

MASON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
Meeting of the Board of Directors

July 10, 2009

PRESENT: Tom Botsford, Michelle Carpenter, Aaron Fiedler, Jeff Haueter, Chris Iott, Neil Kentner, Robin King-Fuller, Ron Tatro, and Bob Warnke. ABSENT: Joe Dean, Lance Delbridge, Kim Gorrell, and Robin Manno.

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- I. Call to order at 7:30 AM
- II. Minutes of the June Meeting – reviewed and approved.
- III. Treasurer’s Report – discussed and approved.
- IV. Executive Director’s Report – discussed and approved. No new members since the last report. Ambassadors are working on two new non-member outreach programs and will share that with the Board and other committees soon. (See the leave-behind card idea.) In 2006, the Board voted to join the Lansing Regional Chamber of Commerce by paying dues. Since then, in 2007 and 2008, we have had a “reciprocal” membership with the Lansing Chamber. Should we make it truly reciprocal? (If so, might we want to do the same with Leslie next year?) **It was moved, seconded, and approved by the Board that we have reciprocal memberships with other Chambers of Commerce when appropriate.** We are still looking for people who would like to collaborate on writing a draft of our Strategic Plan, Membership Dues Restructuring, and other planning documents. Anyone who would like to learn how these are put together is welcome to help. The Membership Services Committee will review and approve the draft of our strategic plan and dues restructuring before consideration by the Board. We still have tickets to sell and contributions to ask about for several fundraisers. Fundraising is essential to our Chamber’s continued activities and programs on behalf of our community. Help people understand that their support by buying tickets, etc. for certain public events and activities help fund certain purposes. Available now are: sponsorships for the MACC Golf Classic in late July to support the *Aggie Corner Scholarship Fund* and tickets for the MACC Annual Raffle & “Early Bird”/Dinner in October to support the *Hometown USA Fund* (including raising funds toward Christmas decorations for the streetlights on Cedar Street in 2010. Remember, any money we get from people in fundraising is not a tax deductible donation, as we are not a charitable or educational nonprofit, but contributions are going to the Chamber – our local business and community association nonprofit and our programs and events benefit the entire Mason area community.
- V. Committee Reports:

**Executive Committee** – The committee discussed the reports and agenda for the Board of Directors meeting on Friday, July 10, 2009. Discussion took place over the officers’ reports, especially updates on membership and the treasurer’s report in regards to the Horse Show and other fundraising income. It was announced that **Allegiance Health** will have a groundbreaking at Noon on Thursday, July 23 at the old Funtyme site. A notice is attached to the Board packet.

**Ambassadors Committee** – Ad hoc committee developments and assignments were discussed: Member Mixers – A discussion of the upcoming mixer events -- or events that have a mixer component – took place. They are the June 21<sup>st</sup> Chamber Night at the Races at **Spartan Speedway** (to benefit the Mason Area Visitors Center Fund), the Golf Classic outing on July 30<sup>th</sup> at **Eldorado** (to benefit the MACC Aggie Corner Scholarship Fund), the annual Raffle Party on October 17<sup>th</sup> – now at **Eldorado** (to benefit the Mason, Michigan – Hometown USA Fund), the new Business-to-Business Expo on November 12<sup>th</sup> at the **Cobblestone Events Center**, and of course the Holiday Party Mixer on December 3<sup>rd</sup> at the **Fairgrounds Community Building**. It was decided to scale back costs on the Race Night because ticket sales to members weren’t going well. It is now being publicized to the community. Doug Klein and Aleasha Wood are still charged with checking out arrangements for a potential speed networking event at **Meijer**. Good Morning, Mason! -- The next GMM is June 25. The theme is “patriotic” since we’re between Flag Day and Independence Day. Co-sponsor is Dart Container Corporation. We’ll continue the roll out of the annual MACC Raffle and all our other events. MACC Golf Classic Outing – We STILL really, really need golfer “goodie bag” and door prizes for this event. Many sponsorships are also still available. We are trying to build sponsorship and participation to benefit the Aggie Corner Scholarship fund. Remember that the date was moved up to Thursday, July 30 due to conflicts with the **Fair** and Thursday Night Live events. Other items: Ribbon Cuttings – **Mason Insurance Agency** will have their ribbon cutting on June 26<sup>th</sup>, a Friday, at 4 PM with a reception following. Mason Values Week/Fair Week – Plans are underway for booth volunteers and more.

