

AMTA General Membership Meeting Minutes
April 4, 2018
The Atlanta History Center

CALL TO ORDER

Jon Brasher, President

Brasher called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

WELCOME

Atlanta History Center – Brandi Wigley

PROGRAM – LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Kim Franz, AMTA Secretary

Motion to approve: C. Cash | Second: J. Renfroe

TREASURER’S REPORT

Kim Franz, AMTA Secretary (on behalf of Beth Bailey, AMTA Treasurer)

Bailey posted the report to the AMTA website. Contact Bailey with questions.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

CVB Marketing Partnership

Jo Ann Haden-Miller, Co-Chair

Wrapping up FY18 plan. Committee will gather to review the digital proposals and the print proposals for the FY19 plan.

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

Laura Luker, Co-Chair

Hit the Trail: From Film Trails to Hiking Trails is live on the AMTA site as well as the LRC Travel Media Marketplace. LRC is also pitching this to media. Please send social media posts

and images to visitmetroatlanta@gmail.com as the committee is actively looking for content for the year. Next blog will be *Diners and Drive-Thru Establishments*.

NEW: Partnering with 365 Atlanta Family (Leslie and Sue) will be promoting Things To Do and Places To See in Atlanta through 4 blog posts that will match the existing content on their 365 Atlanta Family website. Topics: restaurants by cuisine, Atlanta music festivals and events, rooftop bars in Atlanta and other scenic places to grab a drink, Atlanta museums (anything educational would fall into this category). Requests will be once a quarter. Events calendar on the 365 Calendar is free to use and will be featured in their newsletter.

Meetings

Brandi Wigley, Chair

Member memo will include all locations and topics. The upcoming Membership Meetings are June 6, August 1, October 3 and December 5.

Membership

Mike Vescio, Chair

We welcomed 6 guests to this meeting. Villa Rica added a new member. Diane Stone received a gift card for bringing a guest.

Attendee and guest list are included at the end of this document.

GDECD REPORT

Randi Greene, Atlanta-Metro Tourism Project Manager

Mark your calendar for the 2018 Governor's Tourism Conference **August 27 – 29** at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis. Copies of the 2018 Travel Guide are available for order. Contact Randi if you need a log in for the site.

NEW BUSINESS

Jon Brasher, President

Ashley- Grace from Midtown Alliance will be leaving the board. She will continue to be a member for the remainder of the year. We have an opening for the board and are actively seeking people who are interested.

OLD BUSINESS

Jon Brasher, President

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Jon Brasher, President

Brasher called the meeting to close for tours at 11:29 a.m.

MEMBERSHIP ATTENDANCE

AC Hotel Atlanta Buckhead at Phipps Plaza – Mandi Budman
Advance Travel and Tourism – Matthew Smith (attended in Joseph and Ray’s place)
Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance – Angela Walton (attended in Mera’s place)
ATCOMM Publishing – Lisa Werneck
Atlanta CVB – Jo Ann Haden-Miller, Courtney Bigum
Atlanta History Center – Brandi Wigley
Atlanta Magazine Custom Media – Jon Brasher
ATL-CRUZERS, LLC – Stephen Chester
Coweta County CVB – Tray Baggarly, Cheryl Smith
CTM Media Group – Bob Gunby
DeKalb CVB – Mike Vescio
Douglas County Tourism & Film – Collin Cash
Dunwoody Convention and Visitors Bureau – Kim Franz, Katie Williams
Fox Theatre – Shelby Moody
Game-X – Leah Spain
Georgia Aquarium – Gabriel Bidot
Georgia Department of Economic Development – Randi Greene
Georgia VIC – Tallapoosa – Connor Hooper, Pamela Maynard (guest)
Gwinnett CVB – Victoria Hawkins, Jessica Whittingslow
Henry County CVB – Laura Luker, Aisha White
HSP Media LLC – Hope Philbrick
Johns Creek CVB – Shelby Marzen
Lamplighter Tours of Atlanta, Inc. – Lee Klaer, Christine Peters
Marietta Visitors Bureau – Theresa Jenkins, Judy Renfroe, Courtner Spiess
Mary Huff Communications – Mary Huff
Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament – Katie Ortiz
Peachtree City CVB – Nicole Sheets
Roswell CVB – Diane Stone
Rhyme & Reason Design – Heather Daniel
Stone Mountain Village Visitor Center – Kimberly Cumbie
Tourism Skills Group – Neville Bhada
Urban Enterprises – Caitlin Smith
Villa Rica Convention & Visitors Bureau – Sharon Dupont
Where Atlanta – Karen Jones Atchison
World of Coca-Cola – Jacquie Wansley



Diane Stone
don 1/22

AMTA GUESTS

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Ryan	GH&A Lobbyist		

Heath

New members -

Mandi at hotel - Buckhead
Shanae VACAC VB

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