



**Merchants Meeting**  
**November 2, 2017 at 8:30am**  
Westin Portland Harborview Hotel (Top of the East)  
157 High Street

**Board members present:** Suzie Rephan, Matt Veith

**Others present:** Jenn Ross-Boshes, Vanessa Golden, Barbara Meusile, Anne Karonis Weiss, Erin Miller, Steven Barker, Dylan Gillis, Mary Alice Scott, Jordan Simm, Stefanie Scala, Ashley Dyer, Gudrun Cobb, Denise Beck, Nancy Lawrence, Melissa Spoerl, Marie Stewart Harmon, Vanessa Pike, Orondé Cruger, Michaela McVetty, Dan Knight, Kelly Crotty, Joanne Alfiero

**Staff present:** Amy Geren, Adam MacDonald, Taffy Eaton

**Minute 1.** Suzie Rephan welcomed everyone, asked for introductions and thanked Jeff Burrell for hosting the meeting.

**Minute 2.** Review and approval of October 5, 2017 meeting minutes: A motion to approve the meeting minutes was made by Joanne Alfiero and seconded by Vanessa Pike. The vote was unanimous.

**Minute 3.** Townsquare Media, Holiday Promotional Opportunities, Benn May: “Seize the Deal” is a no-cost, flexible marketing program. Retailers sell your gift cards and get interviewed on the radio to sell your store and your offer. The base list reaches 16,000 people that will get a blast about your newly released deal. Benn works with non-profits and retail stores specifically. Townsquare Media has a budget to fit yours for any holiday marketing. There is a wide range of offerings through Seize the Deal.

**Minute 4.** Holiday 2017 event update: Adam

a. We have 90 businesses participating in Light up Your Holidays events with 19 new for 2017

b. Tree Lighting – Friday November 24<sup>th</sup>: Hood is the Presenting Sponsor, Portland Symphony Orchestra will do a pop-up brass band crowd warm-up. Amy reminded everyone that Monument Square is always smoke and tobacco free and it will be promoted that night.

c. Horse & wagon rides – free Friday, Saturday & Sunday afternoons beginning Friday November 24<sup>th</sup>

d. Shop for a Cause Day – Saturday November 25<sup>th</sup>. There are 45 stores participating, Amistad is the beneficiary and Machias Savings Bank is sponsoring. We are looking at having a tent in Post Office Park where shoppers can get a Machias Savings Bank shopping bag and list of participating businesses. The Portland Community Chorus will offer wandering entertainment throughout the day. Suzie thinks Shop for a Cause Day is a nice way of saying that retailers are giving back to the community – a local community supporting the local community.

e. Elfternoon Lunchtime Shopping – Nov 29, Dec 6, Dec 13: There are 35 participants this year. We started with 13 participants in 2015. The Press Hotel might get involved, offering free gift wrapping. Michaela McVetty offered her catering menus. Suzie said that Adam can include your menu on his “day of” email if you let him know what you will be serving each day.

f. Window Display Contest – There are 58 participating businesses this year. Judges will be from MECA or Creative Portland and Old Port Magazine. Windows need to be ready by November 24<sup>th</sup>. Judging will be done in early December.

g. Merry Madness – December 7<sup>th</sup>: We offered early bird tickets at \$15.00 and sold 560 tickets. The price is \$20.00 now. Having food available is a good idea because stores serve wine tastings. Suzie reminded everyone that alcohol cannot be taken out of the stores. Please practice responsible pouring. Adam said Portland Downtown's only requirement is to stay open until 10:00pm and offer some sort of beverage and snack. Gudrun mentioned being swamped last year and how wonderful the evening was. She had a person by the door to be sure no one left the store with wine in their glass.

Further information:

- Adam told everyone that an event kit will be delivered to each participating store with materials for each event the retailer has signed up for
- Vanessa Pike suggested having a poster size map of the Merry Madness participating stores at the kick-off event
- Amy Geren suggested services partnering with retailers (massage therapists, salon services) offering their services at retailer stores
- Portland Downtown has TV, radio and print advertising lined up. There will be a 4 page insert in the Portland Press Herald on November 16<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Minute 5. Ad hoc Committee updates**

- Street Art Vendor discussion: The committee is discussing enforcement of current Street Art Vendor regulations, increasing the requirement of pedestrian passage to 6', keeping vendors from selling the same product you do away from your store, encouraging the City to be in touch with the State about tax payments and making the Marketplace more appealing to vendors. There is some talk at the City level about extending the Festival Zone to both sides of Commercial St. Chuck Fagone, Code Enforcement Officer, has been concentrating on booth size this year. Suzie invited retailers to come to the meeting or contact the City if they have issues with vendors.
- Old Port Festival 2018 discussion: The committee is discussing making the festival a more local representation of Portland and the area. Matt stated that the committee is getting started and encouraged merchants to get in touch with their thoughts. The committee will contact the Common Ground Fair for food vendor ideas as well as Yarmouth Clam Festival. Adam is developing 2 surveys, one for downtown businesses and one for the community (public). Suzie is hoping some changes will take place in 2018 but more may take some time.

#### **Minute 6. METRO – Denise Beck**

- Distributed schedules and information on public meeting dates for Project West service (Gorham & Westbrook). There is a survey on METRO'S website [www.gpmetrobus.com](http://www.gpmetrobus.com) for this project. They hope to get lots of responses.
- Service to Brunswick started in August. Bowdoin students are coming to Portland and using evening buses too.
- Buses are free on
  - First Friday Art Walk
  - Election Day
- Suzie asked about the Hop-on Hop-off bus METRO used to run. Denise said that the cruise ships asked METRO not to run the bus anymore and the new General Manager wanted to get away from short routes. Route 8 might be brought back as a short, more frequent bus and could work for cruise passengers for \$5. METRO is improving the system all the time. Suzie mentioned that the excursion buses only work with certain cruise lines, not all of them.

**Minute 7. Other business:**

- a. Suzie mentioned that the December Merchant meeting is on December 7<sup>th</sup>, Merry Madness day. Can merchants meet on Tuesday December 5<sup>th</sup> or Wednesday December 6<sup>th</sup>? We will confirm the date change with Doug at Bull Feeney's. Suzie will try and have someone from Nappi or National Distributors talk about safe serving of alcohol.
- b. Suzie invited Orondé Cruger with Speak About It to speak about his organization at the December meeting
- c. Suzie asked whether anyone present knows anything about the club at 10 Exchange opening at 7:00 am. Nobody has that information.
- d. Matt Veith suggested we offer merchants a chance to talk about their business each month
  - a. Jenn Ross-Boshes and Vanessa Golden with **Beauty Mark**: Beauty Mark has been in Camden for 10 years and opened in the Old Port this summer at 250 Commercial Street. They offer all esthetic services and some evening hours and are very excited to be in Portland.
  - b. Nancy Lawrence with **Portmanteau**: Nancy opened the store in 1979 on Wharf St. Nancy makes everything she sells, bags, jackets, cloaks, print fabric, tapestry, canvas, waxed canvas. Charts are very popular.
  - c. Anne Karonis Weiss and Erin Miller with **SKORDO**: SKORDO is a family business at 372 Fore St and has a shop in Freeport. It is a shop for people who love to cook. They grind their own spices in Brunswick and create exclusive rubs.
  - d. Vanessa Pike mentioned free educational offerings on December 8<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 – 9:30. Sean Wilkinson with Might & Main is presenting. Register on [www.visitportland.com](http://www.visitportland.com)

**Next meeting:** Tuesday December 5<sup>th</sup> at 8:30am, Bull Feeney's

Respectfully submitted,  
Taffy Eaton, Recorder