

Marketing & Events Committee Meeting Notes
May 3, 2019 ~ 8:30 a.m.
Meeting Location: Commerce One, Room A ~ 901 Saginaw St.

Members Attending: Michelle Judd, Tyler King, Christine Schwall, Mike Murray, Peggy Rau, Brandon Strong

Absent: Valerie Allen, Becky Hortop, Laura Horwath

Also Attending: Mike Bacigalupo, Matthew Kowalski, Suzanne Maxwell

Agenda / Introduction of new member

Maxwell reminded the committee that the agenda for today's meeting will consist of Tall Ships marketing, followed by the Downtown Marketing Plan. Maxwell introduced Brandon Strong, owner of Regent Floral & Mercantile. Strong previously held leadership positions at the Dow Bay Area Family YMCA as well as the YWCA. Regent Floral & Mercantile will be a flower shop, art gallery, and handmade gift shop opening in May 24th.

Tall Ship Celebration

Maxwell reminded the committee of Schwall's suggestion of providing marketing materials to local hotels, possibly putting together packets or bags. Judd asks how far out from Downtown Bay City we'd like to go and adds that she can ask for data from the CVB. Judd asks if we should supply marketing materials for one or two nights, should we look into Midland with the LPGA being the same weekend? Maxwell added that volunteers are needed to assemble well ahead of time and drop them off to each location.

Rau suggests having a single page handout if budget and feasibility become unobtainable. Judd agrees, but would like to see these have more content and information about the area and happenings more so than just handing out coupons. Bacigalupo questions how many hotels we'd like to target, as well as how many rooms each has, and finally if they would even be willing to allow us to market within their facility. Judd shares that there are just over 1,000 rooms in Bay City alone. Rau suggests we coordinate with the Tall Ships directors to make sure we're not overlapping ideas. Bacigalupo says he will contact Roberts about this and the booth that they've previously had during the event.

The group discussed creating a "treasure map" of participating businesses that when visitors present will be stamped and when they have an agreed upon number of stamps from various stores, they can enter to win a grand prize of gifts from participating business. Bacigalupo points out it's a similar format to the sleigh of gifts during Sundays in the City. Maxwell says we could reach out to Herter Music Center about displaying the giveaway in their window. Judd suggests each business participating display flags in front of their store to represent their inclusion, possibly pirate themed if they're inexpensive.

Schwall suggests doing a window decorating contest, similar to what was done in 2016 for the Tall Ships Celebration. Judd agrees this could increase merchant involvement. Maxwell explains that the beautification subcommittee will be presenting a storefront beautification contest throughout the summer months and is reluctant to throw in another contest on top of that, but window decorating would still be a great idea.

Bacigalupo suggests that we encourage downtown merchants to stay open on Sunday during the Tall Ships Celebration. Schwall says it needs to be a point to talk with fellow merchants on each block to make it a collective effort, rather than a few stores open here and there. Strong says the discussion has been brought up for tenants of the Davidson building, but he will discuss further at their next meeting.

Judd approaches the idea of having entertainers on street corners. Rau asks if we could find individuals or groups to volunteer a free job and possibly receive tips, rather than being paid by the DMB. Judd agrees, and reiterates a desire for having ambiance throughout the day and evenings downtown. She brings up the idea of asking performers scheduled for the festival if they'd be willing to do a much smaller scale performance for visitors in line, and would like to touch base with Jerry Casault to see if this is possible. Strong says music on the streets may encourage visitors to keep exploring downtown more than just the park.

Maxwell says we will post to our Downtown Merchants closed Facebook page seeking musicians. Maxwell noted that the downtownbaycity.com website will have Tall Ships Celebration front and center to make it as easy as possible for visitors to get the proper information. Judd suggests we look into advertising on the shuttles or even having signage throughout the area that can be seen by visitors on the shuttles. Maxwell remembers in the past there were "pocket guides" of information and adds we can post the maps onto our social channels to be printed as well. Judd suggests having areas downtown for photo opportunities.

Marketing Plan

Judd begins with the goals of the Downtown Marketing Plan and explains that we need to have numerical proof of how we measure, as well as who it is being measured against (number of visitors, money spent). King asks how are we going to capture the data. Judd explains she gives her marketing class a perceptual map from the CVB representing the Great Lakes Bay Region and asks if we want to play to our current strengths or increase our weaknesses.

In the situation analysis, the committee made slight updates to the strengths and added lack of newer transport, and lack of young professional feedback to weaknesses. Opportunities was updated as well, adding increase in mixed use buildings, natural resource development, and creating experiences/memories (as per survey results). Threats removed were internet buying and increased unemployment.

Competitors list was updated by removing the big box stores, as they no longer are a direct competition of the downtown market. Additions to the competitors list are other attractions, competing community events, and nearby downtowns, closest being Midland as it has similar market and is in a closer proximity.

Judd says financial goals need measurements, or “yard sticks”, with a hard target being worked toward. She points out that the committee needs to fine tune the goals and explain them further in the strategy section. Things to be emphasized are area entrepreneurs, low cost of business (\$/sq.ft), and waterfront location. Judd asks that members look over the Marketing Plan prior to the next meeting and are prepared to discuss in depth.

Other

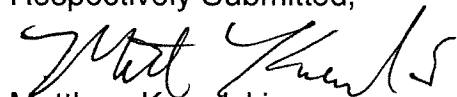
Judd asks that the review of the Downtown Marketing Plan be finished at the next meeting. This topic deserves a dedicated amount of time to get this accomplished. Judd sets the next meeting date for May 24th at 8:30am with agenda items of the Downtown Marketing Plan and Sidewalk Days.

Murray shares that the Delta College Planetarium has new shows and new exhibits beginning in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:03 am.

Respectively Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Kowalski". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matthew Kowalski
Administrative/Marketing Specialist