

Special Events Committee Meeting Minutes
151 Martin Street, Conference Rooms 202 & 203
January 13th, 2023

Chairperson Astrein called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

In Attendance: R. Astrein, K. Cummings, D. Fehan, B. Hussey

Staff: C. Sheppard-Decius, N. Gerkey

Guests: none

Absent: Z. Kay, S. Lipari

Public Comment: none

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Hussey, seconded by Fehan to approve the December 9, 2022 Special Event Committee meeting minutes.

Yeas: R. Astrein, K. Cummings, D. Fehan, B. Hussey

Nay: none

Absent: Z. Kay, S. Lipari

Restaurant Week Brainstorming Meeting

Restaurant Week Meeting with Birmingham restaurants is scheduled for Tuesday, January 24th at 3pm at Hazel's to discuss the future of Restaurant Week. Hussey said she has reached out to restaurants and 14 are confirmed for the meeting. Sheppard-Decius confirmed via Brook that Bank of Ann Arbor is secured as a sponsor, and wants to secure more sponsors. It was noted that restaurants could potentially be sponsors for Restaurant Week, depending on the new format. Hussey mentioned there has been interest in bringing back "Night on the Town" event – could pair it with new Restaurant Week. Sheppard-Decius suggested renaming Restaurant Week to "Best of Birmingham". It was discussed to change the time of year of Restaurant Week to spring/fall, and do a different spin on the event depending on the season.

It was noted that there is \$15,000 budgeted for promotions – Sheppard-Decius discussed target marketing, regionally, and make Birmingham more approachable. Hussey also suggested a charitable component. The idea of \$1 rosé where sales go to a charity was suggested, especially if Restaurant Week happens in the spring. Fehan said a local charity that's tangible should be chosen, that way people can see where their funds are making a contribution. Hussey added that her charity, The Great Decorate, had a great year in fundraising efforts – just over \$58,000 with ~\$3,000 going to each child.

Hussey suggested bringing Restaurant Week website metrics to the meeting, Fehan added that more data gives us more credibility as an organization. Fehan said that the previous format of Restaurant Week is a challenge, and that we should drop the fixed pricing. Hussey added that we should make sure restaurants have choices to showcase what they do best. Fehan said that Restaurant Week is not restaurant promotion, but a community promotion.

The committee agreed upon the following objectives for the future of restaurant week:

1. Bring people to Birmingham
2. Notoriety – What sets Birmingham apart from other cities
3. Create Community – from restaurants and patrons

The committee agreed upon the following action items for the restaurant meeting:

1. Bring website traffic metrics of previous Restaurant Week to meeting
2. Reimbursement for Hussey for providing light refreshments/snacks
3. Tripod and phone for filming the meeting
4. Create a small PowerPoint presentation for talking points
 - a. Present idea of what it will look like
 - b. Timeline
 - c. Rosé Charity Idea
5. Confirm how many years Restaurant Week has been around – Gerkey did a search and this year is the 18th year.
6. Hussey continue to follow up with restaurateurs and share contact information with Gerkey

Event Budgets

Sheppard-Decius requested getting sponsorship numbers from Brook to add into the budget. She also mentioned that we want to set a higher budget for Spring Stroll and Art Walk, as well as increase social media promotion. It was noted that Winter Markt and Dream Cruise costs increased from other years, but this could also be due to COVID. Sheppard-Decius suggested that the Farmers Market budget could be reduced. Fehan countered by stating that Farmers Market and Winter Markt draw people into town, and doesn't mind the budget being spent on those events. It was mentioned that Dream Cruise sponsors are \$60,000 from Chevy, and \$1,000 from Nowicki. Sheppard-Decius suggested revisiting who runs Dream Cruise instead of the Birmingham Shopping District in the future if funding disappears. She also mentioned discussion with Brook about DPS involvement in Dream Cruise as they are cleaning for non-event days and we compensate for that.

Events Strategy Goal Discussion

Sheppard-Decius suggested goals for events and how to improve the following: local frequency, build Birmingham Shopping District's value, penetration of regional visitors, and building the length of stays. Fehan mentioned getting zip code information via credit card purchases to help tailor what we do, and also suggested seeing parking metrics, and how long people stay. Hussey added these metrics can be found via social media and websites, too. Astrein suggested increasing sponsorships to help improve events. Fehan added we need to improve our "ask" effort when it comes to sponsorships. Cummings brought up the idea of promoting "staycations" at the Daxton or Townsend and building packages to promote businesses in Birmingham and bring new visitors. Sheppard-Decius wants to gather ideas and prioritize at the Strategic Planning meeting on February 6th.

Meeting adjourned at 9:55 a.m.

NEXT MEETING: Friday, February 10th, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.