

## MASSACHUSETTS RESTAURANT PROMOTION COMMISSION

Minutes from the Second Meeting of the Commission  
Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium, Newton, MA  
November 26, 2019

### Commissioners in Attendance:

**Chairperson Keiko Matsudo Orrall**, Executive Director, Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism  
**Senator Edward J. Kennedy**, First Middlesex District in the Massachusetts Senate  
**Pat Lee**, Owner and Operator, *Horseshoe Grille*  
**Bob Luz**, President and CEO, Massachusetts Restaurant Association  
**Representative Paul McMurtry**, Eleventh Norfolk district in the Massachusetts House of Representatives  
**Kathi Maino Turner**, Turners Seafood Companies  
**Ted Twinney**, Co-Founder and Manager, Start Line Brewing Company

### Other Attendees:

**Mari Cooney**, Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development  
**Kerry Miller**, Massachusetts Restaurant Association  
**Todd Snopkowski**, Snapchef  
**Josephine Cuzzi**, New England Center for Arts & Technology  
**Martha Leahy**, New England Center for Arts & Technology  
**Stephen Clark**, Massachusetts Restaurant Association  
**Kathy Bell**, Murphy Donoghue Partners  
**Rory O'Hanlon**, Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development  
**Tonia Scalcione**, Executive Office of Housing & Economic Development  
**Daniela De Caro-Heavey**, Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism  
**Annie M. Thompson**, Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism

The second meeting of the Massachusetts Restaurant Promotion Commission ("the Commission") occurred at the Newton Free Library, Druker Auditorium, pursuant to notice being duly given under the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

Chairperson Keiko Matsudo Orrall called the meeting to order at 1:06 P.M.

Commissioners Lee, Luz, Turner, and Twinney, and Representative McMurtry were present. Commissioners Faison, Gullo, Jamison, and Senator Kennedy were not present.

Chairperson Orrall briefly introduced the present commissioners, and motioned to approve the minutes. All commissioners approved minutes.

Chairperson Orrall invited Mari Cooney to provide testimony at 1:08.

Ms. Cooney provided testimony on apprenticeship pilot program managed by the Executive Office of Labor & Workforce Development (EOLWD) and the Massachusetts Restaurant Association (MRA). Details provided include:

- Program has been underway for less than two years.
- Other states have been inquiring about the program since its inception.
- 12 apprentices currently involved in the pilot.
- Program also works with community colleges and will continue to do outreach to more colleges.
- Apprenticeships include a master brewer, front of house and back of house training.

Commissioner Turner inquired about apprenticeships within the fishing industry, particularly Gloucester. Ms. Cooney stated that the program is working with the Massachusetts Fishing Partnership, and trying to identify boats and captains for apprenticeship.

Commissioner Lee asked how EOWLD gets the word out and keeps the program growing. Ms. Cooney replied that they work with the MRA on getting the word out, as well as Bunker Hill Community college and others.

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Commissioner Twinney asked about barriers to the program. Ms. Cooney replied that barriers are mostly understanding the model and identifying who pays for what, especially in the restaurant industry and related training.

Chairperson Orrall asked about the scope of the program and whether this is the first program of its kind in the country. Ms. Cooney replied that there is just one cohort of 12 apprenticeships for the pilot, and stats are limited since the program is still a pilot – offered to present at a future meeting of this Commission in a year on progress. A follow up discussion on cost of the program and tax credits ensued:

- Chairperson Orrall asked a follow up question regarding tax credits. Ms. Cooney replied that tax credits for apprenticeships are available, but not for restaurants.
- Commissioner Twinney asked Ms. Cooney to elaborate on the costs of the program – whether they are for the apprentice or mentor. Ms. Cooney said the mentor incurs the cost, but they work closely with restaurants to ensure they know the benefits.
- Chairperson Orrall asked a follow up about hourly requirements – 2000 for the restaurant program. Ms. Cooney stated that they use federal requirements, which vary based on skill level for apprenticeship. Example of nursing and others that require 8000 hours.
- Commissioner Luz stated that the cost of education is exorbitant and that this program benefits the individual and the industry.
- Chairperson Orrall asked a follow up regarding cost to participant. Ms. Cooney replied that it is \$35 for the participant. There are no limits to number of apprentices.

