



Merchants Meeting
September 1, 2016 at 8:30am
Westin Portland Harborview, Top of the East

Board members present: Suzie Rephan, June Usher

Others present: Marie Stewart Harmon, Matt Stone, James Dufresne, Susan Driscoll, Sandy Jones, Melissa Spoerl, Joanne Alfiero, Jean Berg, Bill Frappier, Tom Gangewer, Steve Corman, David Argitis, Vanessa Pike, Kelly Fernald, Joe Palacci

Staff present: Adam MacDonald, Taffy Eaton, Amy Geren

Minute 1. Suzie called the meeting to order and asked for introductions.

Minute 2. Summer review

- Portland Police Department (PPD) general overview:
 - David Argitis talked about PPD's heavy summer presence Downtown: there were 2 foot-patrol officer and 4 Cadets. 2016 summer didn't seem any worse than 2015 with transients. While they are unsightly, their rights must be respected as well as merchants, property owners, visitors, etc. The HOME Team is very helpful to PPD.
 - Several merchants commented on how great the Cadets were this summer. Anthony has moved on to Police Academy.
 - Panhandling is not illegal however the PPD observes "travelers" and transients for other ordinance violations. Unless it is privately owned, anyone can stay on a bench all day.
 - Call non-emergency PPD number for people in your doorway
 - Asking politely for transients to move along so you can sweep your sidewalk works
 - David Argitis said friendly conversation with them is good
 - No amplified music is allowed without a permit
 - Aggressive panhandling (yelling, following) should be reported
 - Seemed like a very busy city this summer – generally good experiences.

Minute 3. Cruise Ship season

- Bill Frappier talked about Portland Discovery tour products. Cruise passengers purchase an all-day ticket for \$40 and can get on and off at 7 locations around town. The cruise lines set the prices. Portland Discovery contracts with Royal Caribbean and Celebrity lines and only runs these tours when their ships are in port. They operate regular tours other days.
- Vanessa from CVB gave some stats:
 - September (28 ships) and October (18 ships) busiest months
 - 2016 Passengers: 102,004 Crew: 40,522 – 76 ships
 - 2017 Passengers: 117,525 Crew: 45,686 – 84 ships
 - 2015 around 100,000 (Bob Leeman)
 - From DPA two-month interview process:
 - 45% say Portland destination was important in their itinerary selection
 - top interests: Sightseeing and shopping
 - Average spend: \$100
 - Returning visitors:
 - 25% of passengers are likely to return to Portland within 5 years by cruise
 - 31% of passengers are likely to return to Portland within 5 years by other method

- Cruise visitors spend 2.8 hours in Portland
- Find full cruise schedule here: <http://www.cruiseportlandmaine.com/> -> About, Cruise Schedule
- CVB discount special for Portland Downtown members:
 - **Visitor Marketing Program:** \$100 OFF standard \$490 annual rate (PD member cost: \$390)
Includes:
 - Brochures/Flyers at Ocean Gateway Information Center and Portland Ocean Terminal
 - Business listing on responsive destination website www.visitportland.com
 - Business description in Portland's Visitor Guide
 - Business noted on walking-map
(and more!)

Minute 4. Getting ready for the holidays

- Window decorating – Jean Berg from Portland Press Herald and Sophie Sarno from Fish and Bone will Co-chair the committee. They will have a committee meeting next week – everyone is welcome.
 - Windows need to be decorated by the Tree Lighting, Nov. 25th.
 - PPH gives \$1,000 grand prize and Jean will work on other prizes.
 - Categories discussion:
 - Best overall
 - People's Choice includes a social media choice and we also put ballot boxes in participating retailers.
 - Best use of product
 - Best non-retail window
 - Most unique/original
 - Best use of lights
 - Best historically themed

Jean will take these ideas to the committee and work with Adam. Jean will see if she can get a photographer to photograph all the windows and set up a Facebook page. Hopefully we will have more than the 36 participants from 2015. Further discussion:

- Contact MECA or high school art departments to see if they could offer students to do the decorating.
- Judges should judge by December 1st
- Give large prize ribbons to winners to add to their window

Masonic Temple is thinking about having a tree decorating contest by local businesses in 2017. People bid on them then the tree is often donated to a family.

- Tree Lighting – November 25th, 5:30 – 6:30pm. The presenting sponsor is Hood and will bring a life-size snow globe to the event. Sarah Long is the host, Rick Charette back and media sponsors are lined up.
 - Suzie encourages businesses to stay open until at least 8pm
 - Looking into having speakers and screens for better visibility and sound
 - Pop-up dance performances in windows after the Tree Lighting?
- Shop for A Cause Day – Saturday November 26th. Same day as Small Business Saturday but each event bolsters the other. Suzie asked Jean whether she could ask the PPH to promote both. Discuss beneficiaries: organization must be a non-profit, based in downtown or their services and programs have an impact on downtown. Make A Wish, Good Shepherd Food Bank, Main Access Immigrant Network, Goodwill Employment, HOME Team, Salvation Army, a foster family organization. If you have a feeling about any of these, email Adam and Adam will send a survey to the Merchant group.
- Elfternon Lunchtime Shopping – Wednesday's, noon – 2pm: 11/30, 12/7 and 12/14
- Merry Madness – Thursday December 8th – Adam said Portland House of Music has been confirmed for the kick-off event. Since food was an issue last year, we are thinking about hiring B Good to cater.
- Carolers in the Old Port – high school choral groups. Sandy will call area high schools.

Minute 5. Other business:

- Matt told the group that the Titanic exhibit ends on October 23rd. All present are welcome to come in today at 12:15 for free. Dinosaurs will be the next exhibit.

Next meeting: October 6th at 9:00am, Bull Feeney's

Respectfully submitted,
Taffy Eaton, Recorder