



## MINUTES

**Date/Time: Thursday, October 17, 2024 – 3:30pm**

**Location: ZOOM (Video available for viewing, upon request)**

### **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: Kristy Jack, KCHA Vice President

- Virtual Attendance: Kristy Jack, Mollee Pifer, Nick Nerbonne, Alyssa Bey, Jenny Lashuay, Jaylyn McCloy, Todd Kissel, Qi'Shaun Coyle, Dianna Stampfler

Approval of September 2024 Meeting minutes (Tabled)

Treasurer's Report & Membership Report – David Jibson, KCHA Treasurer (Tabled)

Monthly Discussion: KCHA 2025 and Beyond...

- Nick Nerbonne, Travel Michigan – Purpose is listen to speakers and colleagues in the industry, opportunity to connect with people in Kent County. Survey – possibly look at a different time (lunch, 5pm). TC Ad Club does a pre-registered lunch (not sure about billing) with a speaker each month.
  - Kristy: We have surveyed in the past, but can do so again to see if there is interest to change.
- Jenny Lashuay, BattleGR – Asked about past attendance. Prefers in person. Willing to host a meeting. Lunch meetings are well attended, catered could be done at BattleGR. Most don't mind paying \$15-\$20.
  - Dianna: Pre-covid was 20-30 on average. Dwindled to less than 15. Most are those industry leaders to give reports but very low hotelier attendees. Membership is for a PROPERTY with no limits on the # of people who can attend. Suggest getting names/emails for restaurant GMs and invite to future meetings. Traditionally we've moved meetings around to different venues, with themes/topics.
- Jaylyn McCloy, Experience GR – Topics for younger demographics: AI, Generational Marketing & Engagement, Workforce Development. Possible pane discussions.
- Mollee Pifer – 3:30 is shift change for restaurants, which would make that meeting time difficult for them. Also hotel check in.
- Dianna Stampfler, KCHA – If we did a lunch meeting, would people pay? Or a place to bring one in?
  - Jaylyn – Stockbridge Association does a lunch meeting with about 40 people. Some restaurants host and would cover fees or could get a sponsor. Not all employers will cover meals.
- Dianna – Mentorship with non-salary younger staff to network with longstanding industry leaders. What makes it of value to them to invest the time to be there.
- Ed Wilson, Country Inn & Suites (Via email) – Bringing in key speakers of interest to GMs – Fire, EMS, EcoLab, Sysco/Gordon, Pest Control, DEA
- Kristy – Go to a cannabis growing or retail facility (field trip) to learn how it is grown, harvested, etc. That meeting a few years ago was very well attended.
- Jenny – Lawyer to talk about all the upcoming changes to employment, minimum wage, sick leave, etc. Also recruiting and retention. Team building culture.
  - Dianna – We get some updates from MRLA at the monthly meetings. Possibly to get a focused speaker.
- Dianna – Accessibility update with Experience GR. GR Airport has a new Sensory Room.
- Jenny – Possible Happy Hour meetings or social for networking (with a 4:30 start time)

- Jaylyn – Holiday Party possible raffle (tickets to a stage show, swag bag, etc).
  - Dianna – Collection for Ronald McDonald House

#### Objectives:

- Bring in more speakers
- The in-person value of networking
- Send out survey about date/time and frequency.
  - Should we look at lunchtime meetings, would people pay?
  - Happy Hour timeframe meetings – would people dedicate time outside of the workday?
  - Should we mix up the schedule with morning, afternoon, evening?
- Upcoming Meeting Topic Ideas
  - Cannabis Tourism (update) – visit a agricultural or retail venue
  - Generational Marketing (Mentorship) – panel led by Jaylyn
  - Staffing & Workforce Development (Training, Housing, Pay, Opportunities)
  - New Development
  - Accessibility in GR (including Autism Friendly Certified Destinations – TC, Crystal Mountain)
    - Grand Rapids Airport Sensory (Possible meeting location)
  - Equity & Inclusion in Hospitality
  - AI in Hospitality / Tourism
  - Stress Management
  - Work-Life Balance
  - Sick Leave, OT, Minimum Wage
  - Teambuilding Culture – Staff Retention
- Membership Drive
  - Restaurants, Attractions, Service Providers
  - Attracting more students for mentorship

#### Monthly Reports

- Experience Grand Rapids (Jaylyn) –
  - Savor & Soar (Oct 29) opportunities are still available. This is a dinner celebration with the Hospitality Academy at Ottawa Hills to learn more about the industry. Registration closes Oct 19.
    - Contact Qi'Shaun Coyle with questions.
  - Restaurant Week November 1-9. Increased number of restaurants, menus posting soon.
- Grand Rapids Diversity & Inclusion – No Report
- West Michigan Sports Commission (Alyssa) –
  - Didn't win any NCAA Championships unfortunately, Connor & Katy will try again for next season.
  - Post season bids are starting so a lot in SimpleView
  - Friday, October 11 – groundbreaking at Meijer Sports Complex Phase II – starting on the softball fields.
- West Michigan Tourist Association – No Report
- Travel Michigan – MEDC – No Report
- Women in Hospitality Leadership-Grand Rapids – Leadership Conference is November 20 in GR. Registration is open. Mollee will be serving as part of the Tip Jar Foundation.
- Grand Valley State University – GVSU / MC4T Volunteer Clean Up Event at Michigan Veterans Home in GR on Friday, October 25. Students, faculty, alumni and industry.
- Ferris State University – No Report
- Grand Rapids Community College – No Report
- Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association (Dianna) – Stars of the Industry Awards event November 7 at St. John's Resort in Plymouth
- Michigan Cares for Tourism (Dianna) – Fall 2025 (Location to be announced in Q1 of 2025)

#### Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Friday, October 25 – MC4T & GVSU Volunteer event at the Grand Rapids Veterans Home
- Tuesday, October 29 – Savor & Soar with Hospitality Academy
- November 1-9 – 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Restaurant Week Grand Rapids
- Wednesday, November 6 – Experience Grand Rapids Fall Partner Event (Accessible Tourism) @ Goei Center
- Thursday, November 7 – Stars of the Industry Awards presented by MRLA @ St. John's Resort, Plymouth

- Wednesday, November 20 – Women in Hospitality Leadership Conference @ JW Marriott ([www.wihlcon.com](http://www.wihlcon.com))
- Thursday, November 21 – Cheers for Charity benefitting Hospice of Michigan @ DeVos Place
- Friday, November 22 & Saturday, November 23 – GR International Wine, Beer & Food Festival @ DeVos Place
- Thursday, December 5 – KCHA Holiday Part at Max's South Seas Hideaway
- Thursday, January 16 – 2025 KCHA Annual Meeting at Sheraton Grand Rapids Airport

Round Table Discussion

Board Nominations Open. President & Secretary positions are open. <https://forms.gle/uMJksqiBD28LMvH86>

Adjournment

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