

SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)
Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
Le Meridien Delfina, 530 Pico Blvd., Santa Monica, CA 90405
Wednesday, April 12, 2017
5:13 p.m. – 6:37 p.m.

Board Members Present: Raphael Lunetta (Chair), Nicole Flynn (Vice Chair), Richard Chacker (Treasurer), Paul Leclerc, Albin Gielicz, Jeff King, Juan Viramontes, Darlene Evans and Rick Cole.

Board Members Absent: Ellis O'Connor (Secretary) and RoseMary Regalbuto

Staff Present: Misti Kerns, Kim Sidoriak, Evan Edwards, Omark Holmes, Nika Jalali, Jackie Alvarez and Monique Haslock.

Call to Order: Chairman Lunetta called the meeting to order at 5:13 p.m.

Chair Report: Chairman Lunetta opened his chair report by giving a brief overview of his two main objectives as Chairman of SMTT Board: 1) To ensure the community and residents understand the importance of tourism and the impact their support has on a small business; 2) And, how messaging can have a collaborative feel between residence, businesses, community and tourism.

Lunetta explained that during the process of opening his new restaurant, he has been reconnecting with the community after a two-year break. In doing so, he realized how important their support was and how much the growth of the restaurant will depend upon the support of tourism and the community.

City Managers Report: Cole touched on 4 key things taking place in the City: 1) The final draft of the Downtown Community Plan will be presented this evening at 6:30pm. The plan reflects what was heard from the community - a) greater emphasis on historic preservation, b) more public space of all sizes; c) height restrictions; and d) housing will be allowed in retail areas on the promenade.
2) Homelessness – development taking place in Downtown Los Angeles is pushing homeless people out of the area which is affecting other cities in the region as well as Santa Monica. Within the next couple of weeks, Santa Monica's homeless count should be released.
3) Historic Settlement – the city can close the Santa Monica airport in 2028, however are immediately allowed to shorten the runway which will eliminate big jets.
4) Changes in City Manager's office - with the retirement of Elaine Polachek in July, the four top jobs have seen turnover within the last two years. The City is actively looking internally and externally to fill open positions.

Meeting Minutes: Vice Chair Flynn presented the meeting minutes from the February 8, 2017 Board of Directors Meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was offered by King and seconded by LeClerc; the motion passed unanimously with all SMTT board members present with the exception of absent board members O'Connor and Regalbuto.

Board Financials: Kerns presented the February 2017 and March 2017 financials. A motion to accept the financials was offered by Gielicz and seconded by King; the motion

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Staff Updates: Kerns informed everyone that the Downtown Community Plan was being released tonight at 6:30pm and will send the plan to everyone for review.

Kerns reminded board of SMTT's Spring Mixer on April 18, 2017 at Courtyard by Marriot and reminded everyone to RSVP if they haven't done so already.

Kerns shared information on the upcoming Travel & Tourism Summit taking place on May 12th at the Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel which will focus on the future of Santa Monica. SMTT will be asking board members for more involvement, assisting with various tasks or panels. Panel discussions will focus on the importance of small business, items in the city that impact our industry and what to look for in the next several months, tourism from a political standpoint, sentiment of the international traveler to the United States, and winter wave impact, to name a few. Assistant City Manager, Elaine Polachek, will be retired this year and will be acknowledged for her years of service. Also, SMTT will launch a new program, Santa MoniCARES, and ask attendees to bring gently used business attire to donate.

Kerns shared that during her recent trips to our state's capital in February, and Destination Capitol Hill in D.C. with U.S. Travel last month, there were the most people she has ever seen waiting to talk to senators and congressmen about issues relative to traveling to the U.S. In D.C. there were 42 states being represented and over 300 industry people.

Sidoriak gave an update on the 5-year strategic plan. The take away from the stakeholder interviews last December were to be prepared for the unknown, beef up our group sales efforts on vision statement side, emphasis on partnerships, and more engagement of board members in things such as the Tourism Summit. An updated 5-year strategic plan was provided in the board packet where only slight changes were made to the objectives and 2-year initiatives based on the feedback from the shareholder's meetings.

Lane Break Out: At 5:50pm board members and staff broke out into groups to discuss items relative to their areas of focus on the 5-year strategic plan.

Adjournment: Being no further business, Chairman Lunetta adjourned meeting at 6:37 p.m.

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