



Quarterly Meeting

April 22, 2022 - Dewey Beach Delaware

Call to Order

Anna Weltz, Chair

Attendance and Introductions

Morgan Christopher, Bradford County; Tara Hill-Coursey, Caroline County Economic Development; Aaron Jumper, Cumberland Valley Visitors Bureau; Rachel Rohm, Delaware's Quaint Villages; Joel Cliff, Discover Lancaster; Alicia Quinn, Discover Lehigh Valley; Morgan Christopher, Endless Mountains Visitors Bureau; Mark Ickes, Explore Altoona; Anna Weltz, GO Laurel Highlands; Jen Boes, Greater Wilmington Convention & Visitors Bureau; Liza Gutshall, Huntingdon County Visitors Bureau; Buffie Boyer, Juniata River Valley Visitors Bureau; Jana Carter, Kent County Office of Tourism; Lisa Haggerty, Pennsylvania's Americana Region; Tina Coleman, Southern Delaware Tourism; Krista Boothby, Talbot County Department of Economic Development and Tourism; Emily Keel, Valley Forge Tourism & Convention Board; Sue Swales-Vitullo, Visit Clearfield County; Alison Morris, Visit Fairfax; Matthew Scales, Visit Hartford; Jennifer Sigal, Visit Loudoun; Morgan Christopher, Visit Potter-Tioga; Meghan Gearino, Visit Richmond VA; Brenda Black, Visit Shenandoah County; Vanessa Junkin, Wicomico County Tourism; Miranda Jarrell, Visit Williamsburg; Allison Rohrbaugh, Visit Harrisburg & Hershey; Courtney Swenson, Tour Stafford VA; Brittany Loving, Tour Stafford VA; and Chrissy Tobias, Explore York.

Welcome and Housekeeping

Anna Weltz, Chair

Anna Welcomed Chrissy Tobias as the new Board secretary.

The Quarterly meeting host, Tina Coleman, welcomed us to South Delaware.

Since this is the first in person meeting in two years we went around the room and introduced ourselves by telling the group a interesting or weird fact about ourselves.

Approval of Minutes – January 21, 2022

Christine Tobias, Secretary

Motion to approve: Morgan Christopher

Second: Jen Boes

No opposed: Motion passes

Approval of Treasurer's Report & Budget

Krista Boothby, Treasurer

Motion to approve: Alisha Quinn

Second: Brenda Black

No opposed: Motion passes

Old Business

Anna Weltz, Chair

New Staff Member – Matt Scales – The job description for the Admin Assistant was shared through social media channels, our website, and other locations. Have only received one application so far. Extending the window to May 20, 2022. Hoping to widen the pool of candidates. The listing will also be posted on PRSA, LinkedIn, and Indeed.

Anna Weltz shared the hope that this will eventually turn into an Executive Director position.

A suggestion was posted to post and boost the listing on Facebook.

The position is a remote, part-time position with little travel. It will pay \$600 a month.

20th Anniversary

Jen Sigal

July 1st is MATPRA's birthday. Three RPFs were submitted from agencies. We hired two of the agencies. Mindy Bianca's company will work to attract new, stronger media to our organization. She will be recruiting three to four media professionals to participate in a panel at Marketplace.

Platinum PR was hired to execute a two-phase plan. First phase is researching the reporter personas the organization is already attracting. They are also developing a 20th anniversary logo. They encourage us to add this logo onto our websites and link it back to the MATPRA website.

The second phase of the plan will be gathering anniversary materials such as MATPRA moments blog posts, social media engagement, and newsletters.

We will also be holding a celebratory dessert reception and cider toast at Marketplace.

New Business

Anna Weltz, Chair

- *Treasurer* – Krista Boothby has agreed to extend her term.

- *FY23 Quarterly Meetings* – Nov. 4, Jan. 20, and April 21. First right of refusal will be extended to Winchester County and Charles County

Anna Weltz raised the idea of making the January meeting virtual. It is consistently the least attended quarterly meeting due to weather and traffic issues. With the uncertainty of where the public health situation will be at that time, it might be a good idea to just plan on it being virtual. Anna opened the idea up to the floor for discussion.

A question was posed about whether or not the virtual meeting should count to the mandatory attendance required for Marketplace. The bylaws do not specify a need to host in-person meetings.

Motion: Ali Morris

Second: Joel Cliff

No opposed, motion passed.

