



## MINUTES

**Date/Time: Thursday, September 16 (3:30pm)  
Residence Inn Downtown – 40 Louis Street NW**

### **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: Kyle Holst, KCHA President

Andrew White – GM. Property opened February 16, 2021 w/ 147 rooms with a variety of rooms and 13 floors. Wahlburgers and Social Misfits restaurants opening on the main level.

Approval of August 2021 Minutes: Motion – Liz | Second - Melissa

Approval of August 2021 Financial Report: 7/31-8/31 – Balance: \$7868.43. \$2000 of invoices outstanding for the golf outing still. Motion - Liz | Second - Melissa

### Presentations

- Carl Fiorenzo, Equipment International (231-760-3049 | carl@equipment-international.com) – Around since 1964, third generation owner (home office in Chicago, with large presence in West Michigan (Wayland)). Institutional and industrial laundry equipment. They'll offer a free inspection, assessment and provide report for member property management. Also provided information about the Ozone Laundry Solutions which reduces hot water use by up to 90% and guaranteed sanitization approved by CDC for saving energy cost and 50% reduction in linen replacement. Members can try this system at no cost, installation is free, utilize for 30-60-90 days and it will be removed (also at no cost) if you're not satisfied.

### Monthly Reports

- Experience Grand Rapids – Kelly Messerly
  - ArtPrize guides sent to hotels, additional are available through the hub.
  - CVB rack cards available at the Brewsader program and other programs.
  - CraftPass app is still active through the end of October.
  - Restaurant Week: November 5-13 (registration ends Sept. 26)
  - Promoting fall color tours and outdoor recreation.
- Grand Rapids Diversity & Inclusion – Angela has taken a position out west, the CVB will look to fill this vacancy perhaps in early 2022.
- West Michigan Sports Commission – Katy sent the following information:
  - Jr. Gold Bowling lead is in Partnernet. I've had 5 hotels respond so far and we need hundreds of rooms in Grand Rapids. A lead was sent out in 2019, but we need hotels to redo it as some things have changed. If a hotel agrees to everything they're asking for, I encourage them to submit a rate for just athlete rooms as staff won't be at every hotel.
  - I'm meeting with 200x85 (Western Michigan Invite) hockey tournament. They struggled finding hotel rooms and had to move divisions all the way to Brighton in order to find places for their teams. I know the rebate is an issue, so we're going to talk about that, but if there's anything else, please let me know.
  - WMSC Golf Outing is October 11<sup>th</sup> at Thousand Oaks – info on westmisports.com. Also looking for raffle

- donations, contact Katy if you can donate items.
  - Encourage people to check partnetnet as I've seen terrible responses from hotels recently. I understand it's because of staffing changes or shortages, but I'd hate for people to miss out on business.
  - 4-5 new USSSA BATL baseball tournament coming to Meijer Sports Complex for 2022. They have a different housing person, so leads will be coming out soon for those events.
- West Michigan Tourist Association – NA
- Women in Hospitality Leadership-Grand Rapids – Liz: Looking to fill 2 open board positions (treasurer, event/outreach) and getting set for 2022.
- Grand Valley State University / MC4T – Patty sent the following report:
  - Adopt a Bed fall bed cleaning (of eight parks in downtown) - Saturday, October 16 (8:30am - 3:30pm - different parks at different times). We are reaching out to organizations who had beds in 2019 to see if they are interested. We will have students assigned to every bed too and will plan on a fall clean up/planting, and late April clean-up/planting with those individuals/organizations interested. GR Pks/Rec will maintain the beds in summer. All eight beds have irrigation. No cost to participate (funded by MC4T).
  - 2. MC4T - 2 of the 7 "30 Days of Giving" events are done! Just got back from the UP where we were able to complete events in both the sun and rain. GR HTM professionals are represented in all of the events this year - thank you! 240 volunteers for all seven events. First media: <https://www.uppermichiganssource.com/2021/09/14/michigan-cares-tourism-repairs-facilities-bond-falls/>
  - 3. We are sorry to hear about the poor showing for the job fair, it's what we are hearing all over the state. As such, in an effort to try to support a long term solution, we've been working on a promotions video to attract young people to the industry. Visit Detroit has been working with us (GVSU) all summer. We tied in Experience GR and TC Tourism too with 18 video clips from various tourism organizations around the state. The draft is coming out soon and we'd love to share it with KCHA. It will be shared at PMGC21 in Nov too. The goal was to have one hip and relevant video to encourage 16-25 year olds into the industry. Ideally, we hope all CVBs and tourism organizations will share this on their social sites, with email databases, local schools, buy some targeted ads, etc. Visit Detroit is writing a marketing plan for the video/digital campaign we invite others to do too. If we use this grass roots approach to unifying an exciting message to this market, we hope it will generate interest. If it could be played in schools for career days (it has all elements of the industry represented from across the state), etc.
- Ferris State University – Kaky: Back in school. "Hospitality Industry Intersection" trying to help meetings with student organizations and industry reps get their names and faces in front of students to help with employment situations.
- Michigan Hospitality Educators Alliance – NA
- Michigan Cares for Tourism – See above.
- Putting for Pineapples Golf Outing Recap – 2022 date set for second Monday of June back at Sunnybrook. Shooting for 18-22 teams again. \$2000 in invoices still coming in.
- KCHA Job Fair Recap - Kyle: 45 of 52 businesses (all facets of the tourism industry) showed up. 1000 jobs to fill collectively. Only about 60 people attended. About 5 walked out with a job. Everyone had a 10x10 booth for display set up with an interview space next to it. Experience Grand Rapids spent a considerable amount to pull this off, and DeVos donated space, parking and covered all set up expenses, FSU helped with registration.

#### Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Thursday, October 21 – KCHA Membership Meeting (Location TBA)
- November 2-4 – Pure Michigan Governor's Conference (Detroit)
- Thursday, November 18 – KCHA Membership Meeting (Location TBA)
- December TBA – KCHA Holiday Gathering @ Thousand Oaks (Oak Leaf Lounge). Date to be announced.

#### Round Table Discussion

- Chris @ Social Misfits opening on the lower level of the Residence Inn Downtown. Concept is waffles, coffee and

cocktails (with a Washington DC consultant). Will open 7am-11pm with room service at the hotel and eventually catering. Hopefully fall opening. 87 seats with a patio area.

- Dave Lorenz at Travel Michigan –
- AHC reopening Rendezvous soon in the Amway.
- The Plaza (formerly the Crowne Plaza) will be renovated in 2022 into a Sheraton.
- Melissa introduced Erin the intern for GR Wine Festival with volunteers and groups, sized 25 or more (with 21+ of age) to help pouring wine, beer. Festival: Friday, November 19 and Saturday, November 20.
- Dave Lorenz @ Travel Michigan: Things are getting better every day. Travel trends vary, based on comfort level. Fiscal year starts October 1, operating on \$15 million (before COVID \$36 million). Hopefully things on the budget front will improve soon. Next two years will be our most difficult as Michiganders are staying close to home during the pandemic but as things change people will move outside the state more frequently. Canadian border hopefully will open about February, with more international travel returning. Grand Rapids has been to the hardest hit area in the state when it comes to recovery. Moods are improving, events are coming back (like ArtPrize). Nov. 2-4 is the Pure Michigan Conference on Tourism will be at Motor City Casino. Registration opens this week, registration caps at 400.

Adjournment: Motion – Liz | Second: Melissa

**Kent County Hospitality Association**  
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**[www.KentCountyHospitality.org](http://www.KentCountyHospitality.org)**  
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