

SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)

Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors
SMTT Conference Room, 2427 Main Street
Wednesday, March 14, 2018
5:06 p.m. – 7:01 p.m.

Board Members Present: Raphael Lunetta (Chair), Nicole Flynn (Vice Chair), Richard Chacker (Treasurer), Matthew Lehman (Secretary), Darlene Evans, Albin Gielicz, Rosemary Regalbuto, Neil Carrey and Damien Hirsch.

Board Members Absent: Rick Cole.

Additional Attendees: Judith Meister (City of Santa Monica, City Beach Manager) and Guangyu Wang (Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission).

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

Call to Order: Chairman Lunetta called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m.

Chair Report: Chairman Lunetta gave an update on his Sales Mission to Brazil with Misti Kerns and Todd Mitsuata the previous week. This sales mission is for a tourism development, he said they visited three different cities in five days. He said major stops included Sao Paulo, Curitiba, and Rio De Janeiro. One of the highlights was conducting a cooking class for eighteen travel agents and journalists using local ingredients. The Chef and staff at the restaurant were amazing and very welcoming to our team. The Chef spoke French, so they were able to communicate in French throughout the event. This was a great trip and brought a new understanding of the efforts hotels and the tourism industry professionals go through for luxury travelers.

Lunetta stated while prepping for the Brazilian trip he was reminded about the importance of small business in Santa Monica. He reminisced about heading down Montana Avenue to get his shoes repaired at Angela's Shoe Store and stated that he purchases all his suits from Caruso Brothers. He said it's those places that create the soul of Santa Monica. He then stated before he terms out he would like to try to recognize some of those small businesses and partnerships.

North Beach and Beach Chair Report: Meister gave a presentation on an exciting project they've been talking about for over 15 years, the Santa Monica North Beach Trail Improvement Project. The project will include changes and upgrades from the North Trail to south of the pier to Muscle Beach to Bay Street. The three project goals are to improve safety and circulation, create separate walking and biking paths and improve Ocean Front Walk. She shared a link to the city's website and where board members can find more information.

Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission: Dr. Wang shared that Kerns has been invited to join the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission's governing board which meets bi-monthly. He stated it would be an asset to have a representative from the tourism industry. Dr. Wang gave a brief overview of the Commission which was established in 2003 to monitor, assess, coordinate and advise the activities of state programs and oversee funding that affects the beneficial uses, restoration and enhancement of Santa Monica Bay and its watersheds. It's three goals are beach water quality, national restoration program, and benefit & value. The commission only has two full-time staff members however one of the largest boards at 34 members as to be very inclusive.

After Dr. Wang departed, a formal vote was taken. A motion to approve Kerns joining the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission Board was offered by Lunetta and seconded by Treasurer Chacker; the motion passed unanimously with all SMTT Board Members present with the exception of Cole.

Meeting Minutes: Vice Chairman Flynn presented the meeting minutes from the January 10, 2018 Board of Directors Meeting. A motion to approve the minutes with a correction to attendance to include Hirsch was offered

Approved by Nicole Flynn 06/08/2018

by Hirsch and seconded by Carrey; the motion passed unanimously with all SMTT Board Members present with the exception of Cole.

Board Financials: Treasurer Chacker presented the December 2017 and January 2018 financials. A motion to accept the financials was offered by Regalbuto and seconded by Gielicz; the motion passed unanimously with all SMTT Board Members present with the exception of Cole.

Approval of the 2018-2019 City Budget & TMD Annual Report: Edwards presented the 2018-2019 City Budget, Forecast and TMD Annual Report. A motion to approve the 2018-2019 City Budget and Forecast was offered by Carrey and seconded by Regalbuto; the motion passed unanimously with all SMTT Board Members present with the exception of Cole. A motion to approve the 2018-2019 Annual Report was offered by Carrey and seconded by Regalbuto; the motion passed unanimously with all SMTT Board Members present with the exception of Cole.

Staff Updates: Holmes shared that SMTT continues work with the Coraggio Group on the Santa Monica brand perception study. They are preparing the second phase of work which will focus on engaging partners, stakeholders, visitors and residents to gain their insight on the destination. This will manifest in a series of 1:1 interviews and focus group sessions during March, and a resident intercept in April.

Holmes advised the board that SMTT is working with Threshold to create a 360-degree virtual reality viewing experience for each of the 900+ Santa Monica tourism-serving attractions and businesses listed on the Partner Portal sections of its website. SMTT is among the first DMOs to utilize the technology in this fashion, and it adds another free feature to be used as a marketing tool on the Partner Portal.

Kerns asked the board to take time and carefully read through the homelessness pamphlets provided and give their feedback to the City, so they can finalize.

Kerns shared SMTT staff has been out in the community and traveling a lot and will continue to do so. Hansler has four upcoming events, two of which are new meeting planner partnerships – Conference Direct and Helms Briscoe. SMTT is looking at doing a “stunt” with Visit California but details still need to be worked out. We are in a good position to bring filming here from the India market.

For the Good of the Order: Carrey shared the PAL Charity Golf Classic is taking place on June 11, 2018 benefitting a scholarship Carrey started for his son. He also mentioned a school bond on the November ballot regarding School District Feasibility for Santa Monica/Malibu.

Regalbuto shared a pamphlet outlining the prevention of child sex and labor trafficking in the tourism industry and mentioned she is working on a labor trafficking form. She will discuss further with Kerns.

Adjournment: Being no further business Chairman Lunetta adjourned meeting at 7:01 p.m.