- *FY 23* – The board is exploring the idea of a strategic plan to grow the organization. Anna asked if any of our members have suggestions for companies that we could send RFP to. Members mentioned Marshal Communications and Destination Next. Prices ranged from \$15k to \$50.

The possibility of grant funding was mentioned. Krista would need to investigate that more.

- *2023 Marketplace* - RFPs are now open. All RFPs are due by June 1, 2022. A few DMOs have already expressed interest.

2022 Marketplace Update

Liza Gutshall, Host Committee

The host committee is looking forward to hosting the first ever multi-destination Marketplace. They hope visitors don't see county lines. Happy Valley will be the homebase.

Plans are in the works for an opening reception and celebration for the 20th anniversary of MATPRA on Tuesday evening. Earlier in the afternoon will be the Annual MATPRA meeting and professional development panel.

Wednesday will be Marketplace and Happy Valley Welcome FAM tours.

Thursday buses will take us to FAM tours at the surrounding DMOS.

For the first time this year DMOs are allowed to attend pre- and post-FAMs.

There are lots of options for sponsorships starting at \$500.

Anna let the group know that a second DMO representative will be allowed to attend at an additional cost. This year the cost for a 2nd rep will be \$500. This is to ensure the DMO does not end up losing money on the event.

Morgan Christopher raised an objection to allowing a second representative being allowed at Marketplace. He stated there is so much effort put into making sure all the DMOs are on an even playing field at the event that allowing two representatives from a DMO gives them a leg up. A discussion about whether or not a 2nd representative should be allowed followed with suggestions including having a trainee designation for the other representative and also only having them attend for the marketplace.

Anna Weltz stated the 2nd Rep policy would stand for 2022 and we'll see what the post-event surveys say about whether or not that should continue.

Event reminders and pre-planning info

Anna Weltz, Chair

The formal dates for Marketplace are October 18-20. Plan to budget for \$575 for registration and estimate about \$160 per night for lodging. Sponsorship opportunities are available. DMO registration will be open in May. Deadlines will be set for full, partial and no refunds.

Committee Reports

Media Committee

Morgan Christopher, Endless Mountains

The accepted media from the canceled 2020 and 2021 Marketplaces were invited back for 2022. They had to submit two current pieces of writing, one of which had to be travel related. Forty-two journalists responded and were accepted. There were 20 new media applications, nine of which were accepted. There is 1 application still being considered. There are a total of 51 media personnel planning to attend. Places are being reserved for the media for professional development panel with the help of Mindy Bianca.

Registration for Marketplace will open in Mid-May along with FAM tour preferences.

The Media Committee is working on updating the master media list which is available upon request.

Membership Committee

Lisa Haggerty

The membership committee has been calling new members to welcome them to MATPRA.

Emails will go out to members who have not attended a meeting in the 21/22 fiscal year to inform them they must attend the July meeting and have their dues paid in order to attend Marketplace this fall.

A Google form will be coming out in the coming weeks for membership renewal. The membership committee asks that all members fill out the form so we can start fresh with updated information.

A question was asked about what potential DMOs need to qualify. Anna responded that, according to the bylaws, Downtown/ Main Street organizations do not qualify for MATPRA membership. All members must have their state verify they are the approved destination marketing organization for that location.

Marketing and Social Media Committee

Vanessa Junkin & Courtney Swenson

Vanessa Junkin – We currently have 3,554 followers on Facebook, 559 followers on Instagram, and 817 followers on Twitter.

Social media content is pulled from the group press releases and repurposed. This helps to keep the posts on theme with marketing efforts. Around \$200 was used for ads about the marketplace.

Courtney Swenson – The marketing plan for MATPRA is available upon request. The marketing committee asks that when DMOs submit photos for the group press releases they include the DMO name in the file name to lessen confusion.

The marketing and social media committee is working with Platinum PR to recruit new media to MATPRA. They will go through our media mentions, social media and website data to create media profiles to help with the recruiting process.

New group press release themes are being developed for the next fiscal year.

Website Committee

Ali Morris

Committee Membership Update:

We bid adieu to Crystal Abrom of Visit Howard County and Leslie Baker of Visit Hampton, who have both accepted new positions outside of DMO life. Best of luck to them both and they will be missed.

