

Minutes, Monday, January 18, 2021, 9:00 a.m., On-line meeting
Glen Lake Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors

Meeting called to order by Co-President Sue Boucher at 9:17 a.m.

Attendance:

Connie Kröll and Sue Boucher, Co-Presidents; Larry Widmayer, Treasurer; Brooke Hazael-Massieux, and Katy Wiesen, Board members; Raquel Jackson, Marketing Director; Patricia Widmayer, Secretary to the Board; Leah Moskovitz, Guest (Cherry Republic)

Minutes and Finances

Minutes: The Board unanimously accepted the Board of Directors Minutes for the 12/14/20 Board meeting.

Treasurer's report. The Year-End Financial Report (attached) from Treasurer Larry Widmayer was unanimously accepted. In summary, the Treasurer reported that:

Financially, 2020 was difficult year for our Chamber as it was for many member businesses. Despite reduced income, The Chamber able to:

- Show a slight operating plus of just over \$1,467.
- Invest \$10,000 in a new, dynamic Web Site
- Report a 2020 loss of (\$755) after including depreciation cost of new Web Site
- Re-start paying our commitment of \$2,000 to Glen Arbor Township for the Glen Arbor Gardens.
- Acquire A-frames and signs for placement around downtown reminding guests to wear a mask so "we can stay open"

As shown on both the Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2020 and the December Financial Status and Cash Flow Report, the Chamber is ending 2020 in a relatively strong cash position. There is cash in Huntington Bank of \$12,720 and Accounts Receivable of \$6,563. This gives the Chamber a cash potential of \$19,283. Thus, the Chamber end 2020 with our Accounts Payable at zero.

Membership dues

The Treasurer report that 71 membership invoices were sent, totaling \$13,612. Of those sent, 34 have been paid to date, for a total of \$ 6,575. Reminder notices are being sent, and much of the balance is anticipated to be paid.

At the recommendation of the Treasurer, a Friends of the Chamber membership category was unanimously created by the Board. The fee is \$50, will be listed as such on the website, and included in all mailings/event invitations.

Development of a long-range planning process

Katy introduced a discussion about vacant retail properties on Western Avenue. It was suggested that Board members interview new owners to determine what brought them to open in Glen Arbor? Talk with Georgia Geitzen as to why her shop did not work? Then develop a long range plan to promote businesses to open in Glen Arbor. Development of a long-range plan should be on the February agenda.

Marketing Report 2020

The Marketing Director reported:

Website Activity

- In the month of August alone, <https://www.visitglenarbor.com/> had 15,780 pageviews, while the year's total was 112,766 pageviews for the website.
- Average time spent on a page, 1 min 24 sec.
- Overall page load and website speed has greatly improved since the launch of the new website, delivered in the late Spring. The new site was designed to be fully responsive to all screen sizes and devices and while also being easy to navigate content.
- 58% of users viewing from a mobile device, while 36% view the site from a desktop computer and 5% from a tablet.

Email Newsletters

We composed and sent 30 email newsletters between January - December 2021, reaching an average of 1,200 people each email sent (between actual opened emails and social posts that follow the email campaign).

We maintain TWO email LISTS. One reserved for Membership and the other Subscribers list is open to the public. We send varied, targeted content to each group. The emails we send have a 39% average open rate , high above industry standards.

Summary

A new website was delivered this year to bring both community members and visitors an online resource for connecting with local businesses and community events. Visitors used our website to aid in trip planning, discovered things to do, kept up on Covid-19 updates, and used our site to find places to stay and shop.

The Chamber's strong online presence allows our organization to successfully reach people visiting the area, despite not having a physical brick and mortar location. We are committed to sharing current and accurate information about our members, businesses, the area, through regular website maintenance, social media sharing and by sending email newsletters. We are proud to continue to be a strong organization representing in this small but strong community.

