

STATE OF LOUISIANA
RESILIENT LOUISIANA COMMISSION
HOSPITALITY & TOURISM TASK FORCE
Draft MINUTES

MEETING

Tuesday, July 14, 2020 at 2 p.m. CDT

This meeting was available via Zoom and members of the public were encouraged to provide comments to resilientlouisiana@la.gov and/or the Zoom chat function.

Zoom Meeting Information:

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/93226649625?pwd=dLUraUc1L1p6Z2Yvd2ZoVHJXenRYUT09>

Password: 154401

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Meeting ID: 932 2664 9625

Draft Minutes:

- Welcome
 - Kyle France called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.
- Roll Call
 - Jill Kidder called roll. A total of 39 individuals were on the call, but the meeting did not reach a quorum of the actual members of the Hospitality and Tourism Task Force.
- Introduction of special guest and speaker Louisiana's State Fire Marshal, Mr. Butch Browning.
 - Kyle introduced Fire Marshal Browning. The Fire Marshal expressed his appreciation to the people of the state for doing the right things to get control of this pandemic. He said face to face conversations like the one today over Zoom "allows us to find solutions and common ground," especially as we face additional challenges related to this virus.
 - Browning outlined the details of the Governor's Proclamation JBE 89 from this weekend that includes 1) the closing of bars; 2) rolling back the number of people for social gatherings to a max of 50 people; and 3) Masks are to be worn in public.
 - The Fire Marshal's office, at the request of the Governor, created a "toolbox" to provide specific direction and details to our businesses and organizations. He encouraged every everyone to register at opensafely.org to stay up to date on how your business or organization is impacted by the current state proclamations
 - Courtesy visits by the Fire Marshal's office "have been good." The one major concern, his office is seeing on these visits is that employees have masks but are not always wearing them or wearing them properly.
 - Mr. Browning said "Today ... we are at an impasse. Today ... will be graded in two weeks." We must do what it takes to reduce the spread of this disease and flatten the curve.
 - Social gatherings where people are shoulder to shoulder are a concern.

- Kyle France asked the Fire Marshal to speak about Mardi Gras and other festivals.
- State Fire Marshal Browning said, “Whatever I tell you is just a guess. There’s no crystal ball to this. I’ll tell you that Mardi Gras and the tourism piece is very important and, I get it, you can’t flip a switch and tomorrow and it be there.”
- “What I understand in the federal guidance is there is a part in our numbers that if we can get back down to a level of very little COVID positives, hospitalizations and all those things that guide the policymakers’ decisions, Phase 3 can happen. And in Phase 3 is fairs, festivals and amusements, which I would concur would be Mardi Gras.”
- “My thought would be once we’ve entered Phase 3, we’ve opened up our fairs, festivals and amusements, which would be Mardi Gras. That’s the way I interpret the data.”
- He was specifically asked about Mardi Gras 2021. Browning replied that we can be there by then if we do the right things and put the proper mitigation measures in place.
- He reiterated to care for each other’s safety and health we will all have to wear our masks and follow these safety/hygiene protocols until we reach Phase IV and a vaccine is in place.
- Q&A from Task Force
 - Kyle France called on Mark Romig, leader of the Festivals and Parades subcommittee of the Task Force for comments. He thanked the Fire Marshal and the Governor for their leadership and expressed his optimism for what he had heard from the marshal today. He stated he was pleased to hear that with the right mitigation procedures in place, our state could reimagine Mardi Gras and showcase our culture in a safe way.
 - Mr. Browning stated that he agreed and said he encourages stakeholder input when it comes to his office making decisions concerning guidance for festivals and other business/organizational openings.
 - Kyle France called on Resilient Louisiana Commission Member, Walt Leger. Walt thanked and complimented Butch and the Governor for their leadership. He asked the Fire Marshal for clarification on the regulation outlined in the new proclamation as it relates to event venues with social gatherings like weddings and meetings in convention centers and hotel meeting spaces. He said the distinction is made by the activity and not necessarily the venue. Social gatherings in event venues are limited to 50 people. He gave the example of his KC Hall. It is permitted to allow alcohol sales and catering, but it does not have full restaurant permitting like a hotel or a convention center. Meetings, on the other hand, are considered essential to business and can be better regulated for social distancing and safety protocols. Meetings are limited to under 250 people or 50% of fire marshal capacity, whichever is less. Those spaces that have a restaurant permit also have better ventilation systems.
- Closing Remarks
 - Kyle France called on Secretary Don Pierson for any closing remarks. Secretary Pierson stressed the importance of wearing our masks and for our industry to assist in speaking as one voice about the need for following the protocols. He invited everyone to join the RLC on their weekly call on Friday at 10 am.
- With that, Kyle France adjourned the meeting at 2:40 P.M.