



A G E N D A

**Thursday, May 18, 2023 (3:30pm)
GVSU Downtown Campus @ DeVos Center (DEV107D)**

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

Approval of April 2023 Annual Meeting Minutes (Approved: Jane | Second: Kristi)

Financial Report – David Jibson, KCHA Treasurer (MTD: \$4400 | End \$4500)

Featured Topic: Cannabis Tourism Education – Landon Bartley, West Michigan Cannabis Guild and John Lipford, GVSU

- John Lipford is a professor passionate about cannabis tourism and how it can affect MI when it comes to being a destination. He teaches the Cannabis Tourism Course at GVSU- Cannabis Tourism, 3 courses. History, regulations, responsible cannabis... Can receive a certificate and also can go for a minor. Largest college in the US for a minor degree for this. (616-331-8827 (office), 616-780-7129 (cell), lipfordj@gvsu.edu).
- Landon Bartley: City Planner for GR; Created the 2008 Ordinance to allow home grow and that is how 10 years later he came about his new role being on the Cannabis Guild. Worked with the City and over 2 years talked to a lot of residence and came up with an ordinance to allow the first cannabis stores in about 2020. Left the city and started his own business on difficult land uses, ironically leading him back to the cannabis to the private side of funding and getting it moving. Now the President of the WM Cannabis guild. This has individual and business members across 17 counties in West Michigan (WM), about 33% of all cannabis licenses come from this. So, there is a lot of representation in WM. Started as a political org. and now has stepped into more of an advocate role for reasonable treatment of the industry. He looks at cannabis tourism and how it can benefit WM and also moved into networking and businesses to help them do better business together. (president@wmcannabis.org).
- John: Stats on how it has grown in WM and how the municipalities have accepted it in the past few years!
 - 2020-360, \$341 mill and 6% of municipalities opting in to adult use can
 - 2022- has grown from 6% to 22% in 2 years alone!
- How do we treat this new industry?
 - Always can look west... they were the first to incorporate this into their hospitality market
 - 2011-2015 Cannabis presents #5,100 rooms with a 2.5% increase revenue increased by 11% in Colorado alone!
- So how can we help and get involved?
 - Looking for people who are motivated with it being in West Michigan. Looking at cost for it V Alcohol It's not 7.50/\$1 but its \$3.50/\$1.
 - Looking at Vegas one of the problems is that States are legalizing it but there is nowhere to do it.
 - Nowhere to go to lawfully use it. They buy it but have nowhere to use it.
 - No private residence to lawfully use; so, we are essentially forcing them to break a law to use a legal product

- How to change this problem
 - By creating designated consumption lounges. It's like a bar. Here is the area to take part in cannabis if you do not want it in the rooms yet. Ann Arbor has potentially 28 areas to do this for example in Michigan.
 - Grand Rapids is not on board yet to have the lounges or designated areas. There are ordinances that need to pass in order to get us there. We can't even host cannabis themed consumption events without proper permits.
- An example of how this is an unfortunate grey area is the MI smoking ban.
 - MI Smoking Ban: There is a guest here from Oregon with a medical card and would like to use in his room; he was allowed to if he paid the \$200 cleaning fee. But we do not charge for a service animal. If we charge it would be disability discrimination; is that fair to him?
- What about the smoking ban?
 - According to the Attorney General: Cannot include cannabis in your blanket ban, no smoking tobacco and no smoking cannabis, it has to be separate because the smoking ban only covers tobacco and not cannabis. So for the Cannabis Ban in GR it does apply to all including edibles. From there we dive deeper and ask about common areas or rooms and the rules and ordinances for that.
- MI is now the #1 state to camp in; can they use cannabis?
 - Yes, they can but it has to be done in the room where they are sleeping or tent or camper etc.
 - You cannot prohibit it in rooms but you can in public areas when camping
 - There is a proposed change that wherever you can smoke cigarettes, you can smoke cannabis
 - It will be open to public comment soon and that is where the industry becomes involved!
- What about sanctioned events with permits?
 - You do not need a temp event license to permit consumption unless sales are taking place. So you can host an educational event without a permit unless you are selling.
 - If you're hosting an unlicensed event there can be a citation to your company.
 - Cannabis consumption cannot be in public but you can take steps to make it private with a lounge or area designated to it. It could be enclosed but open air that is allowed as the same as cigarette's.
- The Bottom Line:
 - People are going to use it regardless, we do not want to lose guests over it. There are specific sites popping up that are cannabis friendly like: Budandbreakfast.com and Highbnb.com
- The Facts:
 - Did a study with Michigan and found people doing it regardless and they took time to educate on how to safely do it. What did they want?
 - 2021: What do you want to see in Mi marketplace someday?
 - Cannabash in Muskegon in July
 - They wanted cannabis friendly lodging
 - More Cannabis themed events
- How to educate:
 - Having a handout is a much easier way to communicate those laws and guidelines
 - Would you be willing to hand this out and advertise this as a company if it existed from companies. Experience GR has created a category for cannabis tourism.
 - Train your staff- Train them on people who are having bad experiences with it; new to it, they are going to not be well, not in trouble but need some attention and care maybe more than someone who is experienced.
- When will it be here?
 - It is already here.

