



# MINUTES

Thursday, March 15 (3:30-5:00pm) @ Grand River Hotel

## MISSION

*Our mission is to provide Kent County hospitality related businesses an opportunity to meet professionally with a common interest to better serve our industry and community while furthering the overall tourism landscape of our region.*

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

Welcome & Introductions: Jen Cutter – KCHA President

- Introduction of membership committee for KCHA, asking the group if anyone may be interested in joining this effort.

Approval of February 2018 Minutes

- Karen 1<sup>st</sup>
- Bill 2<sup>nd</sup>

Approval of February 2018 Financial Report

- Ben – gave financial information – watching balance to ensure we stay above \$1000 to avoid \$15 per month ding.
- Amy 1<sup>st</sup>
- Bill 2<sup>nd</sup>

Special Guests:

- Angela Nelson – VP of Multicultural Business Development – Experience Grand Rapids
- Angela – with EXGR in her position for about a year.
  - What does she do:
    - Set a diversity values statement – helped to make diversity more intentional at EXGR
    - Actively securing meeting and convention business that is diverse in nature.
    - Working on sharing information about diversity with local hotels including but not limited to: speakers, hotel employment, etc.
    - Her 3 goals
      - Enhance community engagement and awareness
      - Enhance diversity & inclusion for the benefit of local & visitor economy
      - Establish a hospitality & tourism management workforce development initiative
        - Work with GRPS to start a pipeline of future hospitality employees
          - Target of 2019 for this to start
          - Looking to form an advisory committee
          - Notes will come out about this and the time commitment shortly
        - Introducing students who may not necessarily take a hospitality major to the industry
        - Partner with HBCU's (historically black colleges) and minority organizations to introduce them to the area and our opportunities.
        - Helping lower skilled workforce into the hotels and groom them into a career in hospitality
  - What is diversity and inclusion
    - How things differ – point of difference
      - People, thoughts, and process
    - Inclusion

- Including and respecting people's opinions and thoughts.
  - How to describe inclusion and diversity in your organization
    - Discovery, apprehension, don't think about it due to upbringing
  - Aspects of Diversity
    - It's okay to recognize that people aren't the same.
    - It's important to be respectful
    - Not buying into stereotypes
    - More than just tolerating
- Why is it important to understand diversity
  - Can damage your business
- How to manage diversity
  - Know your audience
  - Just because everyone looks the same doesn't mean they are the same.
  - Things are diverse by default – the employer must deal with it.
  - Rewarding/awarding employees who embrace this is key
  - Be intentional – EXGR is working on leading by example
  - Steps
    - Empower employees
    - Reward employees
    - Provide training
    - Encourage mentoring
- What are the consequences of not managing diversity and inclusion
  - Damages employee moral
  - Illegal
  - Strains employee relationships
  - Damages productivity
  - Recognize behaviors instead of appearance
- Challenge Yourself!
  - Challenge yourself and assumptions that you know what is always right
  - It's okay to notice difference and be aware of our own bias
  - Be an ally

## Monthly Reports

- Experience Pink
  - New chair – Sarah Jorgensen – still calculating donation revenue from this year. Would like to put more thought into what is going to happen next year. Start earlier and advertise more. Keep events in February – one major event per week. With a big event at JW possibly. Bring back dodgeball, including roller derby for an event – Rachel Crowther. Get feedback from Susan G Komen. Locking some things down by May. Contact Sarah to get involved – next pink meeting will be in August.
- Golf Outing (Monday, June 4 @ The Mines)
  - Ross – sign ups start next week on KCHA website you can start enrolling for golf. You can also enroll via paper as well. It will be **6/4 for at the Mines**. Focus is on sponsorships -36 sponsors – 2 per hole. Caddy shack award is back. The funds raised from this event will be used for a grant program for the university to ask for funds as they see fit. The 3,000 from last year is being used to send students to the Governor's Conference. They will have ribbons on so they can be identified.
- Experience Grand Rapids
  - 3/21 – 3:30 Annual meeting and tourism forum. At Art Museum.
  - 3/22 – 8:15 AM breakfast for hoteliers – doubletree
  - 4/24 toast the town – DeVos convention center.
  - 3/26 at 6 PM – Starkgarden – Networking Event
- West Michigan Sports Commission
  - No Comments
- Certified Tourism Ambassador (CTA)
  - 3/21- Disability Decorum 9 AM City Flats
  - 3/30- CTA Training at the Crowne
- West Michigan Tourist Association
  - Doing 7shows this year – to promote the state and west Michigan
- Women in Lodging
  - No Comments
- Michigan Cares for Tourism
  - Copper Harbor is new destination – longer trip with pit stops and excursions. KCHA will reimburse after the event in

late September. There is also a governor's conference event you can register for.

- Grand Valley State University
  -
- Ferris State University
  - 4 students attended alternative spring break – they worked at all 3 hotels in the collection and focused on housekeeping. They also stayed

- overnight and did a “QA” experience.
- 16 students coming to governors’ conference
- Internships start in the fall. Please think about this early on – having a rotational internship is more interesting to them and attractive.
- Career fair is Monday, November 5<sup>th</sup>. At Eberhard Center – GVSU. There will be an afterhours event for networking.

#### Upcoming Meetings & Events

- March 21 – Enhanced CTA (9-10:30am) @ City Flats (Cassandra Bell & Maddie Schaab – Disability Advocates)
- March 27-29 – Pure Michigan Governor’s Conference on Tourism (Grand Rapids)
- March 30 – CTA Training (8am-Noon) @ Crowne Plaza
- April 4 – Enhanced CTA (9-10:30am) @ City Flats (Michael Baker “See Something Say Something” Homeland Security)
- April 11 – CTA Training (1-5pm) @ Holiday Inn & Suites Airport
- April 19 – KCHA Monthly Membership Meeting – At Amway – in glass tower- 25<sup>th</sup> floor
- April 24 – Experience Grand Rapids “Toast of the Town” Luncheon

#### Round Table Discussion

#### Adjournment

Rachel – 1<sup>st</sup>

Bill – 2<sup>nd</sup>

#### **Kent County Hospitality Association**

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