



**Merchants Meeting**  
**December 5, 2017 at 8:30am**  
Bull Feeney's  
375 Fore Street

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

**Others present:** Max Bangs, Paula Jalbert, Ellen Kanner, Loren Coleman, Allison Armstrong, Vanessa Golden, Barbara Meusile, Mary Alice Scott, Jordan Simm, Stefanie Scala, Susan Driscoll, Gudrun Cobb, Nancy Lawrence, Marie Stewart Harmon, Dan Knight, Kelly Crotty, Kathi Shibles, Sara Brown

**Staff present:** Casey Gilbert, Taffy Eaton

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

**Minute 2.** A motion was made to approve the November 2, 2017 meeting minutes. The motion was duly seconded and the vote was unanimous.

**Minute 3.** Safe wine pouring guidelines: John McLoughlin, National Distributors

- John said that in the case of an event such as Merry Madness, which has multiple participating locations, the individual businesses do not know what other stores will be doing. The law generally dictates that it is the liability of the last person who served someone that would be the one charged if there is an incident. So, it is in the best interest of the store owner to serve a small tasting and to not serve a person who is visibly intoxicated.
- Pour 1.5 – 2 ounces, a taste. You can purchase a reusable pourer which makes the pour slower, for better control. Practice pouring with a measuring cup or a 1.5 ounce shot glass and eyeball that amount of wine in a glass so you have an idea of the level 1.5 – 2 ounces should be.
- Suzie asked him what to say if a person appears impaired and is asking for more wine. John suggested offering a non-alcoholic option or simply politely declining to pour them alcohol. If you feel someone is clearly intoxicated and leaving your store and you have concerns, please call the police.
- Anyone pouring wine in your shop must be over 21
- Customers cannot serve themselves for liability reasons
- You do not need a license or permit because you're not selling alcohol
- John recommended having a non-alcoholic option - some venues will only serve non-alcoholic beverages
- Jordan has served sparkling wine and also offers a great deal of food, which is very helpful

Casey reminded everyone that Portland Downtown has been making a concerted effort to elevate the Merry madness event to attract a savvy consumer. This year's glass has a green/chartreuse logo. We ask that stores only serve patrons with the official glass.

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

a. Tree Lighting – Friday November 24<sup>th</sup>: great weather, wonderful event, between 3,000 and 4,000 attendees. The tree was donated by a family in Westbrook.

b. Shop for a Cause Day – Saturday November 25<sup>th</sup>. Machias Savings Bank was the presenting sponsor and had a lovely kick-off event. They made a fabulous video of the event at the bank. Portland Downtown hopes to raise more than \$10,000 for Amistad, with the help of more than 50 participating merchants.

c. Elfternoon Lunchtime Shopping – Nov 29, Dec 6, Dec 13: there is a photo gallery on the Portland Downtown website. Adam will send a Wednesday morning reminder

d. Window Display Contest: there is a photo gallery on the Portland Downtown site to help encourage people to come downtown to see all the windows. Casey encouraged merchants to wander and look at other stores' windows. Facebook voting is under way and the judging panel will take place on December 13<sup>th</sup>.

e. Merry Madness – December 7<sup>th</sup>: volunteers stuffed 1,200 snack bags in 2 hours yesterday! We have sold 1,100 tickets on-line – there are only 100 tickets available at the kick-off event. The kick-off is from 4 – 6:30pm at Portland House of Music. Hyatt has offered a discount on rooms and has booked 40 rooms. Gift wrapping will be available at Bangor Savings Bank on Middle Street.

f. Horse & wagon rides – free Friday, Saturday & Sunday afternoons beginning Friday November 24<sup>th</sup>  
Casey thanked all the merchants for their participation making holiday events better every year.

#### **Minute 5. Old Port Festival 2018:** Suzie Rephan

A committee is working on the future of the event. This is the first time the Board has asked for a deep dive into the effectiveness of OPF. Portland Downtown wants it to be successful for all.

- OPF began as an event to draw people to the Old Port to show that it wasn't a scary place. Now we want to make it more representative of the foodie and cultural town that Portland is.
- The merchant survey indicates that merchants don't feel OPF is a good representation of Portland
- A community survey will be sent to gather more information from attendees
- The committee is considering locating the big, carnival-type food vendors all in one area
- Only small changes will take place in 2018 because the budget has been set
- Suzie encouraged merchants to have a presence, put up a table, sell water, give out coupons for future visits, just be involved
- Suzie is looking onto Common Ground Fair food vendors to encourage more Maine and Portland centric ideas
- With an eye on being more mindful, Portland Downtown will be more careful with vendor placement
- Gudrun commented that 2017 was her first year participating and she only had a table, the store was not open, and she had a great day
- Nancy Lawrence talked about having a story-telling board in their window to let people know what the store is all about

Suzie concluded by saying the committee will make recommendations at the January Board meeting. Please let Suzie know about any ideas you may have.

#### **Minute 6. Ad hoc Committee updates:** Suzie Rephan

- Street Art Vendor discussion: the committee has suspended work until January: they are looking at
  - Enforcing current ordinances including vendor street parking
  - Origination of merchandise
  - Vendor footprint
  - Non-compete clause
  - Improving the Marketplace

Currently, Code Enforcement officers are only allowed to monitor booth size per instructions from Corporation Counsel. The committee is taking the artists needs into consideration also.

#### **Minute 7. Other business:**

- A. Paula Jalbert asked about shoplifting laws. Can a merchant call the police before the shoplifter leaves the store? Yes, get a good description. A merchant can also stop a shoplifter while in the store if you're certain they have something in their pocket. You can offer to put something behind the counter for a customer if you saw them put something in their pocket. Check your video.
- B. Merchant highlights:
  - a. International Cryptozoology Museum at Thompson's Point. Loren would like to look at downtown as a partner somehow. They have a conference on Labor Day weekend that attracts 300-1,000 people.
- C. Mary Alice at Portland Buy Local is planning the 2018 calendar. If anyone is interested with hosting a member mixer, let her know. Mixers are meant to help merchants meet other merchants. Buy Local membership criteria is: any organization that is in Portland, the owner must live within 50 miles of Portland, no corporate headquarters outside Maine and can't have more than 10 stores. They will host a brown bag lunch series on hiring, recruiting and keeping employees in February at the Portland Regional Chamber office.

**Next meeting:** Thursday January 4, 2018 at 8:30am, Westin Portland Harborview Hotel