

**Vermont Brewers Association Events Committee Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 15, 2017 2:00pm-4:00pm Prohibition Pig**

Meeting Attendees: Amy Cronin (VBA), Melissa Corbin (VBA), Andrea Gagner (14th Star Brewing Co.), Anne Linehan (Brocklebank Craft Brewing), Paul Saylor (Zero Gravity), Marly Thompson (Harpoon)

Review of Action Items from American Craft Beer Week Discussion (from our previous meeting)

- Amy is following up with brewers about special release this week
- Vermont restaurant week sponsored by 7 Days was successful
 - Follow-up with 7 Days to see if they are interested in Green Mountain Beer Week and leaning on them for their experience
- Talk to Board about soliciting distributors for sponsorship
 - Melissa says the Board has no interest at this point; Paul says Board might embrace retailers in the future; something that could be brought up to the board again in the future
 - It is fairly common for guilds to accept retailers and distributors as partners or sponsors (Melissa looked at 6 other guilds specifically)
- Message to brewers about Green Mountain Beer week – will be done this week (Amy/Andrea)
- Finalize name - Green Mountain Beer Week – Committee says yes

Review of Action items from Summer Festival Discussion

Music

- Melissa worried about music - “hot potato” no clear vision on making decision of who will take this on. There needs to be a solid plan for music and a decision on who's planning it.
- Amy did speak with Allen Van Anda about music and it did not get much traction. Paul mentioned that Allen was interested in doing music for the brewers gathering. Allen told Amy that he already had bands booked that he wants to see at Nectars for that weekend.
- If there are recommendations from brewers, please tell Amy. Amy will also be having a meeting with Nectars to get recommendations.
- Next meeting we can review bands that are interested in playing at the event and finalize who will perform.
- Amy will move forward with recommendations and brewer opinions.

Increased ticket fee

- The Board approved of the increasing \$2 impact fee to \$3 to also cover taxes (this will be made clear to the consumer when tickets are purchased)
 - This will offset tax burden for the City of Burlington which will save \$10,000 of tax burden that the Association has always carried
- The 2017 event budget is approved by the Board at this point and was presented to the committee for offline review

Photos

- Photo from past festivals - Andrea will reach out to brewers
 - Ask if festival goers have photos from past festivals to share on social
 - Call to action to share photos - work into social media calendar

Former Brewers

- Catamount and Rail City in St. Albans
 - Paul says Rail City is more of a stretch, no contact, might not work out
 - Andrea will see if she can find contact
 - Paul will try again with Catamount and keep Marly posted
 - Paul says Dan Gates (old Trout River) might be willing to participate and create a commemorative brew. Melissa reached out to Trout River and they are open to approaching Dan about this
 - Liz Trot was mentioned by Anne. She hasn't contacted her yet, but will.

Green Mountain Mashers Coming back to the Festival

- Always had a booth at festival and would like to come back as they were pushed out in recent years
- Amy met with Jason the club President last month
- Melissa and Amy think we would have room because the VBA and VBF do not need separate booths (it should be one) which would free up space to have Green Mountain Mashers
- Peterson Malt has been at Stowe Brewers Festival and brings variations of malts
- It would be great to pair Peterson Malt and Green Mountain Mashers in a booth together
- See if Green Mountain Masher want to help with education tent too
- Committee unanimously agrees to invite the Green Mountain Masher and Peterson Malt to the 2017 festival

New food vendor request - do we have room? Do we want to take on more?

- The request came from Asian food truck (Mad Taco spoke highly of them and he has worked at Hop Jam)
 - Andrea mentioned how there is not a ton of food variety
- Seemed like there was room based on last year's event and now that we are losing the larger education tent footprint we should be able to fit them. It's also another source of revenue.
- Paul mentioned how we could take Jesse Bridge's (Park and Rec) offer to grow festival footprint to accommodate more variety

- Paul likes the idea of more variety, maybe not this year though
- Melissa thinks if we have a smaller education tent we have room to add one more food vendor and it will add more variety
- Amy will contact the food vendor and tell him yes

Price point for vendors (food and retail)