Chairperson Orrall asked Kerry Miller, Massachusetts Restaurant Association, to testify at 1:25 PM.

Mr. Miller described the HOPES Grant:

- Grant aims to prevent recidivism for 16-24 year olds through culinary training
- The federal grant amount is \$4.5 million total, of which Massachusetts received \$1.2 million.
- Illinois and Virginia have programs as well.
- Stakeholders of the program are Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), MRA, and program candidates.
- The program works with the Suffolk County probation office.
- Program is alternative to young people coming out of high school with culinary programs racking up \$125,000 in debt. Apprenticeship program can train them to move up from dish room to boardroom.

Commissioner Turner asked Mr. Miller to explain certified restaurant owners and how one can become an apprenticeship restaurant. Mr. Miller replied you could become certified through National Restaurant Association or the MRA. A discussion ensued between Commissioner Turner and Mr. Miller regarding training and certification for employees.

Commissioner Luz asked Mr. Miller about obstacles to the program going statewide. Mr. Miller replied that the current contract is with Suffolk County, and it is a pilot. They want to get it right before expanding further.

Chairperson Orrall asked if this HOPES program is the same as the Illinois and Virginia programs. Mr. Miller replied no, the program is specific to Massachusetts. A follow up discussion ensued among Mr. Miller, Chairperson Orrall, and Commissioner Luz regarding the timeframe of the program.

- Mr. Miller stated all programs start at the same time. Commissioner Luz referred to Virginia and stated that MA is attempting to replicate their program, which has 90,000 individuals who have come out of the program. MA's program has not yet been able to expand to the state level.
- Mr. Miller stated that the grant is \$5,000 per person.

Chairperson Orrall invited Todd Snopkowski, CEO of Snapchef to provide testimony.

Mr. Snopkowski provided background of his company, Snapchef, which he founded 18 years ago.

- He developed an apprenticeship program in 2006 and now does culinary staffing for 400 full time jobs per week as well as training.
- Snapchef has 5- and 12-week technical training programs. The 12-week program is 40 hours/week.
- Snapchef services corporate cafeterias, not restaurants.
- Current training programs are not large enough to make a dent – collaboration among the different training organizations is needed to do more.

Commissioner Turner asked whether apprentices are paid, or pay for training with Snapchef. Mr. Snopkowski replied that they get paid if they take a job. There is no payment to participate in the program.

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Chairperson Orrall asked about Snapchef's footprint. Mr. Snopkowski replied that they are New England-based, servicing areas including Boston, Springfield, Dorchester, Worcester, and Providence. Chairperson Orrall asked about recruiting. Mr. Snopkowski replied that they tap into all levels of government – including career centers like MassHire.

Commissioner Luz commended Mr. Snopkowski as a tireless advocate for training.

Commissioner Turner asked about legislation for a team wage or TIF. Mr. Snopkowski replied that a training stipend, tax break, or TIP would be great. Training costs affect small businesses. Mr. Snopkowski suggested a tax break that could be turned into increased wages for employees or one that encourages training.

- Commissioner Turner asked a follow up regarding workforce distribution. Mr. Snopkowski replied that ages of workers ranges from 18 to retirement age, and typically between the age of 28 and 35. In Springfield, the workforce is 60% women, while Boston is evenly split between women and men.

Senator Kennedy joined the meeting at 1:45 PM.

Commissioner Luz suggested there might be an opportunity to look at the 15-18 age range and instituting a training wage that could get young people started sooner.

- Mr. Snopkowski replied that he is working on that with GEN and the MRA, doing an annual teenage competition. He mentioned that culinary is becoming a "lost art" with major culinary schools like Le Cordon Bleu closing.