**Economic Development Committee** – Doug Klein discussed the upcoming Mason Area Entrepreneurs Club meetings on Thursday, September 24<sup>th</sup> and Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup>. The Chamber is planning a Business-to-Business Expo on Thursday evening, November 12<sup>th</sup> at the **Cobblestone Events Center**. This is an extension of the Mason Values program. New development properties will soon be on the website. There is some interest again in Mason as a movie location. Marco Brogio will give a **DDA** market study update at the next Good Morning Mason. He says that the study has been filed with the State. It will be used in strategic planning by the DDA and the Chamber. A one-page summary is being developed and will be distributed at GMM. A goal of the **DDA** is to revitalize their website. There are also 7 new on-premises liquor licenses available through the **DDA**. Los Tres Amigos is waiting for

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a regular liquor license to open. Tim Gaylord shared that the local economy is doing better than the State. Property values have dropped dramatically – and may be bottoming out. There is a bit more flexibility now on financing. Regulatory agencies are causing difficulties in the lending process, often making it so the banks can't afford to lend. A reminder was given that inflation comes back shortly after any recovery. Art Good mentioned that overextension of credit in the past decade has caused a depression in housing sales. He believes we are 3 to 5 years from the bottom of the real estate market. The unemployment rate could go above 14% soon. Brent Forsberg said that concerns about inflation are being heard more often lately. The new home tax credit is getting some people looking. More foreclosures are coming, though. They are moving quickly when they come on the market. Tim Gaylord said when banks lose money on foreclosures, they have to make it up on future loans – and that affects us all. Sue Pigg said that business loans also get squeezed. There is no buffer for any setbacks in small businesses' financing. There is some SBA help available, but many people wait until it is too late. An EPA grant came in to the **County**, which will pay for phase one and phase two "brownfields" assessments. This will be operational by August 1<sup>st</sup>. Land bank flips seem to be working well – at the lower level of value anyway. There have been eleven site searches in the **County** since April 1<sup>st</sup>. LEAP has been helpful in the development process. George Hayhoe reported that they're almost done with the Riverwalk. Gravel is done through Howell Road and paving will follow shortly. We'll have two and one-half miles from Kipp to Howell Roads very soon! Bob Warnke led a brief discussion about the 37<sup>th</sup> annual MACC Horse Show. David Haywood that the Summerwood subdivision is still moving along -- with three houses now and three more coming. These homes are under \$150 thousand. Green Acres assisted living should open soon. The decision by the **County** to put the new 911 center in Lansing instead of Mason was discussed. We also discussed possible outcomes for Rayner Park, since that was involved in one of the 911 offers. The **City** is in the process of taking over soil erosion permits from the **County**.

**Hometown USA Committee** – The 2009 Thursday Night Live concerts on the **Courthouse** lawn this summer were discussed. Only two sponsorships are still available, but those are expected to sell soon. Problems with media announcements and listings were also discussed. The new prototype banners are now in from **JP Signs**. Nearly all of the new banners that will go on N. Cedar Street currently sponsored. Lower arms are in – so only the danglers remain. All other downtown banners (year 3 of the 3-year program) are now up. The new ones should go up soon after the last one is sold. A discussion on the two parades took place. The Independence Day Celebration will again feature bike decorating at **Bestsellers**. A bounce house from **Mason RailTime Adventures** will also be near the **Courthouse** steps before the parade.

**Membership Services Committee** – A review of the outcomes at the annual Horse Show took place. The good news is that we collected 100% of the camping fees this year and all of our Chamber volunteers showed up and were ready to work. The bad news is that there were many fewer horses and campers. A complete analysis will be done at the July committee meeting with a recommendation on continuing the show made to the Board the first week of August. A review of the May 21, 22, 23 and 24, 2009 Chamber's poker room fundraiser was done. We now have experience in this, but there was little money made. We'll try again once more this year. Dates are September 30, October 1, 2 and 3. The committee continued to discuss the Chamber's strategic planning process. Based on results from that membership survey, a draft plan with a SWOT analysis is being worked on. Collaborators are requested! We have also started work on a new tiered-benefits dues structure for 2010 and could use help with that also. The committee got another update on the **Spartan Speedway** fundraiser on Fathers Day - June 21<sup>st</sup> to benefit the Mason Area Visitors Center Fund. Tickets are still available at \$10 each and the event features a parking-lot mixer. Because member interest still remains pretty thin, we'll scale back the mixer plans to reduce costs. An update on the annual MACC Raffle "On the Town" that benefits the Mason, Michigan - Hometown USA Fund was presented. We continue to have tickets for both parts available. One for the early bird/dinner tickets (200) and the other for the "On the Town" Raffle tickets (2000), each to be sold at \$20 each per ticket. We still need items for the early bird prizes.

VI. Old Business – None.

VII. New Business – None.

VIII. Committee Assignments: Executive Committee - Wednesday, August 5 - 9:00 AM; Ambassadors Committee - Tuesday, July 14 - 7:30 AM; Economic Development Committee - Thursday, July 23 - 7:30 AM; Hometown USA Committee – Tuesday, July 14 - 8:30 AM; and Membership Services Committee – Thursday, July 16 - 7:30 AM.

IX. Announcements – LSJ Media will have a new Chamber advertising special coming out soon, Independent Bank will hold a blood drive on Tuesday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, and 57 units have already reserved for the Veterans Parade on Saturday morning, November 7<sup>th</sup>.

X. The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 AM.

The next Board of Directors meeting is Friday, August 7, 2009 at 7:30 AM in the Chamber office.

*Minutes Submitted 8/4/09 by the Secretary--Douglas J. Klein, APR*