- Retail vendors have been paying \$400 to be at both sessions
- 9 retail vendors, snack type food and selling items (tap handle guy)
- 5 food vendors and they pay \$800 for both days
- Looking at increasing that slightly this year because our tent costs went up
- Does the committee feel \$800-\$1000 is still reasonable for our food vendors?
- The tent cost over all went up \$2,000 overall, if we increase prices slightly \$100 per food vendor it could help our cost
- Increase prices for retail and food vendors?
- Ask food vendors to go up \$100
- Maybe increase food tents more than retail tents (5 food vendors go up \$200 each or \$150 and \$50 for retail)
 - Decided to make a recommendation to the Board to increase food vendors by \$150 for a total of \$950 per food vendor and retailers vendors by \$50 for a total of \$450 per vendor
- Should we have retail vendors at all? Should we think about cutting back?
- Haven't seen much business with retailers
- Be more strategic about our retailers and have them be options that make sense (Smoke and Cure, they give out samples and had a lot of interaction at their booth)
- Get rid of retail space for more brewer space? Maybe consider this for the future, but right now it is where our queue is before the brewers open so it wouldn't work for 2017.

Sponsorship

- Send feedback and any contacts to Amy
- Amy will add tickets to event as part of the opportunity
- Only have 3 allied partners, they are supposed to get first right of refusal for sponsorship

Nano brewers being at festival - wanting to attend

- There are about 6 nano breweries
- We are running into space issues in general, we had 46 brewers last year and now we have 51 members.
- Joint small brewery tent: this has been done in the past, but it didn't work well. Paul gave insight that there were problems with the joint tent not being fully managed – there wasn't a point person for each brewery
- Thinks that Bent Hill might have some feedback on what didn't work. Amy to ask when she visits him this month

- Other options could be one session participation? One group during each separate session? Discussion for 2018 event
 - Board needs to weigh in on this subject
 - Next meeting - draft parameters for next year's event with nano breweries participating

Guest brewers: what has been the process for selection?

- Should everyone who was invited to the 2016 event be invited again this year?
- Last year had 46 brewers total. Is there even any room for guests?
 - 12 guest brewers last year, but the VBA has increased 12 brewers this year
- Could do a lottery to see who wants in?
- Paul thinks the Canadian brewers should be a priority – since they are our neighbors, representing another country and it has been tradition to host them. People who attend the event are interested in beers from Canada.
 - If we only invite Canadian brewers, there might not be room for others
 - If there is room to expand beyond Canada - vote, look at breweries with unexpected beers, opinions of membership choosing favorites, giving other breweries a chance and dropping those who have been around for a long time. Committee agreed to this idea
 - In the past brewers have been asked to give suggestions, but as the festival grew, Laura choose what guest brewers could attend. She tried to choose brewers that would attract people to attend the event, stopped asking for suggestions so people would not be let down when the guest brewers they suggested was not asked to attend

Staffing

- Melissa asked the committee about staffing and how it has worked in the past and why there were limits on numbers. Paul said this was a highly evolved system.
- Andrea shared that it would be helpful to have one more person. Could it be two managers and 3 pours?
- Paul said that in the past brewers were putting 12-14 people on their list as staff so the limits controlled the issue of people just being put on a list
- Marly mentioned how the limits can make it challenging when you are asking people to work for you for the weekend, the limits make is so someone working might not be able to also attend the festival
- Amy & Melissa will contact Jess Hyman to find out find out more on how/why this was implemented
- Paul will talk to Sean Lawson about tent managers at festival as well for clarification

Amy's Action Items:

- Vermont restaurant week sponsored by 7 Days was successful
 - Follow-up with 7 Days to see if they are interested in Green Mountain Beer Week and leaning on them for their experience
- Amy is following up with brewers who responded to the survey about a special release this week

- Review bands at next meeting – Amy to bring
- Put a message on social media for old festival photo
- Follow-up with the Green Mountain Mashers and Peterson Malt about being at the festival – Amy
- Ask Bent Hill about his experience at the festival at a nano brewer

Melissa's Action Items:

- Amy and Melissa to contact Trout River about the former owner
- Recommendation to the Board to increase food vendors by \$150 for a total of \$950 per food vendor and retailers vendors by \$50 for a total of \$450 per vendor – Melissa

Committee Action Items:

- Message to brewers about Green Mountain Beer Week – (Amy/Andrea)
- Old photos from past festivals – Andrea will send a message to the brewers and Amy will put a call out on social media
- Send Amy suggestions/contacts for companies for sponsorship by Feb.28
- Former Brewers: Andrea to try Rail City, Paul to try Catamount
- Feedback on sponsorship and contacts for people to sponsor the event to Amy – Committee
- Draft nano brewery parameters for the Board to review at their June meeting – Next Committee Meeting

Next Meeting date: March 8th at 10am – location decided after the meeting: Burlington with the option to call in.