



MINUTES

Date/Time: Thursday, January 16

Location: Sheraton Grand Rapids Airport - 5700 28th St SE

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 September 2024 and October 2024 minutes **Motion: Kaky Wolfer, Second: Ed Wilson**

Treasurer's Report & Membership Report – Lisa Calhoun, KCHA President

December starting \$3,177; December ending \$3,126. Today: \$5,677

- New & Returning Members:
 - Fairfield Inn & Suites Grand Rapids North
 - NSP Plumbing
 - Max's South Seas Hideaway
 - Postma Pest Control
 - Prince Conference Center
 - The BlueJay Hotel
 - The Finnley Hotel

Looking Ahead: Goals for 2025 and Beyond...

- Hospitality Talent Council/MI Career Quest – **Several hotels, Experience Grand Rapids and Michigan Works. Lisa is involved with MI Career Quest for an event at DeVos this spring (food manufacturing, food production, restaurant groups) to highlight jobs to middle and high schoolers. GFS or Sysco could be part of this. Date TBA.**
- Membership Survey Results (Comments still being accepted) – **Lisa reported on results received, most indicate to keep on Thursday afternoons, with a couple more social networking during the year.**
- Upcoming Meeting Topic Ideas (copied from October minutes)
 - Cannabis Tourism (update) – visit an agricultural or retail venue
 - Generational Marketing & Employment (Mentorship). **Jaylyn will be working on a panel.**
 - Workforce Development (Training, Housing, Pay, Opportunities). **Career Quest (see above)**
 - 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. **Amy Dorey from FSU will do a session on this coming up in May.**
 - Stress Management
 - Work-Life Balance
 - Meeting speakers geared toward hoteliers – Fire, EMS, EcoLab, Sysco/Gordon, Pest Control, DEA
 - Sick Leave, OT, Minimum Wage

- Teambuilding Culture – Staff Retention
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- Membership Drive
 - Restaurants, Attractions, Service Providers
 - Attracting more students or newly graduated for mentorship opportunities.
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- Added amenities on the website – check your listing
 - Make sure all full-service member hotels have restaurants listed on website
 - Need contact info for restaurant GMs to add to the membership list

Monthly Reports

- Experience Grand Rapids – Jaylyn:
 - Attraction Digital Pass to experience the local venues so the staff is aware of what is going on to share info with guests.
 - Annual Tourism Forum: Wednesday March 5 at FMG (3:30-6).
 - Toast the Town – Thursday, May 15 (luncheon).
 - Accessibility: Wheel the World to be destination certified. More information coming soon including a website landing page. Through 2025 Disability Advocates reviews of properties.
 - Hotel Partners add packages to HotelNet which is shared with Travel Michigan as well.
- Grand Rapids Diversity & Inclusion – No Update
- West Michigan Sports Commission - ____
 - Article about 2024 numbers. \$90.8 million economic impact largest ever.
 - Winter Games ramping up in February. UP and LP with new
 - September 3 – Golf Outing @ Thornapple
 - World Ice Fishing in Lakeview in Mid-February with teams across the country.
- West Michigan Tourist Association – No Update
- Women in Hospitality Leadership-Grand Rapids – No Update
- Grand Valley State University – No Update
- Ferris State University – Kaky:
 - School resumed. Group going to X-Games in Colorado with 8-9 students to help out. Sending a marketing team from FSU to help document.
 - Career Fair is February 13. If anyone is interested in being there to talk to students, contact Kaky. This is free to participate. Put together by students in the Event Planning Class as a real-world experience. Two local tech centers are coming to the event to learn about opportunities and as a recruitment opportunity for the college program. Amy Dorey will do tech / AI programming breakouts as part of the event. Mock Interviews are also held to help students prepare for careers. LinkedIn profiles, resume building, headshots and other programs are included. Resorts, attractions, food service and others are participating.
- Grand Rapids Community College – No Update
- Pure Michigan (MEDC) – Nick
 - Education of staff is the key to accessibility issues.
 - Winter Campaign is underway, this is a great winter season. Thousands of businesses around northern Michigan and the UP that depend on snow.
 - Slow Travel is also being introduced for 2025. Slowing down to have a more memorable travel experience, not a sun-up-to-sun-down itinerary but find time to experience and relax. Connecting with agritourism and culinary tourism, check out the natural resources, products of the land (wineries, breweries and other producers).
 - Satellite Media Tour. Host talks about themes and send digitally to TV news stations around the country.
 - Make sure your property is listed on Michigan.org – it is free. Also add events relevant for travelers, including hotel packages.
 - Pure Michigan Tourism Conference (April in Novi) registration opens soon.
- Michigan Restaurant & Lodging Association
 - Stars of the Industry of Award Nominations Open now through MRLA. Will now be presented as part of the Pure Michigan Tourism Conference in April.
 - Legislative Day was held last week focused on the Tipped Wages issue. Info is on MRLA's website.
- Michigan Cares for Tourism – Dianna & Nick
 - Monday, September 15 at Tawas State Park. Networking, volunteering and a 100% give-back program.

Board of Directors Vote (2025-2027) – **President & Secretary positions. No contest, so the existing board will stand.**

Upcoming Meetings & Events

- January 10 to March 2 – World of Winter
- Thursday, February 20 – Monthly Membership Meeting @ Grand Rapids African American Museum & Archives
- Wednesday, March 5 – Annual Experience Grand Rapids Tourism Forum (3:30-6, Frederik Meijer Gardens)
- Thursday, March 20 – Monthly Membership Meeting – Focus on Gen Z Travelers & Employees
- Tuesday, April 15 to Thursday, April 17 – Pure Michigan Tourism Conference, Novi (No Monthly Meeting)
- Thursday, May 15 – Experience Grand Rapids Toast the Town Luncheon
- Thursday, May 15 – The BlueJay Hotel – AI in the Hospitality Industry
- Thursday, June 19 – BattleGR

Round Table Discussion

Adjournment: 4:19pm

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