- Detroit Free Press; April 30th about cannabis tourism in MI; has its own Wikipedia page
- What if a guest or vendor brings it in?
 - Are you liable if a guest wants it distributed; it is a gift, you can gift cannabis to guests as an amenity. If a guest wants to they should do it in a discreet box so the staff is not liable because they do not open the boxes.
- You can look at this in a really progressive way or not
 - There is going to be a guide expected to be finished by the end of the summer about “Friendly Business to Cannabis to downtown GR”
- Look at the following for examples:
 - Arizona Clarendale Hotel and Spa: very cannabis friendly
 - Air cleaners to help with that
 - Denver
 - California: Desert Hot Springs
 - NY is up and coming and Copper house in Detroit-Black and Queer owned
 - Start to infuse cannabis into where you do alcohol, Cannabis has a wellness component
 - Do not see alcohol as a drug; do not want people cross fading
- QUESTIONS:
 - Nick Remes: What do you need to do this for an event?
 - Permit would not apply to GR because it would be city by city
 - Event Planner: Event Organizer License \$5,000 for each event you have a temp event permit that is \$500. Needs to be changed 120 days prior
 - Somebody checking for safety and age, etc.
 - What if it is education and not consumption advertised?
 - Everything but the weed packages:
 - Vape pens, grinders, etc. short of providing them with the weed
 - Collaboration with the industry
 - Begin to talk about “How to help each other” with local retailers
 - Carly: Marketing EXGR- How to showcase this Other than putting out education! What role would an EXGR have in this?
 - Any creative way to halt stigma and misinformation: we don't have an entire degree for alcohol consumption and we should. For decades misinformed. We are teaching about safe use but also on the societal harms because of cannabis prohibition. What you can do not what you can't do.
 - There is a problem because we can't sell and distribute to other states and there are too many cannabis growers for MI without getting our state and other states on board!
 - Some ways people are trying to get their business out there; partnering with restaurants, gambling experience based on what you buy. They are looking for partnerships and inclusions
- How it is evolving:
 - Tours are going to become a big thing
 - INDIGROW
 - Similar to a wine tour
 - Owned by a private company
 - GR City commission, oh this would be a good tourism draw.
 - Microbusiness
 - Designated consumption lounge
 - California full out infusions
 - Colorado has 7 course meals

- Of those cities that are licensed
- In MI it has to be at somebodies' house
- Fields Cannery in Muskegon
- 4 things on separate properties
- Community Impacts
- Permit from the DEA to grow Hemp
- Doesn't have the THC in it
- Can gift cannabis if you wanted to
- Not accessible to minors; gift it smartly and wisely
- If this law goes through you can set up full blown consumption areas; as long as it is not in public view
- If they allow consumption lounges then the hotels could open up to it

Monthly Reports

- Experience Grand Rapids: Launching new promotion flights of flavor: one month out... Create Flights, ice cream, cupcake, cookie, oysters, open to all of our partners 25 launching June 21st. Bring it to GR program; encourages local to help us bring conventions to GR MRLA Stars of the Industry Open right now for applications.
- Grand Rapids Diversity & Inclusion (Jordoun): Completed resident survey to get opinions on hospitality overall; May 5 to October 2 there is literally something going on every weekend in Grand Rapids. EXGR oversees hospitality academy, rebranded situation. 16 students graduating from that program next week Wednesday. Goal is to continuously to expand. Reimagining it and taking back the narrative on what the hospitality industry is. Showing them that it is a lot more. Moving to work with the WMSC moving forward. What would this committee like to be trained on? Would love to do some trainings. "All money is green". Have been coming up a lot more often. ArtPrize is a huge melting pot – how do we ask the appropriate questions to accommodate them?
- West Michigan Sports Commission: Last Week: attended sports symposium; went very well. Golf outing June 12
- West Michigan Tourist Association: No update
- Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association: Stars of the Industry Nominations are open here is the link <https://www.mrla.org/stars.html>
- Women in Hospitality Leadership-Grand Rapids: Annual Conference November 15 in Grand Rapids
- Grand Valley State University: No update
- Ferris State University: No update
- Michigan Cares for Tourism: September in the Porkies (UP)

Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Thursday, May 18 – Monthly Membership Meeting @ GVSU (Topic: Cannabis Tourism)
- Monday, June 12 – West Michigan Sports Commission Golf Outing
- Thursday, June 15 – Monthly Membership Meeting (Location TBD)
- Friday, June 16 – Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association Golf Outing
- June 11 Canopy is hosting Drag Brunch- 2 levels-9 performers working with MI Drag Brunch

Round Table Discussion

Adjournment

Kent County Hospitality Association
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www.KentCountyHospitality.org
www.facebook.com/groups/KentCountyHospitality