



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

January 13, 2025

Visit Mobile Boardroom | Mobile Convention Center - 4th Floor

Voting Board Members in Attendance:

Kent Blackinton – President of the MALA Representative
Judi Gullede – Attractions Representative
Aaron Watz – West Mobile Representative
Hunter Omainsky – Restaurant Representative
Rachel Davis – West Mobile Representative

Voting Board Members Not in Attendance:

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

Non-Voting Board Members and Others in Attendance:

David Clark – Visit Mobile Representative
Cory Penn – City Council Representative
Bobby Hall, CPA – Robert Hall & Associates, PC
Patty Kieffer – Visit Mobile
Oliver Dorgan – Visit Mobile
Sarah Paige Moore – Visit Mobile
Taylor Kiernan – Visit Mobile

Meeting Called to Order by Kent Blackinton at 4:01 PM.

Approval of Minutes from the 11/20 meeting.

Aaron Watz motioned to approve. Kent Blackinton seconded.

A unanimous vote of approval followed.

Marketing & Promotions – Oliver Dorgan

- Expedia: During the month of December, the Expedia campaign did well. The Ad spend during the month of December was around \$8,000 resulting in revenue of 206,000; an almost 25:1 Return on ad spend ratio. The total cost of the 2024-2025 Expedia campaign was 200,000 which brought in around \$2.63 million in Revenue.
- David Clark requested that the annual report is sent to every hotel, along with a copy of the Roadmap and 2025 Expedia campaign results.
- Content Creator:
 - Brandwatch: new program we will use to vet influencers, this program will show the health of the creator and their brand as well as if they align with our brand. In addition, they flag potential brand safety risks. This service is paid for by Visit Mobile, but will be used to help execute the content creator campaign for MALC.
- Booking.com: new campaign this year, metrics to come.
- Attractions focused campaign: Kent Blackinton asked if there were any current attraction focused campaigns. David Clark explained that there was an attraction focused campaign in the past, specifically spring/summer. There are no current campaigns directed at the attractions as of now. Oliver mentioned that attraction focused videos were produced by MALC and are running on CTV and OTT placements.
- Airport promotion: David gave an airport update. The city and airport want to start branding. Visit Mobile was asked to help vet the RFP's and Public Relations Companies that could be hired to do this.
- Cruising campaign: Oliver mentioned that the cruising page, because of MALC contributions, is usually the most trafficked page on Visit mobile's website. The partner referrals from Visit Mobile's website to Carnival's booking website show Mobile's commitment to having year round cruising.

City Tax Audit Discussion

- Kent Blackinton talked about the meeting he, Margo and members of Visit Mobile staff had with the city administration concerning short term rentals. During the meeting the idea of a city sales tax and assessment audit of the hotels was brought up. The MALC board previously discussed providing resources to assist the city in auditing the hotels. After the meeting Kent Blackinton wanted to seek the board members' thoughts on revisiting the topic since September and October collections seemed to be short of projections. This would be a one time audit of all hotels which would take multiple years. MALC would look to help hire an outside firm to conduct this audit of all hotels. In past discussions, the board

has supported this. Judi Gulledge voiced that she is in support of this audit. Discussion to be carried over until the next meeting.

Capital Update

- Updates
 - Tillmans Corner Landscaping Update: David Clark updated the Board on the progress of this project. If AL dot gives final approval of the project this week, then the planting should be able to begin on February 5th.

- Trolley:
 - Not feasible to hire a trolley at this point.
 - David Clark mentioned the mayor wants to expand Trolley services. It could be possible for MALC to contribute to purchasing a trolley with the city to service Downtown and eventually West Mobile, South Alabama, Springhill, and more. Kent Blackinton stated this would be a better solution than contracting out a Trolley around Mardi Gras. Kent Blackinton and Aaron both stated they would be in support of allocating capital funds to this.

Special Projects

- Wayfinding Signage:
 - This project which is managed by the city is back on track. This project would provide consistent signage throughout the entire city.
 - MALC already agreed to contribute 10,000 to this project. Kent Blackinton brought up the possibility of allocating more funds to this project. The first phase was 400,000 which is covered. This was one of the original projects that was talked about for the TID, hotels were very interested.

Financial Report by Bobby Hall

Financials as of December 31st, 2025.

Kent Blackinton motioned to approve Financials. Hunter Omainsky seconded.

A unanimous vote of approval followed.

Kent Blackinton asked for clarification on where the interest income is coming from. Bobby Hall clarified it is coming from all of the budget lines. Kent Blackinton asked if there was a way for this money to be moved where it will be earning more interest, bringing up the possibility of moving the reserves into a CD. The board wants to maximize the interest income that is earned either through a CD or money markets. Bobby Hall will follow up on these options and will update the Board at the next MALC Board of Directors Meeting

Open Discussion

- n/a

Future Meeting Dates

- February - none
- March- 12th

Meeting Adjourned at 4:46 PM by Kent Blackinton.