



**MALC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**In Person**  
**3:00 PM**  
**Mobile Marriott Conference Room**

**June 6, 2024**

**Voting Board Members in Attendance:**

Kent Blackinton – President of the MALA Representative  
Margo Gilbert – Downtown Mobile Representative  
Aaron Watz – West Mobile Representative  
Duncan Millar – West Mobile Representative  
Hunter Omainsky – Restaurant Representative  
Judi Gulledge – Attractions Representative

**Voting Board Members Not in Attendance:**

Pinal Patel – Tillman’s Corner Representative  
Ken Patel – Downtown Mobile Representative  
Raj Desai – Tillman’s Corner Representative

**Non-Voting Board Members and Others in Attendance:**

David Clark – Visit Mobile Representative  
Councilman Cory Penn – City of Mobile Representative  
Bobby Hall, CPA – Robert Hall & Associates, PC  
Patty Kieffer – Visit Mobile  
Tom White – Visit Mobile  
Tara Lawson – Visit Mobile

**Meeting Called to Order** by Kent Blackinton at 3:05 PM.

**Approval of Minutes** from the April 18, 2024 meeting.

*Margo Gilbert motioned. Aaron Watz seconded.*

*A unanimous vote of approval followed.*

**Financial Report** by Bobby Hall

Financials as of May 31, 2024.

Margo Gilbert requested carryover reserves be included in future financial reports, now that they are being spent in certain budget categories.

*Kent Blackinton motioned to approve Financials. Margo Gilbert seconded.  
A unanimous vote of approval followed.*

### **Marketing & Promotions – Tara Lawson**

- Digital Campaign Results
  - Expedia – April & May results tracking high with increased inventory.
  - Hotebeds – October to April campaign increased significantly year over year.
  - Digital Display – Highest CTR we have seen with new vendor, all campaigns tracking well. April was the last month of spend on Cruise campaign. A portion of the general campaign ads have been routed towards Attractions, as discussed in last meeting.
  - SEM – Campaign optimization is proving successful.

### **Capital Update**

- Tillman’s Corner Beautification Project
  - Landscaping project to beautify the gateway entrance to Tillman’s Corner off Exit 15B to Highway 90
  - Proposal includes palm trees lining the 15B exit and colorful Crepe Myrtle trees along the Highway 90 median. Optional second phase of proposal includes welcome signage and colorful plant installment on the easement between Highway 90 and the Boot Barn.
  - Phase 1 total cost: \$56,054.99
  - Phase 2 total cost: \$18,420.48
  - Next moves would include consulting with the City of Mobile and ALDOT in regard to land ownership and permission to proceed.

*Kent Blackinton motioned to approve Phase 1 project. Margo Gilbert seconded.  
A unanimous vote of approval followed.*

### **District Management Plan**

- Assessment Amount and Methodology
  - Duncan Millar noted new policies from Hilton properties that would cause issues with switching the assessment to a room rate percentage.
  - Kent Blackinton noted the restrictions with the current budget, and the options available with an increase, including promotion of the many new projects underway in Mobile over the next few years (new airport, Civic Center remodel, Amtrak, etc.)

*Duncan Millar made a motion to propose an assessment of \$2.00 per room, per night in the new District Management Plan. All Board members present cast their individual votes for a unanimous vote of approval.*

- City Services to Visit Mobile
  - Current District Management Plan calls for the City of Mobile to secure Visit Mobile's budget at 33% of the collected lodging tax, or a dollar amount equal to that level of collections in 2020.
  - With an increase in the assessment amount, Visit Mobile will be handling more marketing projects for MALC. An increase in "buy-in" seems appropriate to the Board.
  - Councilman Cory Penn noted that his colleagues will want to see statistics and results when considering an increase. Tara Lawson noted the 4-year in review booklet that is currently in production.

*Each Board member cast a vote to increase Visit Mobile's budget to 45% of the collected lodging tax. Kent Blackinton moved by unanimous decision to approve.*

### **Future Meeting Dates**

\*date was set after meeting for July 25

### **Open Discussion**

- Tom White gave an update on the Familiarization trip that is scheduled for August.
- Judi Gullledge will be bringing updates from the attractions-focused campaign.

**Meeting Adjourned** at 4:27 PM by Kent Blackinton.