

AMTA Board Meeting Minutes
March 7, 2018
GDEcD Offices

CALL TO ORDER

Jon Brasher, President

Brasher called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Welcome

Randi Greene, GDEcD

GDECD REPORT

Jon Brasher, President

The board will approve the January and March minutes at the May board meeting.

Treasurer's Report

Beth Bailey, AMTA Treasurer

Bailey distributed financial reports. Highlights: We are in good shape! CVMP and Membership- almost all of the dues are in. Insurance will be due in a few months.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

CVB Marketing Partnership

Jo Ann Haden-Miller, Co-Chair

Print: Spending 50K in Southern Living, Southbound, Meredith Publications. Looking at the State's opportunities for digital spending opportunities (Rocketfuel, Southern Living)- all CTAs drive to the Explore Georgia site. Top 100 Brochures are doing really well! All members are paid up for the current year- we may have a little extra money to do some separate buys as well with AMTA new creative.

Governmental Affairs

Neville Bhada, AMTA Vice President

Bills With Movement

HB 332 is meant to preserve state conservation lands using funds generated through the state's sales tax on outdoor recreational equipment. The House Resources & Environment Committee revived this bill from last year, passing it out of committee with a substitute pertaining to funding.

SB 375 is an adoption bill that intends to allow child-placing agencies to operate based on their religious beliefs when choosing parents for foster children. This bill was reconsidered one day before being debated for over an hour on the Senate floor but ultimately passed along straight party lines. Republican proponents pitched it as an opportunity to expand the amount of adoption agencies willing to operate in Georgia, claiming that some faith-based agencies did not see room to operate under existing state law. Democrats made the point that there had never been a case of religious discrimination during an adoption in state legal history, and this bill would be at best an

answer to a non-existent problem, and at worst blatant discrimination against the LGBT community. The majority party countered that any placement agency could cater to whatever groups they wanted under this legislation, like a group that worked with LGBT or minority parents. While this legislation does not directly affect tourism, tangentially, organizations could see this as an example of the state trampling LGBT rights and choose not to do business here.

Bills That Stayed Put

SB 17 originally called for the ability for municipalities to hold a local referendum on the start time of alcohol sales in restaurants on Sundays. After negotiations in the Senate Regulated Industries Committee, the time was set at 11:00 and includes retail alcohol sales. It passed the Senate with a 38-18 vote and now goes to the House Regulated Industries Committee.

SB 361 relates to public schools and provides for student and faculty members to have the right to free religious expression and the formation of religious organizations. This applies to residents, but all legislation containing "religious freedom" language should be watched for any possible discrimination that could negatively impact tourism. This bill was read and referred to the Senate Education & Youth Committee and hasn't moved since.

SR 587 proposes a Constitutional Amendment to make English the official state language. This resolution serves the same purpose as 613 but comes from different legislators. The Senate Rules Committee favorably reported, and the bill has now been 2nd read.

SR 613 declares English as the official language of Georgia, with exceptions in cases where other languages are necessary. The Georgia Chamber has come out in opposition to this resolution, as have other minority rights groups with the assertion that the bill can be seen as discriminatory. This bill is in the Senate Rules Committee and may not emerge due to redundancy with SR 587.

HB 658 removes the sunset date for collection of certain excise taxes on rooms & lodging. This bill exclusively applies to Cobb County, as the sunset date wasn't far enough in the future to issue bonds to finance improvements on conference centers in Cobb County. Representative Ehrhart was insistent that this only applies to Cobb County. It has passed the House and been sent to the Senate where it's in the Senate Finance Committee.

HB 753 pertains specifically to nonprofit conference/retreat centers, exempting them from the excise tax on rooms or lodgings. This is a niche tourism area, as only nonprofits are affected. This bill was rumored to be for Epworth By the Sea in Glynn County. It has been 2nd read in the House.

SR 778 implores the Federal government to catch up with pending maintenance issues at U.S. National Parks, was read & referred to the Senate Natural Resources & Environment Committee.

HB 793 extends the sunset on a sales tax waiver for construction materials to be used at the Georgia Aquarium and a museum in Cartersville. Passed out of House Ways & Means and now sent to the House Rules Committee.

HB 936 proposes to not allow public school systems to start before the 3rd week in August. It has been 2nd read and is in the House Education Committee right now. HB 757 pertains to taxicab and rideshare regulation. Taxicab medallions are to be controlled by cities and counties with certificates of public necessity. It has passed the House and is in the Senate Regulated Industries and Utilities Committee.

Public Relations, Social Media, Website

Ashley-Grace Jaber & Heather Daniel, Co-Chair

Member Memo: Distributed 2 reports: E-comm Save the Dates and Newsletter Stats. Average open rate for newsletters is about 43%. Average click through rate is about 8.6%. About 150 total subscribers. The newsletter is very long, would like to keep it at a maximum of 2 scrolls. There has been an uptick with new design from Mail Chimp. *Note to membership, if contacts need to be updated, send names to Membership.*

PR: 985 Instagram followers. LRC working on the new trails blog- need more information! Voted as a committee to invest in 365 Atlanta Family to be a part of their ambassador program which is an additional \$5k a year and gets AMTA an additional 4 articles a year. Perks: listed on site and featured in social as well as newsletter. 365 ATL Family site receives over 378k unique monthly visitors. LRC as well as 365 Atlanta Family are two difference audiences (LRC is Travel Writers while 365 Atlanta Family is our Target Audience). The program can begin whenever and runs for a year.

Motion to approve program: Daniel. Second: Hayden-Miller.

Meetings

Brandi Wigley, Co-Chair

Brandi has agreed to help Chair the committee. *April 4th:* Atlanta History Center and the topic will be the Legislative Update (at McElreath Hall). *June 6th:* Marquee Club at Fox Theatre and topic will be the Sports Market and will discuss the Superbowl and ways to get involved. *August 1st:* Stars and Stripes and the topic will be Social Media with speakers from ATLCVB, Visit Savannah and Explore Georgia. *October 3rd:* Foxhall Resort and the topic will be the GDECD update. *December 5th:* will be the Holiday Luncheon in Henry County.

Membership

Mike Vescio, Chair

Deadline was March 1st for renewals. Waiting on 6 members and about 3 have verbally committed. Several non-renewals have been removed from the website.

GDECD REPORT

Randi Greene, Atlanta-Metro Tourism Project Manager

Presidential Pathways TPM left. Randi will be helping to cover a few of those counties in the meantime. Georgia On My Mind Days schedule is out. Survey will be out to partners, be honest!

NEW BUSINESS

Jon Brasher, President

Discussed future meetings and the flow. There will be signage at the next meeting and volunteers to help with traffic direction.

OLD BUSINESS

Jon Brasher, President

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Georgia Travel Guide will be getting a new look.

The Board Retreat will be November 1 and 2, 2018.

ADJOURNMENT

Jon Brasher, President

Brasher called the meeting to close at 11:28 a.m.

BOARD ATTENDANCE

Atlanta Magazine Custom Media – Jon Brasher
Tourism Skills Group – Neville Bhada
Clayton County CVB – Beth Bailey
Dunwoody Convention and Visitors Bureau – Kim Franz
World of Coca-Cola – Jacquie Wansley
Atlanta CVB – Jo Ann Haden-Miller
Atlanta History Center – Brandi Wigley
Midtown Alliance/Midtown Improvement District – Ashley- Grace Jaber
Rhyme & Reason Design – Heather Daniel
Gwinnett Convention and Visitors Bureau – Victoria Hawkins
Discover DeKalb – Mike Vescio
GDEcD – Randi Greene