Commissioner Twinney stated that there are similarities with craft brewing and workforce. He asked if the big challenge is getting more people into the funnel, or through the funnel. Mr. Snopkowski replied that both are issues, and that they staying on top of technology to keep businesses alive and thriving.

- He provided an example of Uber folks exploring a significant venture through a cloud kitchen.

Mr. Snopkowski referred to the difference between staffing restaurants versus corporate kitchens. Restaurants are 24/7 and 365 days a year, whereas corporate chefs work Monday through Friday, and have structured hours. The work-life balance can be very appealing in a corporate setting.

Mr. Snopkowski referred to the HOPES grant as a fantastic achievement.

Chairperson Orrall invited Ms. Josephine Cuzzi and Ms. Martha Leahy from the New England Center for Arts & Technology (NECAT) to provide testimony at 1:56 PM.

Ms. Cuzzi described NECAT as a social service organization at heart, with workforce development as its goal.

- They work with people 18+ years of age who have barrier to entering the workforce, and are often at the lowest point in their life.
- Serve individuals who are an untapped restaurant labor workforce, 18-26 years old who are at-risk.
- Training programs with this population is more challenging.
- Serve 210 individuals, tuition free.
- Train in all kinds of career readiness and job placement needs, with the goal of obtaining a job at a living wage in Boston.
- Program is primarily in Boston at their facility. Also have a program in Everett, thanks to MassHire, as a result of Encore.
  - o Ran 60 people through that program to staff Encore.
- Work on re-entering people from incarceration, working with Suffolk County House of Corrections.
- Program is 16 weeks in length
- Places students in every type of environment, focusing on greater Boston because there are ample job opportunities.

Ms. Cuzzi introduced Ms. Leahy to discuss the program further. Ms. Leahy discussed how, as a chef by trade, she has seen firsthand the difficulty of hiring and how many come to restaurants with no prior experience. Ms. Leahy provided more background on NECAT, including:

- Looking to develop solid, reliable, long-term employees
- Include social and emotional learning with culinary skills
- Teach how to quit a job properly, how to ask for feedback
- Teach employing handbooks
- Match right candidate with right kitchen
- Host two job fairs – one is exploratory, the other is for placement.
- Goal is for students to envision working at a restaurant.

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Ms. Leahy mentioned that turnover in restaurants is typically 100-120%. NECAT has a much lower turnover rate and can intervene at first sign of a problem, to prevent the revolving door.

Ms. Leahy recommends designating primary relationships, continuing to have executive chef trainings, map out how jobs can progress into careers with higher wages; reinforcing expectations on attendance; always have exit interviews with student and relationship manager; developing a business relationship by sharing training costs – which are currently \$6,000 per employee.

Commissioner Luz asked Ms. Cuzzi and Ms. Leahy about whether students have any training when they come into the NECAT program. Ms Leahy replied that some do, some do not – Suffolk has a servsafe program. Commissioner Luz suggested that they build in culinary training for incarcerated.

Ms. Leahy replied that one of the biggest barriers for people trying to re-enter society is work. People with CORI background has better stickiness than the general population.

Commissioner Turner left at 2:15 PM for a business obligation.

Commissioner Luz asked about front-of-house training. Ms. Cuzzi replied that they are leading in that direction. Commissioner Luz stated that FOH has nearly as much shortage as back-of-house.

Commissioner Twinney commended NECAT on the work they do. Ms. Cuzzi offered to host a future Commission meeting at NECAT.

Chairperson Orrall asked about the footprint of NECAT. Ms. Cuzzi replied that they are focused on Boston. Ms. Leahy added that there is a similar program in Worcester.

Mr. Miller added that MPACT – Massachusetts Professional Association for Culinary Training – is a central place to find organizations who provide this kind of training. Mr. Snopkowski added that there are great programs, including the Crock Center. He added that 10 NECAT organizations would not put a dent in the need.

