhat-very likely to recommend Downtown Bay City to friends or colleagues.

Our survey participants listed E-mail as the highest source of getting their information about Downtown Bay City. Once again, this number may be increased because a large majority of participants responded from our Constant Contact e-mail list. Facebook wasn't far behind, followed by newspapers, brochures, and Instagram. Instagram being low correlates with our age demographic information from the survey and Facebook.

The committee then went through all of the text responses (included in the excel file e-mailed prior to the meeting) with a focus on new events/activities the survey participants would like to see in the future.

Review of Downtown Marketing Plan

Maxwell suggested that revisions of the Marketing plan for Downtown Bay City by the Marketing & Events Committee be rescheduled for the next meeting, as to gain more insight with higher attendance.

2019 Calendar of Events

Maxwell presented the committee with an updated tentative schedule of the 2019 events happening in Downtown Bay City. She began by explaining how many bar/restaurant owners have expressed concern regarding the proposed idea of a "Craft Cocktail Walk." Most issues are with controlling consumption - as liquor is stronger than beers or wines that are part of our other successful walks. Judd mentioned survey participants wanting more family friendly events, and this doesn't fit that idea.

Maxwell discussed creating new events during our less-busy times of the year (when we have no events on the calendar). Survey participants also mentioned having more winter events. Kowalski explained Heppner and Horwath's creation of a Craft Beer Garden event at Unity Park on December 21 and 22. Kowalski shared that the event needs sponsorships and was willing to provide sponsorship information as requested.

Maxwell reported Downtown restaurant merchants interest in revamping the Chili Cookoff event. This event did not happen last year due to poor participation in the previous year, but wants to give it another chance if more businesses are willing to become involved. Tentatively scheduled for Saturday, February 23 with 10 participating businesses.

Maxwell reminded the group of previous discussions of a 5k "fun run" for Downtown Bay City and a possible date this could be scheduled for without overlapping other 5k races in the area - Also keeping the idea of adding this event to our slower months (March, April, May, October).

Rau suggested possibly tying in the 5k with some kind of Wellness Expo at Wenonah Park. Including pets to run with, as well as pet adoption could be both the theme and charity. A date will be determined in the near future.

The idea of having a Food Truck Festival event was suggested to the Committee. Maxwell suggests sometime in October, as we do not have many events. Judd asked if this Food Truck Festival could be a possible involvement or replacement to restaurant week in Downtown Bay City.

Survey participants mentioned having some sort of New Years Eve event in Downtown Bay City. Since this is too late to plan and execute for 2018, it is possible for 2019. Discussions of not simply replicating what Midland has for New Years, as well as target audience for this event: Adult (alcohol) vs. family friendly. The suggestion of having a firework display rather than a ball drop at midnight was suggested with great response.

Bay City is known for its fireworks displays and has many connections to make this an attraction. Rau suggests getting hotels involved in some capacity.

A "Hot Chocolate Hop" was proposed as another new winter event. Possibly end of January or early February. Rau suggests maybe getting merchants that provide treats or pastries to get involved on top of the hot chocolate to make this more inclusive.

Downtown Bay City Website Updates

Kowalski explained that he had met with Alana Rabedioux of Cadmium Designs the previous week to go through downtownbaycity.com to ensure proper functionality. Broken links have been corrected, and Kowalski explained a desire to create more online forms to streamline processes - for instance, an online form for merchants to sign up for a Downtown Bay City event rather than printing a physical copy and faxing, emailing, or bringing them into the office. Not only would this save time, but could increase participation by making sign-up easier.

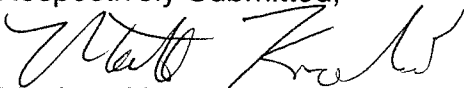
Other

The Marketing Committee will discuss on the closed Facebook group whether to meet again Friday, December 28, 2018 or Friday, January 4, 2019.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 am.

Respectively Submitted,



Matthew Kowalski
Administrative/Marketing Specialist