

**MINUTES**  
**SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)**  
**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE JOINT SMTT BOARD OF DIRECTORS & TMD COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10, 2020**  
**DIGITAL ZOOM MEETING VIA SECURE LINK - 5:00PM**

**Call to Order:** Vice Chairman Hirsch called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

**Roll Call & Self Introductions:** Vice-Chairman Hirsch called for self-introductions. Board Members and those present provided brief self-introductions. The following persons were recorded in attendance:

**Present:** Vice-Chairman Damien Hirsch, Secretary Neil Carrey, Treasurer Albin Gielicz, Member Darlene Evans, Member Gerry Peck, Member Anuj Gupta, Member Lauralee Asch, Member Jeff Klocke, and Member Jan Williamson.

**Absent:** Member Rosemary Regalbuto

**Also, Present:** SMTT President/CEO Misti Kerns, SMTT Director of Operations Evan Edwards, SMTT Director of Business Development Brian Wright, SMTT Director of Visitor Experience Rachel Lozano, SMTT Director of Operations Omark Holmes, Caroline Beteta Visit California, Someone Else, Visit California and TMD Committee Members: Juan Viramontes, Eric Kreft, Kevin Anawati, Anthony Evangelista, Gerry Peck (serving dual role), Peter Alles and Charlie Lopez Quintana.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Caroline Beteta, President/CEO of Visit California presented on the California tourism industry outlook related to the Covid-19 crisis. VC has been working closely with their board, 300+ DMO's and partners to focus on Covid-19 recovery. Caroline thanked and spoke about SMTT staff members that work closely with Visit California serving on several committees and task forces. California is anticipated to lose 72 billion dollars in visitor spending in 2020, breaking a 10-year growth pattern. Tourism industry is in a depression, but we're headed towards recovery. 630K employees in hospitality were out of work by the end of May. This underscores the value of tourism, public officials see how much we power into the economy. In support of Visit California Senator Maguire a tourism champion stepped up and reached out to peers, Senator Ben Allen and Assembly Member Richard Bloom and 160 travel industry leaders, including SMTT, signed a letter to Governor Newsome to request a 45 million dollar one-time stimulus. Caroline shared VC has reduced staff by 55% and her budget has been affected as well. We're in a pause phase. And now, our job is to help shorten recovery and assist the industry in rebound. Re-open strategy while focusing on recovery marketing. Encouraging prospective visitors to travel California. Californians spent 1.9 billion in other states over the past few weeks because they traveled to other states that were open. Consumer sentiment states that people want options closer to home. We have an ability to use our local population to jumpstart our economy. The campaign is broken into four waves, the current which is "Close to Home, California" supports the local market; wave 2 is the in-state messaging called "calling all Californians", wave 3 is focused on western region drive markets called "California is Calling" and wave 4 hits next year with our continued in-state marketing "All dreams always welcome in California". Beteta sees this is happening over time, it won't happen overnight. Caroline is very excited about wave 1. She ended with an overview of the "Respect California Travel Code" ...RESPECT stands for Roam Responsibly, Educate Myself, Safety First, Preserve California, Embrace Community, Celebrate Culture and Teach Others. She ended with thanking the board and expressing her love of this community. Kerns thanked Beteta for the leadership and the support she and her team at VC offer.

**Closed session ended at 5:34 p.m.**

**Approval of the April 22, 2020 Special SMTT Board of Directors Meeting Minutes:** Member Peck moved to approve the minutes; Member Asch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with member Regalbuto absent.

**Approval of Updated Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget and Forecast:** Treasurer Gielicz presented the budget with Kerns reporting the difference in income and that budget YOY and noted that documents were reviewed with TMD committee at the quarterly meeting the day prior. Edwards added that only one change from draft budget presented in April. Member Carrey moved to approve the updated 2020-2021 budget and forecast; Vice-Chairman Hirsch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with TMD committee members and board members present with member Regalbutto absent.

