



MINUTES

Date/Time: Thursday, March 21 – 3:30pm

Location: West Michigan Sports Commission - 300 Ottawa Ave NW #240

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: Lisa Calhoun, KCHA President (Lisa has a new job as Director of Sales at the Sheraton)

Approval of February 2024 Meeting minutes (Motion: Jane; Second: Kyle)

Treasurer's Report & Membership Report – Table financial report to May, due to David being out of office.

Monthly Discussion: Sports Tourism in Kent County

- Mike Guswiler – Meijer Sports Complex Update
 - Excited to be in the office. 9 full time employees. A great intern program within the community. Excited to host you and we have been around for 17 years as a non profit to promote our city through sports and recreational activities. Really had a focus on adaptive sports in the past few years. Excited to partner with Calvin to see how this goes. Should be around 900 participants. Have contributed to well over half a million hotel rooms back to the business from our efforts and bidding to get families and activities here. Excited to continue to advocate to get GR on the map and heads in beds.
 - The new complex is focused on “diamond sports”. The land is a partnership with Kent County and Plainfield township. It is more than the Meijer sports complex. Premier Park is right there and we have been able to utilize the park and grow the opportunities for GR to bring sports to the area. Such as archery, soccer, BMX, mountain biking.
 - With the impact we are excited for this expansion. Very sustainable upgrade and the revenue/expense is pretty balanced and should be a great opportunity for that to be enhanced. With the upgrades to the baseball fields with a new turf option they are hoping to extend the times that these fields can be used.
 - The highlight is a special field dedicated to those who need assistance to play and enjoy baseball.
 - May 11 12-3pm sign up to support those in a few of these games. Lunch provided. Come out for a great time and make a difference in these kids' day!
 - Pickleball courts at Belknap get full quickly so we are partnering with Rockford pickleball to work to double the # of play and opportunity to bring more pickleball to GR
- Kara Wood – Grand Action with an update about the Soccer Stadium
 - GRSS is a public private partnership. Very similar to VA, downtown Market. Involves funding from all different capacities to make these opportunities happen.
 - Building on the success of Grand Action. Based on the destination asset study to see what we need to grow and sustain what we have and what we need.
 - A mix used development near west side over by the YMCA. Hoping to host local to professional teams
 - And encouraging more housing which we so desperately need.
 - Will be professional team capable.
 - The process of information has been sent out. 8500-12000 seats. 17 professional matches with other events. Roughly 164,000 visitors per season. With just one professional team and the goal is to have 2 professional teams.
 - Not closed but hoping to use year-round and add some creative opportunities during the winter.
 - Economic Impact: \$5.2 in annual wage earnings. \$408 Mill based on the next 30 years. #330 job opportunities from players to supporting staff.
 - Talked a lot about sound- Should not be a problem. Stays in the confines of the commercial district
 - Initially looking at 20Mill of opportunities from local business and then growing from there.

- "March to the Match" will be exciting
- Parking- 16,000 spaces around so no parking will be added.
- In the design/development phase. Assembling land, lining up capital, and then do some final steps to start this build
- Wednesday and Thursday will be a big deal for them
- Website is live for you to check out if needed
- Design phase they are neck and neck
 - Capital wise the Amphitheatre is ahead.
 - Can't have a team until there is a stadium. But there is a lot of interest so build it and they will come.

Monthly Reports

- Experience Grand Rapids
 - JayIn- annual tourism forum this past Tuesday. They had record attendance and be on the lookout for a recap email coming soon if you have not already gotten it
- Grand Rapids Diversity & Inclusion - No updates at this time
- West Michigan Sports Commission
 - Wrapped up star spirit nationals at Devos and they are excited to be welcomed back next year. Looking to add in a wrestling tournament in April
 - USA Table Tennis- in the final 3 to host their national championships here.
 - Move united- a 25/26 opportunity. More details to come.
- West Michigan Tourist Association
 - No updates- but if you want copies of their Care Free Travel Guide please reach out. The lighthouse maps should be ready next month
- Women in Hospitality Leadership-Grand Rapids – No Updates at this time
- Grand Valley State University
 - GVSU networking event is next Monday 3/25. Roughly 30 organizations signed up
- Ferris State University
 - Internship season is here. School is done last week of April. Looking forward to bringing around 10 students to the Governors Tourism Conference in April
 - Working with GRCC to bring the option for their bachelors to GR so they do not need to move to Ferris
- Grand Rapids Community College
 - Experience GR was able to donate to their culinary fund and are excited to see where that goes
- Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association
 - 4/3 Event "No Room for Trafficking" event in Detroit. More details to come. Hoping to add to GR one day. HTIM training round one is almost done. Starting next round in April. Free if you go through the whole 12 week program. Lots of certificates and opportunities for employees.
- Michigan Cares for Tourism
 - Pure MI governors conference in Kalamazoo. Building wiffleball fields to support the league and the tournaments. 9-12pm.

Upcoming Meetings & Events (See attached for 2024 KCHA Meeting Schedule)

- Monday, March 25 – GVSU Networking Extravaganza at Hager-Lubbers Exhibition Hall (DeVos 105E)
- Tuesday, April 9 to Thursday, April 11 – Pure Michigan Tourism Conference in Kalamazoo
- NO APRIL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
- Thursday, May 16 – Monthly Membership Meeting @ Amway Grand Plaza's Pickleball Courts
- Monday, May 20 – Michigan Cares for Tourism @ Belle Isle, Detroit
- Thursday, June 20 – Monthly Membership Meeting @ Watermark Country Club's CORK

Round Table Discussion

Adjournment

Kent County Hospitality Association
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www.KentCountyHospitality.org
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