

SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)

Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
SMTT Conference Room, 2427 Main Street
Wednesday, January 10, 2018
5:09 p.m. – 6:46 p.m.

Board Members Present: Raphael Lunetta (Chair), Nicole Flynn (Vice Chair), Richard Chacker (Treasurer); Matthew Lehman, Darlene Evans, Neil Carrey, Damien Hirsch, and Laurel Rosen.

Board Members Absent: Albin Gielicz, Rosemary Regalbuto, and Rick Cole.

Additional Attendees: Henry Servin (City of Santa Monica, Acting Traffic & Parking Manager), and Michael Towler (City of Santa Monica, Principal Administrative Analyst).

Staff Present: Misti Kerns, Evan Edwards, Omark Holmes, Brian Wright, and Monique Haslock.

Call to Order: Chairman Lunetta called the meeting to order at 5:09 p.m.

City Parking Management: Servin gave an informative presentation on City of Santa Monica parking operations. The main objective is to increase parking rates so that they are affordable yet comparable with surrounding cities. His concern for SMTT is to ensure rates do not discourage visitors, and parking is available when they arrive. He shared that on February 27th Parking Management will be going before City Council to present the new parking rates. His office hopes to launch the new rates in late April or early May.

Chair Report: Chairman Lunetta stated this was the second bimonthly meeting since SMTT launched the pilot email program and welcomed feedback for the Board. He stated that members should reach out to Misti Kerns if they feel it is not working. He stated that it is imperative the Board reads the monthly email communication sent out during the off-meeting months. Lunetta shared that SMTT facilitated a Service Excellence Training conducted by Eric Weiss where attendance was affected on day three due to the local fires. He said in the training he obtained great reminders regarding credibility, cultural sensitivity and the importance of staff knowledge. He thanked Damien Hirsch for his gracious hospitality and excellent service during the training sessions at Le Merigot. He then shared that a holiday event hosted at the Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows was spectacular and service by their staff was excellent. Lunetta talked about a toy drive benefitting P.A.L. and how much he enjoys giving back to our community. Lunetta talked about his participation on the City's Homelessness Committee, where he learned a few facts such as the small percentage of crimes are committed by homeless. He appreciated that SMPD is handling the homeless situation firmly but with care and compassion, that SMPD always offers support. He stated that Kerns was recently reappointed to the Pier Board for another term and thanked her for her service. Lunetta concluded his Chair Report by reminding the board his term as Chairman with SMTT will be ending in June and he will miss the other board members, along with SMTT staff. He has greatly enjoyed his 8 years on the board.

Meeting Minutes: Kerns presented the meeting minutes from the November 8, 2017 Board of Directors Meeting. A motion to approve the minutes was offered by Flynn and seconded by Hirsch; the motion passed unanimously with all SMTT Board Members present with the exception of Gielicz, Regalbuto, and Cole. Evans abstained from the vote as she was not present.

Board Financials: Edwards presented the October 2017 financials. A motion to accept the financials was offered by Treasurer Chacker and seconded by Hirsch; the motion passed

Approved, with a correction to attendance to include Hirsch, at the February 14, 2018 Board of Directors Meeting.

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Staff Updates: Holmes gave an update on the Brand Perception Study project from Coraggio Group. He talked about the second wave of hotel VR video and photography sessions project with Butter Video. He informed the Board that SMTT is in the process of working to populate VR content on all Partner Portal Pages. He gave an update on the homelessness survey SMTT is working on with Lauren Schlau Consulting.

Wright shared in early December he attended the ILTM in Cannes, France, with An Verbeeck from the Fairmont Miramar Hotel and Bungalows. He said the quality of people they met and booked appointments with were excellent, high-end contacts. Wright mentioned SMTT is helping Visit California establish which markets we should concentrate in moving forward. They are predicting their budget to be flat over the next two years.

Kerns stated she wants Wright focusing on getting out into various markets and selling the destination as much as possible. She sent him to the Visit California International Committee meeting and lunch today.

For the Good of the Order: Evans shared information about the Martin Luther King celebration on January 15th. Dr. Tommie Smith will be the guest speaker, awards will be given out and that this is a great community-spirit event and she hopes all can attend.

Rosen informed the Board that February 1st will be the Santa Monica Chamber State of the City event. This year's event will be a summit on the Economic Sustainability of Santa Monica on the local, national and global stage. There will be good presentations this year from companies such as Amazon and Lyft.

Adjournment: Being no further business Chairman Lunetta adjourned meeting at 6:46 p.m.

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