Chairperson Orrall opened the floor to public comment 2:21 PM.

Ms. Cooney stated that after the participant finishes an apprenticeship program, they receive a certification. If they are at community college, they may also receive college credit.

A member of the audience suggested that people with disabilities are also an often-untapped resource for the workforce.

Chairperson Orrall moved the discussion to the next agenda item among the Commissioners.

Commissioner Lee stated there was a role for the Commission to assist and coordinate the work currently ongoing. Commissioner Twinney suggested that the scope was to build awareness of the program to potential candidates to ensure higher utilization of current programs.

Commissioner Luz added that there is a lot of opportunity as well as a lot of need with record-low unemployment. Commission can provide an at-risk population with a path in an industry where you don't need a college degree to do well. Commissioner Luz suggested that they start in neighborhoods where the program is needed most.

- Commissioner Lee suggested they market and promote it.

Senator Kennedy brought up the reference to Johnson & Wales culinary program and asked Mr. Snopkowski why enrollment is down. Mr. Snopkowski referred to Le Cordon Bleu had too high tuition for the wages being earned after graduation. Johnson and Wales is moving to front of house and management.

- Senator Kennedy asked Mr. Snopkowski what could fill the void left by those culinary school closures. Mr Snopkowski stated that the void hasn't been filled yet – though lots of strides have been made.
- Ms. Cuzzi referred to a celebrity chef myth, where reality is that it's a difficult profession.
- Mr. Snopkowski referred to champions of the apprenticeship model such as Andy Husbands and others.
- Mr. Miller mentioned that the National Restaurant Association has done a nice job on competency based model – showing you how to learn skills.

Representative McMurtry stated that the format of this commission meeting has been very helpful, tapping into a specific issue. He mentioned that there is potential legislative action of the issues raised at the meeting.

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Chairperson Orrall moved to the topics of timeline and goals for the Commission. She acknowledged that there is an outstanding item on delaying the due date of the final report. Representative McMurtry stated that it will happen.

Chairperson Orrall brought up the request for quote posted by MOTT for a consultant to review the restaurant industry. Chairperson Orrall also noted the dates for the next meetings, December 17 and January 6. Commissioner Lee asked if the January 6 meeting could be when the consultant is brought before the Commission.

Chairperson Orrall reminded Commissioners that there is an area for public comment on the massvacation.com website and that comments will be circulated.

Commissioner Luz stated that one piece of the commission is the report, but there is a second aspect – the marketing program.

- Commissioner Twinney replied that most of the commissioners have experience marketing and would like to hear from potential vendors.
- Commissioner Twinney added that Economic Development and access to capital is directly tied to viability of restaurants and would like to dig into that topic a little bit:
  - o Including support available from the state, or having speaking from a lending institution or restaurant seeking a loan.

Chairperson Orrall asked for other topics for upcoming meetings, aside from a presentation by the consultant.

- Commissioner Luz suggested marketing.
- Commissioner Twinney suggested that having a standalone topic is productive format
  - o Suggested 3 robust meeting topics: permitting, marketing, and lending, could be the subject for upcoming meetings.
- Commissioner Luz stated that the Cape Cod meeting will be about the tremendous need for employment visas.
  - o Will be subject whether it is planned or not
  - o Suggested we schedule meetings beyond January
  - o Chairperson Orrall stated that a doodle poll will be distributed to find later dates.

Commissioner Luz motioned to adjourn at 2:50 PM, approved by all Commissioners. Chairperson Orrall adjourned the meeting at 2:51.

### Handouts for this meeting:

1. Commission Meeting Agenda
2. Draft Minutes from First Meeting of Restaurant Promotion Commission – 10.15.19
3. MRAEF Certified Restaurant Professional Apprenticeship Program handout
4. HOPES Project handout
5. Commonwealth of Massachusetts Request for Quote - Restaurant Industry Strategic Review

*Recorded by Annie M. Thompson, Chief of Staff, Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, November 26, 2019.*