**GRAND BEND & AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Board of Directors' Meeting

July 22, 2019 – 4pm

Oakwood Resort

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**Chair:** Doug Pedlar

**Directors Present**: Glen Baillie, John Choma, Doug Pedlar, Matt DeJong, Mike Corrie.

**Directors Absent:** Veronica Brennan, Valante Karamoutzos, Jeff Pacheco.

**Staff Liaison:** Susan Mills (Manager)

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1. **Call To Order:** 4:15pm. ***Quorum achieved.***
2. **Approval of Agenda**. Motion to approve the agenda with addition of items 6c Tourism Sarnia Lambton, 8a Complaint about a local business, 8b OTA Submission and 8c Members' Mixer: Glen Baillie; Seconded: John Choma. Carried.
3. **Approval of the Minutes.** *Postponed due to lack of quorum of June's attendees*.
4. **Financial Statements**: Down to chasing the final 12 advertisers for outstanding 2019 visitor guide advertising amounts ($4,200); 2020 visitor guide ad sales have reached $19,790. Motion to approve the financials: Glen Baillie; Seconded: John Choma.
5. **Chamber Member Events & Services**
   a. **Golf Tournament:** Contacted by Bayshore Broadcasting interested in doing contra for a golf hole or registration desk. At this point, the registration desk sponsorship and the golf holes are spoken for. Discussion around contra versus revenue in regards to sponsorships, general consensus revenue preferred, however this issue is a moot point for 2019 tournament. Sponsorship revenue standing at $8,450; remaining sponsorships under consideration. Ad campaign will start week of July 28 for team registration. Judy Johnson will be talking to myFM about sponsorship and also completion of Neil Clifford's directorship term.
   b. **Request for Letter of Support from Rotary:** Latest initiative is to provide the town with a community notice board to be located down at the beach and they are requesting a letter of support from the Chamber. After discussion, general agreement that while the Chamber supports communication to the community and visitors, it would be best to utilize modern digital technology and to locate near Grand Bend's main intersection, so it would be visible and useful year-round instead of just peak summer months. As well, it would be a good idea to consult experts in this field to gain insight on best practices in community and visitor communication before determining the device or method of communication. Susan Mills to draft letter for board review.
   c. **Holiday Home Tour Sponsorship:** Holiday Home Tour board agreed they are willing to be the exclusive sponsor of the Chamber's awards presentation in exchange for a quarter page ad in the 2020 visitor guide. Motion to accept the sponsorship: John Choma; seconded: Matt DeJong. Carried.
   d. **Communication to Lambton Shores:** It has been reported to the Chamber that one of our visitor guide advertisers and local businesses have been informed by a municipal employee that it's "terrible in the Bend this year because there's no beaches". There seems to be similar negative

reports being communicated by staff within Grand Bend as well. This is causing additional stress for local businesses overcoming a poor, wet spring now in the busiest portion of their make-or-break season. Discussion of sending a request to the municipality asking that some instruction be sent to employees to be cognisant of communicating fair-minded and informed opinions. Susan Mills to draft email and send to Board for review prior to sending.

6. **Tourism & Visitor Services**
   a. **2020 Visitor Guide:** Received good news from Matt Downing regarding print production costs of 2020 guide and map – the overall cost will be about $3k less. To date, ad invoices are $36,830 before HST. $13,288 has been received as part of the Early Bird discount initiative and a reminder for payment on or before July 31 was sent out last week.
   b. **GrandBendTourism.com**: Comparison research of successful and modern tourism websites reveals preference for visual-based directory listings, especially of accommodation and restaurants. Using the same directory plugin we already have, the developer has a template we can access to update the look and feel of our current directory (example see: aroundhermitage.com.au). To accomplish the new look every business listed must have photos, website links and interactive Google map – elements for which we charge upgrade fees. To ensure the new website is as visually dynamic as it needs to be, we would need to forego the upgrade fee and build the cost into the membership fee. Currently upgrade fees generate $8,957 and we have 131 of our 181 members purchasing some form of upgrade. On proposal is to charge every member $50 as part of the membership fee in order not to lose this revenue and to ensure the new look and feel of the directory listings. This would bring the base tier (1-4 employees) membership fee to $245+$10 OCC + HST. Agreement the new website must be able to compete visually with the best out there and that every business listed needs to have a consistent look and feel. Motion to approve the membership fee incorporate the $50: John Choma; Seconded: Mike Corrie. Carried.
      i. Membership renewal package must include a strong sales pitch to members about the benefits of doing this.
   c. **Tourism Sarnia Lambton:**
      i. **Directorship:** Mark Perrin's interest in joining the Chamber's Board is accepted conditional on myFM's decision to either complete Neil Clifford's directorship with another employee or let the directorship go. Chamber Bylaws indicate the directorship belongs to the business member not the individual, therefore myFM must be offered the chance to replace Neil Clifford before the Chamber Board can accept Mark Perrin joining the Board. As well, the Bylaws indicate a maximum of 9 directors and the current Board is a complete board (i.e. 9 directors).
      ii. **MAT tax:** At estimate, about a third of local homes sold are turning into vacation rental cottages (likely most on AirBnB) and in effect removing population from the Municipality's count (could negatively affect grants to the Municipality that are based on population). The Chamber has communicated the importance of the MAT tax taking rental cottages into consideration as part of the MAT tax implementation. At the County level (i.e. TSL), this does not appear to be a consideration at all. Their lack of understanding of Lambton Shores' vacation rental marketplace of great concern.

***7.*** **Director & Committee Reports:**

*a.* None.

***8.*** **New Business:**

***a.*** **Complaint about local business:**

***i.*** Received complaint about Grand Bend Parasail (member business) July 22 regarding incident on Thursday, July 18. Mother had booked and paid for a parasail for herself and 9 year old son as part of his birthday celebration. They arrived at the pier at 1:52pm for their 2pm trip and after 15-minutes wondered where the boat was. In checking with the booking kiosk the boat had left the pier without all of its booked and paid customers. A number of trips between the booking kiosk and pier resulted in disappointment and despite receiving refund the general lack of customer service remained a concern. Complaint sent to owner Lee Marcoux for opportunity to resolve and request he inform the Board of actions taken to resolve.

***ii.*** Complaint received about Veslo Restaurant & Motel (not a member). During a couples' stay, the power went out due to the July 20 storm (F1) resulting in no lights, no fridge, no hot water, no air conditioning. Were unable to find another motel due to it being a weekend and everything booked. At check-out they requested a better rate due to there being no power and many standard amenities being affected and were refused.

***b.*** **OTA Submission:** Ontario Tourism Awards no longer have a print award, therefore our visitor guide submission must compete in the "Tourism Marketing Campaign Award – Over $50k" category. Submission sent by email with print backup by courier.

c. **Members' Mixer:** Allen Stubbs of Widder Station has offered to host the fall members' mixer (October 10, 5-7pm). He'll organize a few of the local breweries to be present and offer tastings. Next steps: Need sponsor.

***9.*** **Next Meeting:** Monday, August 19, 4pm, Oakwood Resort. *John Choma on vacation.*

10. **Adjournment:** Motion to Adjourn: 5:10pm – by Doug Pedlar; Seconded: Matt DeJong. Carried.

**Approved On: (Month/Day/Year)**

**Signed:**

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Signature & Position

**Signed:**

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Susan Mills (Manager)