We are seeking 2 new members to join the committee! Please reach out if you have experience or interest in website development/design, SEO, or analytics. Ali Morris: AMorris@fxva.com

Recent Web Updates:

- Marketplace landing page has been updated with this year's event information
- Visitor Guide links have been updated, per Google Form collection. If you still do not see your destination listed, please reach out to the web committee.
- The "Join" page has been flushed out to include some membership benefits and a link to our Destination one-sheeter
- Created a Careers/Jobs landing page for current and future job opportunities with MATPRA
- A filter has been added to the News Post page that allows users to sort by region and interest
- The Story Ideas section has been overhauled into a similar format as the News section, which better highlights press release content and allows for Google optimization and imagery
- Story Ideas navigation now also includes a link directly to the News section, in addition to Press Releases
- History page has been updated, with big thanks to Board members and committees for helping flush this out
- Members asked for the ability to preview posts and itineraries prior to submitting; this is now an available feature on the submission forms
- Members also asked for notifications when posts have been approved/denied; this feature is now live
- Web team has been implementing UTM tracking on our website content and sharing with the marketing & social media committee; this will allow us to see what is driving the most clicks to the website and help us plan out future content
- Flushed out new submission criteria for events, news posts, and itineraries; please refer to the Resources section/How-To guides of the website to acquaint yourselves

Work In Progress:

- Ongoing management of UTM tracking for analytics, in coordination with social media committee and Board. Note: any link that is going to a matpra.org URL should have a UTM placed on it; please reach out to web committee if you'd like to create one.
- 20th Anniversary Content Implementation, per direction from Board & Marketing committee
- Marketplace page updates leading up to event, per direction from Board
- Development of an "In the News" section as a way to highlight MATPRA journalist stories, with links out to their websites and a way to collect more content for the site and social.

Some notes from Analytics:

Data from January 13, 2022 – April 20, 2022

- 4,443 users – 79.4% increase since last quarter
- 8,389 pageviews – 104.4% increase since last quarter
- 5,195 sessions – 95.0% increase since last quarter
- 42% of traffic is direct, followed by 32% organic search
- Since implementing UTM tracking and social media marketing, we are now seeing 22.9% of traffic coming from social (majority being Facebook)
 - Compared to last quarter, where social was 0.6% of traffic!
- Top social content (that we can tell based on UTMs) this quarter was the January & February press releases, as well as the Marketplace page and a shoutout to Juniata's Big Valley blog.
- This quarter, 57% of users viewed the site on mobile, followed by 36% on desktop and only 6% on tablet.

New Criteria for Submitting Content

Members, please take note of new criteria for submitting content. Please try to stick to this as much as possible to help the committee approve content to the site quickly.

For Events

- Must be an annual or large, one-time event.
- Should not be longer than a week (if it is, consider submitting a News Post instead).
- No weekly series events like Farmers Markets, Concerts, Art Galleries, etc.
- You may submit up to 6 active events at a time.
- Ask yourself if this event is something a travel writer would cover or if someone from 30 miles away would travel to attend. Look at it as a pitch opportunity.

Questions on event submissions can be directed to the web committee.

For News Posts

In an effort to balance out content, each DMO can submit **2 news posts per quarter** for a **total of 8 submissions a year**. (This is 4 more than currently accepted.) If you want to submit all 8 posts at once to save time, you MUST list your ideal publishing timeframes (i.e. Day/Month) in the "Notes to Admin" section of the submission form so that they can be scheduled in advance.

Questions on news post submissions can be directed to Ali Morris: amorris@fxva.com.

For Website Access & Management

All members are asked to please take a few minutes to review your DMO profile on MATPRA.org. After you have logged in, you will see a drop-down menu under Member Links.

[Here](#) you will find helpful info on how to update your profile, add a post, update events, and upload an itinerary.

If you need a login or have questions about your account, please contact Ali Morris: amorris@fxva.com.

Website how-to's and other resources available here: <https://matpra.org/resources/>.

Professional Development Session

Matt Scales

Matt Scales introduced Kelsey Ogletree, a freelance writer and creator of the online community Pitchcraft.

Kelsey gave the group insight into the needs of freelance writers when looking at pitches from DMOs. Some of her tips included submitting pitched that were too long, not timely, and with no hook. She encouraged us to follow the writers we are interested in hosting on social media, interacting with their posts, and subscribing to their newsletters. This builds the foundations of a relationship rather than going in completely cold. You can learn more about Kelsey at her website: <https://www.kelseyogletree.com/>.

Next quarterly meeting is July 15, 2022, in Endless Mountains, Pa, hosted by Morgan Christopher

Closing Comments / Adjournment

Anna Weltz, Chair

Motion to Adjourn: Ali Morris

Second: Aaron Jumper

No opposed, motion passed.