



## Agenda

### Middletown Visitors Bureau - Board of Directors Annual Strategy Meeting

March 15, 2021, at 4 - 7 p.m.

**Location:** Google Meet ([meet.google.com/nfg-gtaf-ihb](https://meet.google.com/nfg-gtaf-ihb))

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**Officers:** Elizabeth Hanavan, President (Present) - Lyndsey Pittman, Treasurer (Absent) - Mica Glaser Jones, Secretary (Present) - Mary Huttlinger, Executive Director (Present)

**At Large Members:** DeAnna Shores (Present), Dr. Matthew Smith (Present), David Beeman (Present), Stefan Wannemacher (Absent), Heather Mason (Absent)

**Liaisons:** Ami Vitori - City Council Liaison (Absent), City Manager Liaison, Shelby Quinlivan (Present)

**Guests:** Kathleen Norris (Present), Melinda Huntley (Present), Jim Palenick (Present), Chris Xeil Lyons (Present), Jeff Payne (Present)

1. Betsy - Approval of the February minutes (4:00 pm)
  - a. Motioned by David Beeman, Second by Mica Glaser-Jones
2. Mary - New Business - Welcome - Strategy Session (4:00-4:05 pm)
  - a. Mary - Introduction of Kathleen Norris, Moderator and Melinda Huntly (10 minutes) (4:05-4:15 pm)
    - i. What will tonight look like? Brainstorming on WHY of MVB and how it fits into overall community needs. What does the next 12-16 months look like.
    - ii. Meeting agreements. Keep mute on less speaking or contributing to discussion. Move around if needed, 3 hour meeting. Silence phones.
    - iii. Round Robin Introductions. See bios of guests (attached).
  - b. Melinda Huntly - The Landscape of Tourism (1:30 minutes)(4:15-5:45 pm)
    - i. Melinda - WHY overview - **(See attached Powerpoint Presentation)**
      1. What does finding your why mean? Your "Why" is a statement of purpose that describes why you do the work you do and why you live the lifestyle you do. It is your calling. It is your conviction. It is your mission statement. It is a vision of your life and work.
        - a. WHY - the motivation (strong travel economy)
          - i. **(unique story - Appalachian roots, including gritty, blue grass, hardworking, America devotion, beer, heartland, pride, art, steel, makers)**
    - b. HOW - process (provide information)
      - i. **(story telling)**
    - c. WHAT - our deliverables (channels of communications, methods)
      - i. **(use methods with greatest ROI to target audiences)**

2. Keep focused on MVB and not the community itself, although the community is our asset
  - a. Develop a consensus for the direction of MVB
    - i. We are OPEN for business
    - ii. We have kid and family friendly experiences
  - b. Tourism in Ohio is a trip greater than 50 miles for business or pleasure
  - c. Introduction to our community (both residents and non residents)
- ii. Melinda - The "WHY" for tonight
  1. Copies of prior years' organizational strategies and achievements.
    - a. Mission - Vision - Values
  2. Parameters of the discussion. (Visionary vs. Operational)
- iii. Melinda - Tourism Economic Impact Discussion
  1. Reach of tourism goes beyond the obvious frontline workers
  2. Supports well paying jobs and careers
  3. Symbiotic relationship with Economic Development
- iv. Medlina - Tourism Trends Pre and Post COVID
  1. Drivable excursions will be HOT for the next 12-16 months
  2. Millennial males are the obstacle for safe COVID protocol and threaten synergies for positive experiences
  3. COVID allowing for disruptive innovation
  4. Suggested itineraries provide ROI

3. Break (15 minutes)(5:45-6:00 pm)

- a. KathleenNorris - The Future of the Middletown Visitors Bureau (30 minutes)(6:00-6:30)
  - i. What's Working for Us - What Could We Be Doing Better?
    1. Better collaboration with regard to community partners
    2. Story telling (steel, makers, artsy, music, gritty, heartland, America, work hard)
    3. Letting people know we are open for business
    4. Knowing our audience better
    5. Helping change the perception of Middletown
    6. Partner with Economic Development
    7. Leverage existing assets - appalachian history, MUM Blue Grass efforts
  - ii. What are we good at?
    1. Solid professional brand and marketing the brand
    2. Professional presence / delivers quality product
    3. Storytelling (ex - Heartland Tranquility Excursions in Middletown)
    4. Social Media
    5. Leadership (Executive Director per Melinda & Kathleen)
  - iii. Who are our customers? How can we better serve them?
    1. Local - develop community pride, introduce to undiscovered assets
    2. Short Day Trip - 1-2 hour drive
    3. Long Day Trip - 2-3 hour drive
    4. Overnight Stay - 3+ hour drive
  - iv. How can we be a good partner to the City?

1. Better cross communication and collaboration
2. Leverage existing resources so that MVB and partners are not spread thin

v. If we want to accomplish just two strategic initiatives in the next 12-18 months, what are they?

1. Get the message out that Middletown is Open
2. Understanding target market and audience
  - a. Local - develop community pride, introduce to undiscovered assets
  - b. Short Day Trip - 1-2 hour drive
  - c. Long Day Trip - 2-3 hour drive
  - d. Overnight Stay - 3+ hour drive
3. Increase collaborative communications
  - a. Comms mtg on March 23
4. Story telling - tell it widely
5. Work on a strategic plan (in the interim, develop measurables & a to do list)

vi. If we could change one thing about the Middletown Visitors Bureau , what is it?

1. Be a leader for communicating about Middletown
  - a. Melinda - deeper dive into MVB's WHY
  - b. David - get more people involved in the communications
  - c. Jeff - build strong communication & collaboration
  - d. Mica - collaboration and eliminating redundancies
  - e. Betsy - so many organizations, moving in so many directions
  - f. DeAnna - more focus on youth & families, maximizing opportunities for sports and families
  - g. Shelby - alignment on communications, be prepared for Spooky Nook, Middletown is open for business
  - h. Matthew - storytelling, representation of Blue Grass & Appalachian history and influence
  - i. Chris Xeil - Middletown Growth Partnership TELL boards, big investment opportunities coming down the pipeline and the community needs to been on point as a collaborative partner that is lock step with the City, continue storytelling

b. Kathleen - Organizational Spitballing - Dream Big (10 minutes)(6:30-6:45)

- i. Nothing is off limits
  1. We operate in an “experience” economy
  2. Story is the nature of experience in the life of a place
  3. Capitalize on the push back against homogenization
  4. Build on the unique personality of a place - OWN your WHY and HOW
  5. What gets measured, gets managed

c. Mary - Next Steps & Wrap Up & Thank You (6:45 pm)

- i. Next Board meeting April 19th, virtual meeting

4. Adjournment at 7:10pm



## 2021 Meeting Schedule

*Board of Trustees*

\*Monthly on the Third Monday, except January/July/August

Jan 25 Stakeholders Mtg	Jul no mtg
Feb 15	Aug no mtg
Mar 15 Strategic Planning	Sep 20
Apr 19	Oct 18
May 17	Nov 15
Jun 21	Dec 13 Holiday Party