Debriefing on the Holiday Marketplace issues and recommendations

The Chairperson for this year's virtual Holiday Marketplace reported that, based on notes from the 2019 in-person Marketplace at the Township Hall, the 2020 virtual experience/feedback and the goal of making a return for the Chamber in 2021, it was recommended that:

1. The Chamber offer a hybrid Marketplace event, both live and virtual, in order to (a) maximize quality artisan offerings for the community, (b) draw the community to other businesses in Glen Arbor, (c) maximize the return for the Chamber;
2. Offer a live event at the Township Hall (suggested at \$125 as compared to \$95 in 2019), and a virtual marketplace (at least an additional \$75) exclusively to those who are showing their works live (plus any Chamber member with a gift package/basket offering?), in order to boost their sales, Chamber returns, and available volunteer time;
3. To streamline purchases on the virtual site:

- a. Create a far more “graphic” website or easily navigated Facebook page’ (which probably means more \$\$ and artisan fee). Am checking on costs for such an undertaking;
 - b. If using a Facebook page, needs to be unique rather than through Chamber;
 - c. Only include in the virtual marketplace those artisans who have an online presence; Moreover, some artisans closed their sales earlier than the end date for the virtual Marketplace);
4. To enhance marketing, open the virtual Marketplace two weeks before Thanksgiving, preschedule Facebook posts to appear at least two times each day until the close of the virtual Marketplace, and again offer \$25 gift certificate drawings to boost views;
 5. A jury of Board members needs to be established in case there are any questions about how we qualify “artisans”. Been some awkward situations where “crafters” whose work isn’t creative or unique have tried to pressure their way in;
 6. If Santa is to be included, find an alternative location and request a modest fee. The 35 groups that came to see Santa in 2019 clogged the aisles, and, for the most part, came only to have a photo for their Christmas cards before departing.
 7. Think about how we can monetize or create an outdoor location for the cider & donuts after the Caroling/Tree Lighting Event on Friday evening. More than 400 people squeezed into the Township Hall in 2019 and created an untenable environment for the artisans. (Note: Originally, Friday evening was designated as a “preview party” with a \$10 fee for making advance purchases and treats.)
 8. Remember that there is now an additional fee of \$325 to support setup and cleanup by approved personnel for using the Township Hall when building the budget.

Based on these recommendations, the Board moved to (a) explore separating the Tree Lighting/Caroling, Cider & Donuts, and Santa events from the Marketplace and plan unique events (b) develop a plan to return the Friday evening Marketplace into a Preview Party again; and (c) keep bringing questions forward as more is known about opening or restrictions related to the pandemic in November and December.

Review of various business plans/closing and other events

Pandemic updates and orders affecting businesses and the community:

Several developments have occurred since the last meeting, including:

- Additional EIDL grants and PPP loans are now opened again with additional funding;
- Clarifies that EIDL grants are not taxable and that business expenses paid for with EIDL grants are tax deductible;
- Clarifies that business expenses paid for with a forgiven PPP loan are tax deductible;
- Repeals the requirement of deducting an EIDL grant from the PPP loan forgiveness amount;
- The update regulations for PPP loans make additional expenses forgivable;
- Clarifies that in order to be eligible for a PPP loan, a business must be in operation on February 20, 2020;
- Makes businesses eligible for a 2nd PPP loan if they demonstrate at least a 25% reduction in gross receipts in any quarter of 2020 compared to the same quarter in 2019; and

Chili Cookoff. Kathy will continue to report on any plans for the Chili Cookoff in February, but is skeptical that it will happen. Simply need to keep tabs to know if the Chamber should put the event on the calendar or not. But for now, it should not be on the calendar.

Restaurant Week 2021.

At this point, consideration is being given to a Restaurant Week in the Fall when Covid-19 may be under control and more dining capacity opened.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m..

Next regular Board meeting is Monday, February 8th, 9:00 a.m., with agenda to include:

- Approve minutes of January 18th Board meeting;
- Financial report;
- Membership renewals report;
- Marketing report;
- Updates on pending 2021 community happenings, if any, including the Chili Cookoff;
- Discussion of additional adjustments and recommendations regarding Covid -19 safeguards, protocols and requirements;
- Development of a long-range planning process for the Chamber.

Respectfully submitted

Patricia Widmayer, Secretary to the Board