

**SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)**

Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors

Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows – The Stateroom, 101 Wilshire Boulevard, Santa Monica, CA 90401

Wednesday, September 12, 2018 from 5:30 p.m. – 6:36 p.m.

**Board Members Present:** Raphael Lunetta (Chair), Nicole Flynn (Vice Chair), Richard Chacker (Treasurer), Matthew Lehman, Damien Hirsch, Darlene Evans, Gerry Peck, Lauralee Asch, Neil Carrey, and Rick Cole.

**Board Members Absent:** Albin Gielicz and Rosemary Regalbuto.

**Additional Attendees Observing:** Stephanie Eglin (Macerich Real Estate Company).

**Staff Present:** Misti Kerns, Kim Sidoriak, Evan Edwards, Omark Holmes, Lauren Salisbury and Tammy Ryan.

**Call to Order:** Chairman Lunetta called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**Roll Call & Self Introductions:** Chairman Lunetta welcomed newly appointed Board Member Lauralee Asch to the board and called for self-introductions. Board Members gave brief self-introductions.

**City Manager Update:** Cole gave a recap of a very busy summer in Santa Monica in regard to the public safety challenges that arose with the introduction of the e-scooters and the recently adopted pilot program to curtail those challenges. He also addresses the recent uptick in crime that's created a sense of discomfort and concern among residents and commended the new chief of police, Cynthia Renaud's approach. He addressed the complex nature of the issue when considering all of the various entities involved local, state, and federal legislatures, including how the recent decision by the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court affects policing of vagrancy locally, and how the cost for affordable housing is funded on the state level, and their respective funding of mental health support and housing. He closed by stressing the importance of the upcoming elections in November and the opportunity to make progress on local issues including the downtown community plan, the five strategic goals for the city, and the airport consent decree and opened the floor to questions.

**Approval of the June 6, 2018 Meeting Minutes:** Vice Chair Flynn presented the minutes from the June 6<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting. Carrey made the motion to approve, Evans seconded the motion. E. Edwards called for roll call and a vote. The motion passed unanimously with all Board Members present with the exception of Albin Gielicz and Rosemary Regalbuto. Lauralee Asch abstained.

**Approval of the April 2018 Financials:** Vice Chair Flynn motioned to approve the April 2018 Financials. Peck seconded the motion. E. Edwards called for a vote. The motion passed unanimously with all Board Members present with the exception of Albin Gielicz and Rosemary Regalbuto. Lauralee Asch abstained.

**Reappointment of Board Members:** Chairman Lunetta administered the City Oath for the swearing in of Evans and Asch as members of the SMTT Board of Directors.

**Formal Vote 2018-2019 Executive Committee Slate of Officers:** Chairman Lunetta called for a vote on the Executive Committee of the board of directors. Lunetta then read an email from Gielicz expressing his interest in the Secretary vacancy on the Board in his absence. Richard Chacker self-nominated to replace outgoing Chair Raphael Lunetta, Nicole Flynn to retain her office as Vice Chair, Albin Gielicz as Secretary, and Damien Hirsch as Treasurer. Carrey and Evans withdrew their nominations for the officer vacancies. Edwards called for a vote. A motioned was offered by Cole and seconded by Carrey. The officers were elected unanimously with all Board Members present with the exception of Albin Gielicz and Rosemary Regalbuto. Lunetta offered his continued support and assistance in a non-official capacity as-needed.

***Approved by Vice Chair Nicole Flynn 10.12.18***

**Mission/Vision/Brand Promise Discussion:** Sidoriak presented the results from the recent Brand Perception Study's results regarding the current SMTT Vision Statement; its purpose and its message. The board provided feedback of the positive and negative interpretations; city vs. beach elements and decided to table the decision to make changes until late Fall. She then moved to the various elements of the SMTT Mission Statement and its goals and perceived outward messaging, that feedback included determining where we deliver on our message and where we may fall short. Is the messaging currently accurate or something we're striving toward and should it be changed? It was concluded to once again, table all changes until after the Brand Perception Study Work Session and not to make any decision until Fall.

**Marketing Update:** Holmes' marketing update included the latest in marketing sm tools and gave an overview on the new video series that encompasses the local farmers markets, hotels, meeting spaces, and "car-free" Santa Monica. He also shared the new Virtual Reality technology we're using to spotlight rooms, meeting spaces, retail, and restaurants on SantaMonica.com. The content includes updated photos and videos, reflecting the latest cultural and market trends and closed by giving a quick update on what's next – MICE App and microsite; Family & Luxury Guides; Street Art Walking Map; exploring the Influencer relationships further; updating video and language dubs.

**Public Relations Update:** Salisbury presented the "state of the globe" through the trends and insights over the past year and how that affects our market strategy; beginning with Australia. 67% of visitors from Australia are repeat visitors, magazines are still hugely popular, and recently Cosmopolitan Magazine Australia features on Santa Monica. Brazil is very art, fashion, and travel centric. The United Kingdom is still a strong market, with a leaning toward "car-free" environments, representing "big thought" influencers. France still envisions the California through the spectrum of Baywatch, yet their magazines are a bit more eclectic and reflect and intellectual vibrancy. SMTT looking to further penetrate the markets in China and India. Indian media picked up Kerns's Op-Ed piece and the recent visit to Santa Monica by a popular Indian Influencer Rannavijay Singh is still resonating with his followers and the media.

**Lane 5 Update:** Edwards gave a brief update on Lane Five and noted the recent addition of new staff members including the new Executive Assistant, Marketing Manager, and Visitor Services Associate. She spoke of the recent successful toiletry drive and the amazing Santa Monica hotels who contributed. The toiletry drive supported the City's Homeless Task Force Volunteerism Subcommittee. Kits were assembled during the Buy Local Event. SMTT collected and delivered the toiletries to St. Monica's. Kerns reiterated that the collection continues even beyond the initial drive. Edwards then gave an update on internal accounting training and along with a Client Services update including an overview of the success summer mixer and a look at upcoming events.

**Brand Perception Study/Visitor Experience:** Sidoriak reminded the Committee of the Brand Perception Study Work Session scheduled for the next week. The session is a culmination of data collection including Social Media Analysis, Residential and Visitor Surveys, 1:1 Interviews, Travel Agent Focus Groups and Regional Destination "Competitors".

**CEO & Sales Update:** Kerns reminded the Board of the upcoming Travel Talks Roundtable Session with Congressman Lieu. She gave a brief Sales recap including a 60% increase in appointments at the recent IPW conference and that leads from CVENT have doubled. She also reiterated the need for the greater participation in MICE from the hotels.

She then provided an update on the Travel Industry Sales department items including the CA STAR Training Program; ILTM; China CTrip; IMEX; Germany; Australia, and Brazil. She also informed the Board about the recent cancellation of the U.S. Travel's South American CEO Mission due to political upheaval in the region.

**For the Good of the Order** Chairman Lunetta called for the Good of the Order. Cole proposed a farewell toast to outgoing Chair Lunetta. The room gave a fond farewell toast to Chairman Lunetta at his last meeting.

**Adjournment:** Being no further items for discussion, Chairman Lunetta adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m.

**Approved by Vice Chair Nicole Flynn 10.12.18**