

Naturally Meramec Consortium Regional Zoom Meeting

December 15, 2020 6:00 p.m.

Meramec Regional Planning Commission – 4 Industrial Drive, St. James, MO

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Angie Tutterrow of Go To Blu, Greg Harris of Missouri Rock Island Trail, La’Shundra Connor of A Mustard Seed, Lee Eikermann of Delhi Sustainable Farm, and Michelle Boulware of Meramec Vineyards

**STAFF PRESENT:** Samantha Maddison, Anne Freand, Caitlin Jones

**Minutes**

1. **Call to Order & Introductions:** Samantha Maddison called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Samantha Maddison requested to postpone the approval of the minutes until the January meeting. There were no attendees from the previous meeting to approve the minutes as they were. This was agreed upon by those present.
3. **Staff Report:** Meramec Regional Planning Commission Staff provided an update to Naturally Meramec Consortium attendees on the upcoming events for Naturally Meramec.

Caitlin Jones gave the consortium an update on both website and Facebook statistics for the previous 28 days. While website usage has went down, of the 322 total users on the Naturally Meramec website, 310 were new users to the site. As Caitlin said in the last meeting, this means that the advertising push we have been doing for the website has been working properly. Time spent on the website has stayed steady. This means that people are reaching the website purposely rather than just clicking to it and going right on to something different. Caitlin also mentioned that we are in the process of freshening up the look and function of the website.

The Naturally Meramec Facebook page has seen a significant decrease in views with only 122 views in the last 28 days. This may be because people do not need to make plans this time of year because of the holiday. The Sugar Momma’s post made last week was able to reach over 600 individuals. Caitlin recommended that all attendees like and follow the Naturally Meramec Facebook page and to engage with our posts to help keep the posts higher in the algorithm.

Samantha provided a very brief update to the group on the Speed Date Event that was supposed to be held at Heartland Farms on December 8, 2020. After much discussion, MRPC chose to cancel the event to protect the health and well being of staff and members in attendance. The event will be held in a virtual fashion around the end of January or beginning of February.

Anne Freand spoke to the attendees about the upcoming strategic planning that will take place the beginning of the calendar year. A strategic plan is needed as we are wrapping up the current grant and begin looking for new or additional funding for the program. Anne expects the process to begin with a SWAT analysis around March.

1. **Presentation:** Angie Tutterrow from Go To Blu presented to the consortium on learning how to pivot with your business in the time of COVID-19. She explained to the group that pivoting in your business ideas does not mean starting over. Ways to pivot include ad on’s or increasing value added items, creating virtual events to tie with a facebook live event that people can participate with in their own homes, creating monthly/quarterly subscriptions for items commonly sold from your business, and creating online classes for people to again do from the comfort of their homes. Angie then opened the presentation up to the group to brainstorm ideas. The group instead discussed things that their businesses are already doing to pivot or things that were tried but did not succeed.

La’Shundra Connor spoke about the direction change that A Mustard Seed has had to make due to COVID-19. Because their original idea of creating a commercial kitchen for use in their community was not something that could take place because of the CDC guidelines put in place, they had to refocus their efforts into creating a Farmers Market for the Crocker area.

Michelle Boulware discussed that Meramec Vineyards put the CDC recommendations into effect immediately and were able to find other ways to serve their customers during this time. The business has started offering more online ordering and curbside pickup. They are also now able to ship wine/alcohol to approximately 30 states.

1. **Announcements:** The Naturally Meramec Consortium attendees were given the opportunity to make any announcements about their business and discuss any upcoming events. No new updates were given as updates we made during introductions.
2. **Next Meeting:** The next Naturally Meramec Consortium Regional Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 19, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.
3. **Networking:** After the meeting, Naturally Meramec Consortium attendees were able to network with other attendees. No members had any new updates for the group.
4. **Adjournment:** Samantha Maddison adjourned the meeting at 7:07 p.m.