



**\*\*\*DRAFT\*\*\***

**Merchant Meeting**

October 16, 2019 at 8:30 – 9:30AM

Press Hotel

119 Exchange Street

**Board members present:** Karen Coffin, Sara Brown, Gillian West, Megan Doane

**Committee members present:** Karen Coffin, Sara Brown, Steve Corman, Nancy Lawrence, Barbora Mensik, Mara Pressman

**Present:** Gudrun Cobb, Jaime Wing, Maria Wolff, Joanne Alfiero, Kevin Kingdon, Jess Lauren Lipton, Kelly Crotty, Carrie London, Natasha Bowie, John Peverada, Joyce Mongeau, Susan Driscoll, Kathryn Flynn, Anne Banfield

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

**Minute 1.** Karen Coffin welcomed everyone and asked for introductions.

**Minute 2.** Review & approval of September 18, 2019 meeting minutes: Sara Brown made a motion to accept the September meeting minutes. Steve Corman seconded the motion and the minutes were approved unanimously.

**Minute 3.** Initiatives to reduce impaired driving downtown, including Lyft voucher program for Merry Madness: Jamie Dionne, Highway Safety Coordinator, Maine Bureau of Highway Safety. Jamie described the difference between Maine DOT and Maine Bureau of Highway Safety: DOT works to save lives with signage and infrastructure and Maine Bureau of Highway Safety works to save lives with behavior modification. Portland has the highest drunk driving and pedestrian fatalities in the state. It is important to get in front of the problem by offering rides to and from bars. The Maine Bureau of Highway Safety received a grant of \$10,000 through the Governor's Highway Safety Association. Lyft is focused on Portland so \$5,800 is slated for this Lyft voucher partnership. Details:

- Lyft will offer free rides to patrons of Old Port bars and restaurants, up to a 20 miles radius of the jetport, including Scarborough and Gorham. "Plan before you party" is the message.
- People will see ads for a ride home if they go on social media during the evening. There will be codes to use #smartrideforme
- Lyft drivers are plentiful and come to Portland from all over
- The program will run from the Wednesday before Thanksgiving (11/27) through New Year's Eve, 5pm – 3am, Thursday - Saturday. They are working with AAA to offer free towing also, so cars won't be left downtown.
- A Lyft Lounge with their logo will be set up in the Old Port. Jamie asked about locations for the tent – Post Office Park was suggested. They will print 200 t-shirts for bartenders and others to wear. The Maine Bureau of Highway Safety will staff the tent and try and attract people in need of a ride. Jamie's department would like to build relationships with downtown bars and restaurants.
- If the program goes well, the organization has other funds to expand the program to other cities. They are working with Maine DOT and the Portland Police Department.
- Jamie is looking for a screen printer to logo the tent and t-shirts. Karen encouraged merchants with connections to screen printing companies to let Jamie know.

**Minute 4.** Deep dive into Portland Downtown's "Light Up Your Holidays" events including Shop for A Cause, Merry Madness, Elfteernoon, and the Holiday Window Display Contest: Adam MacDonald. Adam said PD is deep in planning mode already!

- Monument Square Tree Lighting, 11/29, 4-6pm. With Rick Charette's retirement, the event will be reimagined and be a more experiential, marketplace style event with a smaller stage and moments with Santa.
- Shop for A Cause Day, 11/30 all day. The holiday event raises around \$10,000. Greater Portland Immigrant Welcome Center is the 2019 recipient. The process for choosing a beneficiary will be as follows: merchants will nominate 3 non-profits during a meeting and voting will be sent to the larger merchant email list. Adam will invite someone from the Greater Portland Immigrant Welcome Center to the November 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.
  - Postcards and stickers promote the participating merchants. Gudrun Cobb spoke about the positive feeling of the day.
  - It is a partnership between PD, merchants and the winning organization
  - Adam spoke about the International Downtown Association award PD won for Shop for A Cause Day
  - Each merchant chooses how much they would like to donate
- Elfternoon Lunchtime Shopping, 3 Wednesdays 12/4, 12/11 and 12/18, noon – 2pm. Androscoggin Bank will sponsor the event with a hot chocolate kick-off party. Businesses self-promote the event on social media. Maria Wolff would like to rally neighbors on Congress St so shoppers will come up.
- Merry Madness, 12/5, the kick-off party is from 4-7PM at the Custom House and there are 1,200 available tickets. Merchants must stay open until 10pm. Kick-off party attendees get goody bags including snacks, a commemorative Merry Madness wine glass and one pour of wine. We stagger entry times to keep the flow of people in the Custom House even.
  - Kevin Kingdon said they ran out of wine early and will plan better this year. He recommends all merchants read the memo from Adam as it contains valuable information about the evening. Other shoppers come to participate in the evening even if they don't come to the kick-off party.
  - Ticket sales begin today
  - Sara Brown would like to hear about volunteer opportunities. Adam will send an email with options in November.
  - Adam prints a map and list of participating businesses that all kick-off party attendees receive and are also distributed to all participating merchants
  - PD may partner with Maine Spirits through bars and restaurants again this year, with specialty cocktails or mocktails.
  - Hyatt Hotel is a partner offering a discounted room rate on December 5<sup>th</sup>
- Holiday Window Display Contest, begins November 29<sup>th</sup> and continues until Christmas day. Judges will do their walk on December 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Look for emails from Adam!

**Minute 5.** Joanne Alfiero, Portland Press Herald: Joanne distributed information about the annual Portland Press Herald Gift Giving Guide and encouraged merchant participation. Joanne also spoke about available Early Bird advertising opportunities in Portland Downtown's annual Downtown Map & Directory. Publication date is April 2020.

**Minute 6.** Merchant updates – what's new with your business?

- Crystal Joys – Carrie London asked about downtown Halloween events. Amy Geren said the PPD is doing something for kids and Kelly Crotty can connect her with the police department.
- Amy Geren spoke about Portland Downtown's partnership with the Tobacco Prevention Program with purposeful signage in parks. Amy offered No Smoking window clings to everyone present. Maria Wolff – spoke about 2 exhibitions at the store: Master Craft Award recipient, Tom Ferrero's metal work and Dark & Stormy, A Fiber Art exhibition

Karen thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,  
Taffy Eaton, Recorder