



**MALC Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
In Person and Zoom  
4:00 PM**

**July 25, 2024**

**Visit Mobile Boardroom | Mobile Convention Center - 4<sup>th</sup> Floor**

**Voting Board Members in Attendance:**

Kent Blackinton – President of the MALA Representative  
Judi Gulledge – Attractions Representative  
Margo Gilbert – Downtown Mobile Representative  
Aaron Watz – West Mobile Representative  
Duncan Millar – West Mobile Representative  
Raj Desai – Tillman’s Corner Representative

**Voting Board Members Not in Attendance:**

Hunter Omainsky – Restaurant Representative  
Pinal Patel – Tillman’s Corner Representative  
Ken Patel – Downtown Mobile Representative

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

David Clark – Visit Mobile Representative  
Bobby Hall, CPA – Robert Hall & Associates, PC  
Patty Kieffer – Visit Mobile  
Oliver Dorgan – Visit Mobile  
Tara Lawson – Visit Mobile  
Lamont Williams – Commercial District Patrol Services  
*\*\*For a portion of the meeting, two members of the media from local NBC station, WPMI, were present to film and report on the TID renewal.*

**Meeting Called to Order** by Kent Blackinton at 4:05 PM.

**Approval of Minutes** from the June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024 meeting.  
*Duncan Millar motioned. Judi Gulledge seconded.  
A unanimous vote of approval followed.*

## **Financial Report by Bobby Hall**

Financials as of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

*Judi Gullledge motioned to approve. Margo Gilbert seconded.*

*A unanimous vote of approval followed.*

## **Renewal Discussion**

- Following discussions with Tillman's Corner representatives, there is reason to believe hotel owners in that area would not support an increase to a \$2 assessment in 2025.
- The Board of Directors will reconsider last meeting's vote to increase to \$2

*Kent Blackinton motioned to nullify the June 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024, vote on District Management Plan changes. Duncan Millar seconded.*

*A unanimous vote of approval followed.*

- To address the main concern of room rate increases hurting Mobile's occupancy, the Board discussed following a model similar to Montgomery's recently passed TID, which included a stipulation that the City would only increase lodging taxes to an agreed-upon maximum percentage for the duration of the plan.
- New District Management Plan proposal: A renewal at \$1.50 assessment in the first renewal year, followed by a \$2.00 assessment for years 2-5, 45% of the lodging tax going to Visit Mobile (with the option to move to 40% in negotiations) a stipulation that City Council will not increase lodging tax by more than 1% in the next five years (with the option to move to 2% in negotiations).

*Kent Blackinton motioned to move forward with the new proposed changes to the District Management Plan for renewal. Raj Desai seconded.*

*A unanimous vote of approval followed.*

## **Guest Speaker – Lamont Williams, Night Hawk Security**

- Lamont came to report that Night Hawk Security, which MALC has employed to provide overnight patrol services to hotels in Tillman's Corner and the Beltline area, will be rebranding to Commercial District Patrol Services.
- There will be a "TID Unit" dedicated to MALC hotel patrols.
- Lamont has partnered with the Mobile Police Department to provide an off-duty officer on the weekends to trail behind Commercial District vehicles and assist with stops. This partnership is currently in a trial period and there will be no additional cost during that trial period.
- All employees have a background in law enforcement or military.
- Reported that calls this summer were at a minimum and arrest rates and tickets were down as well.

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

- Digital Campaign Results
  - Expedia – Tracking at a higher ROAS year over year when compared to last June
  - Arrivalist – Data is showing potential new markets to send messaging to
  - GDS – Results are down for the month of June. The Amadeus delivery team is looking into the drop, but we suspect it to be due to a decrease in travel agent bookings in June rather than a delivery issue.
    - Visit Mobile team noted that this 6-month campaign is ending in July and proposed an extension to the Board.

*Kent Blackinton motioned to approve another 6-month contract with Amadeus and look into increasing the markets and spend. Duncan Millar seconded. A unanimous vote of approval followed.*

- Digital Display – General branding campaign results are currently trending lower than expected, the team is looking into other vendor options.
- Kiosk update
  - The kiosks have been shipped and will be arriving soon. The two indoor kiosks will be placed upon arrival, the outdoor will need to work with the City to inspect for ADA compliance before final install.
- “Why TID? Four Years in Review” booklet
  - Visit Mobile team created a comprehensive booklet outlining projects by MALC from the TID’s establishment to date. These booklets were passed out to all Board members and will be distributed to all hotels and city officials ahead of renewal process to educate stakeholders.

## **Capital Update**

- Conversations with the City about wayfinding signage are still ongoing.

## **Future Meeting Dates**

Executive Committee to meet Tuesday, July 26

August 29<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm – Visit Mobile

## **Open Discussion**

**Meeting Adjourned** at 5:06 PM by Kent Blackinton.