

Howard County Tourism Council, Inc.
Board Meeting Minutes
April 22, 2018
Robinson Nature Center

Term Ends EOFY		First	Last	Present
		Bates	Gail	
		Guzzone	Guy	
		Harden	Al	Y
		Ebersole	Eric	Y
		Wilson	Diane	
		Besson	Karen	
		Johnson	Kathy	
2019	Executive	Libber	Mike	
2018	Executive	Mangione	Pete	Y
2018	Executive	Mangus	Becky	
2019	voting	Mattis	Julia	Y
2018	voting	Barnard	Valerie	Y
2020	voting	Nicklas	Barbara	Y
2018	Executive	Balderson	David	Y
2020	Executive	Chandler	Chuck	
2018	Executive	Clark	Martha	Y
2018	voting	Kelehan	Kevin	Y
2020	voting	Buscher	Tori	
2021	voting	Turner	Katie	Y
2021	voting	Troglio	Aimee	Y
2021	voting	Kennedy	Ian	Y
2021	voting	Hasseltine	Terry	

7 of 15 voting members required for quorum.

- Meeting called to order-8:39am
- Guest Speaker: Pam Reese-Community Liaison
 - Welcome to Robinson Nature Center-LEED Platinum facility
 - Lots of events coming up with master gardeners
- Tony thanks the board for their hard work. Official announcement that he's leaving VHC.
- Previous meeting minutes (vote)
 - Votes to approve-unanimous
- Financials (vote)
 - Overall health of the hotels right now--down a few % points
 - Howard County is doing well in this downswing-over the other counties in the state
 - Baltimore and DC are both struggling to fill their convention calendars and that bleeds into our market
 - AirBnb is taking a large market share with no taxes owed
 - Federal events are not taking place with the same schedule as before, because there is no one in the government to approve these events
 - There are threats and downward pressure on us as a result of these trends
 - Overall revenue will be down for the next year, we're looking at a hit to the budget
 - MD State grant is also a flexible number, and we cannot know yet what we'll be granted from that office
 - Vote to move the savings fund from a high risk account to a more approachable account
 - Why is marketing looking down now? Because we haven't actually spent the money yet
 - Why is there so much money allocated under the website fee? Because of the contract with Simpleview, the invoices come in together, and we need to break out what is not billed under the website fees. We need to get a new website that has less of a maintenance fee.
 - P. Mangione-we're on track for the year, Pete would like to get rolling on the budget for next year--coming up at the Executive Committee meeting next week
 - Votes to approve the financials-unanimous
- Review Membership Fee (vote)
 - Membership is behind FY17 by 12 or so members, that's because some of the free memberships we gave out after the EC flood did not renew for an additional year
 - Has there been discussion amongst the staff about changing the structure for next year?
 - If we increase the price, we may be able to bring in the same amount of money, but many will drop off and no longer participate
 - M. Clark--it doesn't make sense to keep changing the price, because it's about engagement, not about revenue generation
 - A. Troglio-many of her merchants would likely leave if we doubled the price
 - E. Ebersole-do you know who you'd lose first?-Restaurants, retail & Attractions
 - D. Balderson-have you created tiers of membership for those businesses that want enhanced benefits?
 - Yes, there is a structure in place for different levels of benefits--we can look at creating some more intermittent levels
 - Vote to approve to maintain \$50 membership fees-unanimous
- Welcome Center Renovation Update

- Grants update
 - Design firm update
- Rebrand and website
 - Paused for the moment
 - Marketing Position-postponed for now, current staff has been able to handle executing the marketing calendar until a new director comes in
- MD Korean Way
 - Press conference-May 1, 1:30-Tous Le Jour
 - We'll be launching this product with many guest speakers
 - Amanda will be speaking on the behalf of VHC
 - Radio, FB and Edible DC marketing campaign behind this project
- SMS Text
 - This is a good arts partnership-because most of the categories focus on arts events in the county
 - public/weekend events only--something that is new and not a repeating event
 - Previewed events will be randomly selected
- Meeting Adjourned: 9:23