



Merchants Meeting
May 15, 2019 at 8:30 – 9:30AM
Press Hotel
119 Exchange Street

Board members present: Megan Doane

Committee members present: Chris Cummings, Barbora Mensik

Present: Bob Fowler, Carrie London, Leslie Smith, Wendy Hayes, Kevin Kingdon, Kelly Crotty, Tim Gatz, Nancy Lawrence, Joanne Alfiero, Susan Driscoll, Alan Nye, Jacques deVillier, Gudrun Cobb, Doug Fuss, Bailey Irving, Steve Corman, Max Bangs, David Joseph, Nelle Hanig, Mara Pressman, Anne Karonis, Jaime Wing, Maria Wolff

Guests: Heather Davis, Katy Sargent with LeaningWorks

Staff present: Casey Gilbert, Adam MacDonald, Amy Geren, Taffy Eaton

Minute 1. Casey welcomed everyone, thanked the Press Hotel for sponsoring and hosting the meeting and asked for introductions. Casey spoke about the new 2019-2020 Downtown Map & Directory.

Minute 2. Committee Member Policy refresh – Casey Gilbert: The Portland Downtown Board of Directors approved a Committee Member Policy, which was developed by the Governance Committee. The policy defines committee member qualifications and voting privileges. Taffy can email the policy to anyone interested in becoming a committee member.

Minute 3. Review & approval of March 20, 2019 meeting minutes: Casey asked for those present to review the minutes. They will not be voted on today because a quorum is not present.

Minute 4. Meet the Summer Shop for A Cause Day beneficiary LearningWorks: Heather Davis introduced herself and Katy Sargent. Heather commented that many LearningWorks sponsors are among those present.

- The organization is 52 years old and has locations on Brackett St in Portland, Biddeford and Sanford
- The mission is to reimagine learning. Traditional school systems do not work for all students.
- The organization works with 3,000 clients annually. Second to fifth graders make up the majority of clients.
- They offer free after school programs as well as transportation. All materials are provided.
- They also work with teens and young adults in the Service Works program, of which Graffiti Busters is a part, as well as the Youth Building Alternatives program.
- They work to build the capacity of new Mainers (about 200 adults annually) with free ESL classes, individual tutoring and mentoring.
- Heather shared some facts about fundraising. All the programs offered are free. The Shop for A Cause donation would keep the waiting list down by making it possible to hire an AmeriCorp member for one year. There is a critical need for local support.

Shop for A Cause Day is Saturday June 8th. Casey mentioned some of the former Shop for A Cause Day recipients and reviewed the process, which culminates with the check presentation.

Minute 5. Board election updates + Meet the nominees: Nominees for the Retail/Merchant seat on the Portland Downtown Board of Directors will provide brief bios: Casey reminded everyone present that PD is a 501c4 nonprofit organization funded by Property Owners within the downtown district. Stakeholders also have a voice on the Board and there is a vacancy in the Retail seat. Casey invited the 3 nominees to introduce themselves.

1. Sara Brown with David Wood Clothiers is unable to be here today so Casey read Sara's bio

2. Jacques DeVilliers with Old Port Wine & Old Port Spirits said he lives and shops in the Old Port. Jacques has served on other nonprofit boards, loves being part of the Old Port and supporting other downtown businesses.
3. Kevin Kingdon with Edgcomb Potters said he has been in retail for 30 years, happily coming back to the Old Port 5 years ago. Kevin is interested in cross promotion with other Old Port businesses.

Casey concluded that the Board of Directors will ratify the nominations tomorrow and ballots will be sent at end of May.

Minute 6. Summer Kick-off Weekend updates: Adam MacDonald – all events are free, all weekend

- Friday June 7th
 - Square Hop, 6-8PM, 4 parks, 4 performances, 1 amazing night
 - Fresnel Theater – Post Office Park
 - Maine Marimba Ensemble – Monument Square
 - Sea Level and the Memorial Skylight - Congress Square Park
 - Palaver Strings – Longfellow Square
 - First Friday Art Walk – Portland Downtown will co-promote with Creative Portland
- Saturday June 8th
 - Summer Shop for A Cause - registration is open for another week. Adam will be doing digital and print promotions and printing a postcard with participating locations. Adam encouraged businesses to share social media promotions and email blasts with their friends, followers, and lists. Merchants have raised \$50,000 for local nonprofits in the last 4 years.
 - Walk the Working Waterfront – 11AM -3PM. New England Ocean Cluster will manage the free community event. It is an opportunity to explore wharves and piers. Follow their Facebook page.
- Sunday June 9th, 11AM – 5PM Old Port Festival farewell celebration. Parade with Shoestring Theatre. UMaine is the exclusive parade sponsor. Casey reminded everyone present that registering for a vendor space outside your store is free.

Minute 7. New businesses and other news:

- Fine Arts Festival: Maria Wolff with Maine Craft Portland said the festival is the 2nd to last Saturday of August. Congress Street is closed to traffic between High St and Longfellow Square. Vendor booth space is sold out and there is a waiting list. Maine Craft Portland is hosting an Alternative Bridal Pieces show through the end of June and will host a fiddler during First Friday Art Walk.
- Bob Fowler with Milestone said the HOME Team works 6 days a week, Monday – Saturday, 9AM -9PM. Portland Downtown makes an annual contribution to the HOME Team program.
- Tim Gatz with Visit Portland said the Annual Meeting is May 20th at Marriott Sable Oaks. Visit Portland promotes greater Portland and is a membership organization. Casey added that Portland Downtown and Visit Portland partner on the Visitor Information Booth in Tommy's Park.
- Nelle Hanig with the City's Economic Development Department said the Business Creation Program for Job Creation received a \$200,000 grant and will launch in July 2019.
- Adam asked about Downtown Worker Appreciation Day coupon redemption – businesses present indicated they had success with their DWAD offers. Casey spoke about the afternoon session of Downtown Worker Appreciation Day. Almost 100 people came to the Portland Downtown office this year so we will look into perhaps partnering with a coffee shop in 2020, so that it becomes more of an occasion.
- Casey thanked Kelly Crotty and Dan Knight with Community Policing for all of their efforts to enhance safety in downtown
- Casey said that Amistad and Portland Downtown have started a Peer Outreach Worker program, partnering with the Cadet program to provide additional services for those in need

Casey thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 9:20. The next meeting is July 17th.

Respectfully submitted,
Taffy Eaton, Recorder