

Meeting Minutes DRAFT: Approved January 28, 2025

Howard County Tourism Council, Inc. Board of Directors Meeting

November 12, 2024, 8:30 - 10:00 AM

SONESTA SELECT COLUMBIA, [8910 STANDFORD BLVD, COLUMBIA, MD 21045](#)

In-Person Strongly Encouraged / Virtual Alternative: Meeting ID: 814 4849 1121 +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

11 of 20 voting members are required for a quorum. P = present, E = Excused Absence, A = Absent

Term Ends EOFY		First	Last	Present
non-voting		Katie	Fry Hester	E
non-voting		Dan	Burns	P
non-voting		Terry	Hasseltine	E
non-voting		Kathy	Johnson	P
non-voting		Mike	Milani	E
non-voting		Sharron	Christiansen	P
non-voting		Felix	Fachine	P
FY26 (2nd)	President	Tricia	Hudson	P
FY26 (1st)	President-Elect	Jayquin	Bella	P
FY25 (2nd)	Past President	Yolande	Lacan	E
FY26 (2nd)	Treasurer/Secretary	Jim	Starke	P
FY28 (special)	Nominating Chair	Martha	Clark	P
FY28 (special)	Exec. Board	Chuck	Chandler	P
FY26 (1st)	Exec. Board	Vince	Culotta	E
FY25 (1st)	Exec. Board	Steve	Carne	P
FY25 (1st)	Voting	Grace	Anastasiadis	P
FY28 (2nd)	Voting	Margaret	Barry	P
FY25 (2nd)	Voting	Nina	Basu	E
FY25 (1st)	Voting	Mae	Beale	P
FY28 (2nd)	Voting	Cheryl	Clemens-Everidge	P
FY25 (1st)	Voting	Phillip	Dodge	E
FY26 (1st)	Voting	Adam	Winer	P
FY28 (1st)	Voting	Dave	Simmons	P
FY26 (1st)	Voting	Nicole	Motsay	P
FY28 (2nd)	Voting	Soo	Park	P
FY26 (1st)	Voting	Rod	Vese	P
FY28 (1st)	Voting	Donna	Wecker	P

Staff in attendance:

Amanda Hof
Denisa Smith
Alex Sullivan

AGENDA

Call to Order (Tricia)

8:48 am

Welcome New Members / Introductions

Host Greeting (Bridgette Sloan, General Manager - SONESTA SELECT COLUMBIA)

Board Meeting Minutes

- July, September (VOTE)

<i>Motion to approve July minutes</i>	Grace Anastasiadis
<i>Second</i>	Jim Starke

All in favor

Motion **Passed** ▾

<i>Motion to approve September minutes</i>	Grace Anastasiadis
<i>Second</i>	Jim Starke

All in favor

Motion **Passed** ▾

Financials (Jim/Amanda)

- June (VOTE)
 - An accountant is a bit behind with the financials
 - We are currently doing an audit
 - The year ended on a very good note
 - Didn't spend all the funds on our lawn project
 - Spent more than budgeted on marketing
 - \$68k was made on dividends, savings, etc.
 - We are in a good place for FY25 financially
 - \$200,000 was moved from M&T Savings to the investment funds in low-risk, high-yield positions. We can move the money back when and as we need it. The reason is we can make more profit in the investment account than in the savings account. Jim agrees on this strategy.

- Chuck: will we be caught up with financials? It is not a good place to be with financials behind so much. Jim: yes, we will. Amanda explained why the accountant is behind due to bank change and moving to ACH payments and anticipates her to catch up soon.

<i>Motion to approve June minutes</i>	Vince Cullota
<i>Second</i>	Steve Carne

All in favor

Motion **Passed** ▾

Old Business

- No updates

New Business

- Sales & Marketing Director Position Update:
Adam Workman is the new hire and starts on December 2nd, 2024
- Potential Winter Event in Partnership with Howard Community College Athletics Department:
 - Amanda and Denisa toured the new building with Mike, the athletic director
 - Basketball Cup in the winter 2025
 - Amanda proposed VHC and Howard Chamber coming together and put on an event at the complex to let the community and tour the building in February
- Hotel Tax: Requesting legislation for a 1 percent increase and for it to be allocated 100% to Tourism
 - A portion of the tax is split between VHC and EDA
 - Amanda in conversation with Senator Guzzone's office and hopes to move forward to a bill
 - EDA is ok for VHC to keep the 1% and not split it
 - The email went out to all the hotels about this
 - Jayquin asked if any of the hotels responded to this email about it. Amanda: not a lot of response but no push back or concerns that we know of
 - The bill has support from hoteliers
 - Chuck: It's being done because VHC is maxed out—the intent is to give us a headspace.
 - Tricia: this will help us to market more
 - Adam: is there anything specific we want to do with the tax money
 - Amanda: we try to keep it broad so we can use it for multiple things
 - Adam: what is the more important thing we want to do with additional funding
 - Chuck: mainly to keep the talent
 - Tricia: it would be ideal to spread out concerts and events so that we don't have so many blank times, marketing
- Legislative Session Preview
 - State Tourism Budget

- Same thing - asking to fully fund the governor's line for the tourism budget.
- Other Legislation Impacting the Hospitality Industry
 - Tip credit is back
 - Tricia: thank you to Amanda for bringing all these organizations together so we don't all work in silos but rather as a community

- Maryland Tourism Day in Annapolis (February 14, 2025)

Strategic Plan Status Report

Save the Dates

- Small Business Saturday, November 30th, approximately 10:00 am - 12:30 pm:
in Ellicott City's Historic District and Savage Mill
- Tourism Annual Holiday Open House and Ellicott City Partnership's Annual Holiday Tree Lighting:
Friday, December 6th, approximately 4:00 - 6:00 pm:
- Tourism Day in Annapolis (shuttle provided): February 14, 2025, 7:00 am - 3:00 pm

Next Board Meeting(s)

- Tuesday, January 28, 2025, 8:30 - 10:00 AM, Location TBD
- Tuesday, March 25, 2025, 8:30 - 10:00 AM, Location TBD
- Tuesday, May 27, 2025, 8:30 - 10:00 AM, Location TB

Create a cheat sheet for acronyms for industry organizations.

Adjourn:

10:18 am