

Executive Directors Report November 2016

Light Up Your Holidays Events (November)

Tree Lighting in Monument Square: The Tree Lighting in Monument Square (Friday, November 25th) was a success despite the soggy weather. Hood Eggnog brought their giant snow globe and adults and kids alike had a blast having their photos taken inside. Hood also handed out free eggnog samples to event attendees, which was an effort to help promote their new line of holiday flavors. Additionally, we had the Portland Public Library Bookmobile on-site and, as usual, Rick Charette brought joy to event revelers young and old. The VIP area received a huge upgrade this year, with its new location directly in front of the stage, as well as free hot cocoa for VIPs and a visit from Rick & Santa after the show. The event was a huge success in a large part due to our sponsors: Hood Eggnog, MEMIC and Machias Savings bank. The event team, which included Portland Downtown staff, the Portland Downtown Events Committee, Sally Newhall of Sea Glass Events, our Downtown Public Works Crew, electrician Dan Wood, ShowDawg Security and the Portland Police Department made for smooth sailing. I would like to give a special thank you to Robyn Violette and Denine Leeman who braved the weather to attend the event. Robyn was a rock star helping behind the scenes and handing our cocoa to our VIPs. WMTW live streamed the entire event and we had excellent media coverage for the event before and after the event. Portland Press Herald and the Forecaster did a nice job with photo galleries and short editorials.

Shop For A Cause: Shop for A Cause Day (Saturday, November 26th) was a crisp but sunny day and shoppers were everywhere! This year, we added bright green stickers with the hashtag #sfac, which merchants could distribute to those who made purchases. The stickers would act as a badge of honor, similar to an “I voted” sticker. We had fantastic media coverage for this event – with clips on Channel 8 and Channel 6, as well as a segment on Maine Life (clip aired on the Maine Life FB page). Additionally, we had a lot of print media coverage. Milestone Foundation is this year’s beneficiary and Portland Downtown staff is hard at work collecting the contributions from merchants so that we can announce the total amount raised. This year, Machias Savings Bank is our partner in this event, adding an additional \$2,000 in supplies for Milestone on top of what we raise through merchant donations. Stay tuned for the final tally!

Holiday Window Display Contest: The holiday window display contest kicked off on the night of the Tree Lighting and winners will be announced in December. This year, we had about 50 participants, which was up from last year. In fact, all of our holiday events had more businesses participating as compared to last year. The Window Display Contest was reinstated by the Merchant Committee last year and has been deemed a success by merchants and staff alike. This year we have several \$1,000 ad packages for the winners, which were donated by Portland Press Herald, Convention & Visitor's Bureau and Maine Magazine.

Elfternoon Lunchtime Shopping: The first in a series of three lunchtime shopping events kicked off on Wednesday, November 30th. We had a few more than 30 participating this year, our second year of Elfternoon. Feedback from participants is that year two is that the event is much improved and that they are seeing shoppers come in specifically for the event. The final two events will occur in December and I will have a full report for you in January.

Advocacy Letters

Parking & Transportation: After the kick-off meeting on October 24th, we were notified that the City has put together an RFP for the marketing campaign. The committee will be receiving a draft RFP, which we will be asked to comment on before it is released. Future plans and/or meetings have yet to be communicated to the larger group. Jessica Grondin, Public Information Officer at City of Portland, remains the lead on the project.

Sound Advocacy: The Sound Oversight Committee now has a regularly scheduled meeting on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 5:00pm. The public is welcomed to attend and offer public comment. A list of all sound complaints in the City is sent out with the agenda and discussed at each meeting, regardless of whether the complaint was 'verified' or triggered the 92 dbl 'limit'.

Committee Cliff Notes

Merchant: The Merchant Committee was visited by DCS committee chair Josh Benthien to receive updates on the panhandling discussion, which has been moved to an ad hoc committee of DCS for further review. Updates on street vendor issues and holiday events were also on the agenda.

Events: The events committee met twice in November to stay on top of LUYH event planning. The committee received updates from staff and ensured that details were in place to execute successful events.

Marketing: Discussions focused on upcoming holiday events.

NLOC: Reviewed calls for service and liquor license renewals.

District & Community Services: Topics included; downtown tree planting and replacement, panhandling, and the benchmarking ordinance (energy tracking). Amy Geren presented her monthly DEL report, which included a discussion around graffiti removal and improved SSA data collection.

Parking & Transportation: The committee welcomed two guest speakers from the City of Portland: Jeremiah Bartlett, Transportation Systems Engineer, and Bruce Hyman, Transportation Program manager. Bruce & Jeremiah provided helpful updates and answered questions from attendees.

Notes of interest

Attended the **Portland Economic Development Stakeholder's Committee** meeting at City Hall, met with Mike Murray to discuss the creation of a banner policy, met with the **Sound Oversight Committee** to strategize and discuss the upcoming meeting at City Hall, had coffee with new board member Matt Vieth, attended **TedX Dissonance** at the State Theatre, met with Erik Urbanek to review the Treasurer's report, attended **MANP** workshop with Denine in Freeport, interview with Erin Ovalle for **MaineLife**, met with parking consultant (Fort Hill Infrastructure), met with **DCS Committee** chairs to discuss 2017 goals, met with **Merchant Committee** chairs to discuss 2017 goals, attended Sound Oversight Committee at City Hall, attended **Public Services Meeting** at 55 Portland Street, met with Belinda Ray, Ed Suslovic and Denine Leeman about sound issues, took the Tree Crew to lunch at Dutch's, met with **Pinecone & Chickadee** owners to discuss relocating Picnic event, and executed successful LUYH events.