

# Mid-Atlantic Pathwork Board of Trustees

Minutes: Wednesday, October 29, 2018, 3:30 - 5:30 pm

Present: Tom Hubbard, Kent Peterson, Claire Kelly, Rixie Dennison, Kimberly Middleton, John Blum, Brad Smith, Paul Klinger

## 1) Future meeting dates - all dates acceptable to group. Next meetings are:

- Thursday, November 29
- Wednesday, January 30, 2019
- Wednesday, February 27
- Wednesday, March 27

## 2) Reports

### a) Center Operations — Paul

- Positive sentiment feedback from retreat participant (Falling in Love, with Jenny & Lisa), group rebooked for next year.
- A lot of work on social media seems to be generating interests and visibility. People requesting tours and dates, related to ways to grow the business for personal and /or couples retreats.
- Focus on helping leaders to market events to increase participation. If able to bring in \$3-5k more per group, could be saving grace. Of last 10 events, 7 are from marketing. For 6 out of 7, staff were able to impact change (expanding groups) by offering marketing support using social media, boosted sales 20% on these events for very little investment on our end.
- Center rental sales booked 10 events, 5 in this fiscal year, 5 for next year. Space still available for other groups on these weekends.
- Maintenance – Jason and Pat- focused on heaters and boilers for October. Pat leading Wi-Fi solutions seems to be solved. Evaluating power outage situation, binder updated for outage lasting more than a few hours. Will be putting together outage boxes (hand warmers, led lights, cell phone chargers etc.) to make sure people are safe, for each building. Next step looking at generators \$1k for each building, up to \$30k for Lighthouse and Center Building.
- Grounds – Harvesting, many Asian pears. Correcting path to summer house. Next week path to main entrance being added because guests don't always know how to get to office. A walkway will be made from the parking lot to the office with signage.
- Kitchen – new ideas and recipes. Nice to see new food and flavors! Working on revenue, selling granola, cookies, etc.
- Housekeeping- 4 same day switch over with people checking out 9:30 and new group at 2:30. Amazing! One of reasons allowing for growth in bookings. Had a guest complaint on housekeeping, need to make sure we are training staff properly.

**(Discussion)**

- Kent likes the opening quotes with positive feedback from guests, request to keep that on meeting notes.
- Brad asked a question about inquiry pipeline – Paul responded that there have been contacts or scheduled tours, including 4-5 couples retreat requests. People tend to not want to use the phone; better through text or email. Kimberly Klinger tracks and logs data. Requests are double where they were last year.
- Kimberly – Have there been inquires by massage therapists, energy workers and/or yoga to use the spaces. Paul: there are more spaces in Madison, don't need to come all the way to 7oaks. Rixie mentioned that there is not a lot of space to offer massages during a retreat. Adds extra money on to a weekend that may not be affordable.

**b) Membership & Fundraising — Brad, Kimberly**

- Brad able to participate more now, will be working to pull ideas together.
- Rixie: tie membership to the retreat center, currently her only benefit is 20% off in book store. Kimberly: Kripalu offers money off for a leader who brings in a group, as an incentive. Might want to consider something similar. Paul: One of the needed conversations is if there is an Sevenoaks membership, will there be two types of membership? The mindset of the Pathwork groups maybe different from those coming for a retreat. Trying to morph to fit two audiences into one may lead to disappointment. Tom: Bring Rixie and Paul into conversation and set up a price structure that makes more sense. We need ways to motivate those who have come and enjoyed experience. Brad: Claire is also part of the working group, we need to bring folks together, have a lot of thinking to do and need to be clear of what we are trying to accomplish.
- Kent: Appreciates the chart, it puts things in perspective, has been an ongoing discussion for many years. Agrees it makes sense to have two separate memberships (Friends of Sevenoaks) quite distinctive in branding and costs—access to visit grounds, preferred access to available space for a weekend, getaway to stay in Oak House for the weekend. Darlene was involved in this discussion for a while in the past and may be a good person to bring into the discussion.

**c) Finance Committee — John & Kent**

- Good news item – strong 1<sup>st</sup> quarter. Paul as nice a Q1 report as ever, we had a great year last year. Occupied last year 22.76% this year 24.6% an increase of 1.8%. Average daily rate \$ 107.92, this year \$130.08. Revenue per available room 24.32% to 32.2%. Q1 revenue \$148,120 for quarter.
- July outperformed all expectations this year for same occupancy increased revenue. August (last year was a disaster, cancellations and missed projections). Revenue for this year up by 28%, but not best in terms of guest nights. People are paying the rates that

are published at \$142/per night. New guests are paying new rates, rates are strong. Kent: more dollars per night, are we getting any push-back? Paul: no. If guest comments that there are cheaper rates, will have conversation. Comments not coming from serious retreat planners, not losing business based on price.

- Rental forecast vs budget – Paul pointed out the challenge we face through the end of the year. Closed booked sales for Sept missed budget. Between now and end of June need to generate more. Need to bring in almost \$200k in sales by the end of June, still have \$79K to go, have 4-5 weekends to sell. There's a lot of red on this report from Oct-May.
- Rixie: When are able to make upgraded niceties to the center, can increase the rate.
- Kent: Historic comment - having watched finances over 10yrs almost every year we have started not making budget, so this is a chronic situation. It was unusually pleasantly surprising to see how well we've done in June and August. Have closed the gap between what was needed to catch up, have increased by \$40k. Sounds like there is confidence that we can make up the rest, maybe only \$30k shortfall in the end based what was listed in the budget. Hopeful that we can make up \$50k and have weekends booked. Still this is a very serious situation where we may fall significantly short of budget. How can we help?
- Brad : How do you see October coming in actual? (Paul) I think we'll miss by about \$4-5K. Things are improving month to month as we move forward.
- Item #6 Dashboard – (straight-mouth emoji) actual income less than budgeted income due to shortfall in center rentals and 1 sacred dimension cancellation. Center salaries were over budget, maintenance and grounds costs were up, and utilities up due to under-budgeting cost of propane. Month of Sept dropped by \$28k, not what was anticipated. Real question is year to date---center rentals on budget going into October. MAP and center salaries under budget, but over in terms of other items.
- \$38K operating cash, above what's usually kept. At the end of October our cash should rise, will be abundant with cash but that surplus will decrease in November.
- Projection of operating cash, should be fine until March, will be running short before the end of the year may need to obtain loans at that point.  
(FY start June –Sept (1<sup>st</sup> qtr), Oct-Dec (2<sup>nd</sup> qtr) booked but stretched).
- Tom: How do we deal with what looks like a shortfall for the year? Kent suggested reopening idea of partnership.
- Claire: Were we overoptimistic when set budget? Paul pointed out that we knew that we would be stretching ourselves with the expectations needed to cover. Rixie suggested that we hold our language in a more positive way – 'preparing for abundance'. Brad said we are trying to make up shortfall takes time and effort to make up major rental loss, that's why I think there is significant light at the end of the tunnel. instead of being focused on the difference between budgeting and actual. I think Paul is doing a damn good job. Kent appreciated the request to change the languaging but

you're looking at a weary traveler. We exceeded numbers last Spring. Paul you are doing a great job and we are very grateful.

d) **Pathwork Council** — Report from Beth Hedquist - Agreed to exchange meeting minutes, will also share info through Pathwords. Tom is in touch before all meetings. Good news is council is quite busy and making good progress, slow but working at it. Rixie: are there any Pathwork weekends booked? Yes, meets 4 times a year, one scheduled for December.

3) **Executive Session** — Trustees met without staff.