**City Manager Update:** Gupta gave an update on three fronts – the city budget and restructuring of city staff, the Covid-19 emergency along with the economic recovery efforts and the activism protests and civil unrest recently occurring in Santa Monica. Gupta shared that Economic Recovery recently submitted their budget FY 20/21 to City Council that reflected a budget decrease of 24% YOY with final approval of city council expected at the July 14 meeting. The City will focus on recovery to pre-Covid levels over the next couple years. He shared that 305 positions were eliminated across many departments and many levels. The assistant city manager position has been permanently eliminated, he thanked Katie Litchig for her service.. Gupta navigated into economic recovery and the new re-opening phase. The city follows what the County and partners around the city are doing. He wants to make sure they're providing support to businesses and partners in the city. The city is diligently looking at Federal and State funding support as well. Finally, he touched on the recent protests and talked about safety being the first priority in reviewing the budget for the police department. Asking questions, how open and progressive are we as a community is important, these conversations are happening, and we are working with leaders in the community to really make sure going forward we're a supportive community. The City wants to continue to focus on police reforms and being a progressive community, we can all be better and look at all our practices as the chief welcomes via an independent review authorized by city council. Gupta shared that community safety and community trust are important. Member Williamson commented that people are concerned over the protests and looting and how the costs to recover will affect programs or departments that were cut. Member Klocke then shared an economic recovery Go Fund Me created by the Chamber for local businesses.

**SMTT Staff Updates:** Omark Holmes reviewed the 2 campaigns SMTT has developed as part of Santa Monica's economic recovery efforts Santa Monica Cares and Santa Monica Shines. Santa Monica Cares is geared toward local community members – residents, business owners, employment seekers, those who use city services and aims to provide practical tools and resources. Key messages for Santa Monica Cares are to communicate health and safety information such as wearing a face mask, encouraging folks to buy local, volunteer to help and providing businesses what they need to reopen safely. Santa Monica Shines is targeted to consumers and seeks to communicate that Santa Monica is open for business, it is safe to visit, shop and dine and share what businesses and the city are doing to keep everyone safe. A full review was offered of other tactics including new Visitor Guide mailing with LA Magazine, city wide outdoor signage, tool kit for businesses, public art, local healthcare heroes give back. Santa Monica Shines is supported by a paid media campaign that will start in Los Angeles County and expand to drive markets such as Orange County, San Diego, and Santa Barbara. Additionally, shared a regional campaign on Expedia with Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, West Hollywood and Los Angeles. Launch of campaign dates are being reviewed on a regular basis with a planned July 1, launch. Member Carrey commented on the need of awareness of upcoming local and national elections in the mix. Member Evans offered suggestions of tone and timing. Kerns added SMTT will launch a campaign next week to encourage safe and responsible travel and hotel offers for locals.

Brian Wright updated the board on the sales efforts and outreach that continues. Trade shows over the next few months are cancelling or moving to a virtual format. The sales team is holding one on one meetings with domestic and international tour operators keeping them abreast of the evolving situation in Santa Monica, as well as staying on top of consumer intent. Internationally, the demand is growing for outbound travel into the U.S. and are just waiting for the borders and 14-day quarantine to be removed from inbound travelers. The California Star online training platform is being reworked by Visit California and will focus on domestic tour operators, and talks continue with the promotion of the SoCal Triangle itinerary partnership with San Diego and Greater Palm Springs. Behind the scenes, training continues with the CVENT platform and cleaning up of the CRM. Content has been developed for virtual site inspections and FAM's (familiarization tours) for clients and weekly calls with Hotel Directors of Sales and marketing are taking place weekly. Chairman Hirsch was supportive and stated that the weekly hotel General Manger/owners calls are very informative.

**CEO Update:** Kerns advised the board of the now permanent staff lay-offs, reductions in salary and the restructuring of visitor services department. She provided an update of the various re-openings of businesses in

the city and how that will help direct when the campaigns launch. Kerns provided an update of local, regional and state government leadership calls she and other board members have participated in Kerns on behalf of the industry. Kerns expressed her thanks to the staff and the board and TMD committee members for their support during such a difficult and challenging time. Chairman Hirsch provided comments of support.

**For the Good of the Order** Vice Chair Hirsch called for the Good of the Order. Member Asch commented on the need for positive thoughts and comments to our police department and shared how PD and FD will remove boards from businesses tomorrow with Chamber leadership. Carrey, Gielicz and Kerns supported and repeated this important need and reminded that there were no major injuries or deaths in our community. Member Williamson commended staff of SMTT on her positive interactions via the economic recovery communications team echoed by Gielicz. Kerns thanked all for their comments.

**Public Comment:** Vice Chair Hirsch called for public comment. There was none.

**Adjournment:** Vice Chair Hirsch adjourned the meeting at 6:36 p.m.