

MINUTES
SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)
REGULAR MEETING OF THE SMTT BOARD OF DIRECTORS
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2020
SMTT, 2427 MAIN STREET, FIRST FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM,
SANTA MONICA, CA 90405
5:00PM

Call to Order: Vice Chair Hirsch called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m.

Roll Call & Self Introductions: Vice Chair Hirsch called for self-introductions. Board Members gave brief self-introductions. The following persons were recorded in attendance:

Present: Vice Chair Damien Hirsch, Secretary Neil Carrey, Treasurer Albin Gielicz, Member Darlene Evans, Member Gerry Peck, Member Katie E. Lichtig, Member Lauralee Asch, Member Jeff Klocke, and Member Jan Williamson

Absent: Chair Matthew Lehman, Member RoseMary Regalbuto

Also Present: SMTT President/CEO Misti Kerns, SMTT Chief Marketing Officer Kim Sidoriak, SMTT Director of Operations Evan Edwards, SMTT Director of Marketing Omark Holmes, SMTT Business Development Manager – Asia Pacific & Latin America, Todd Mitsuata, SMTT Public Relations Manager Lauren Salisbury, SMTT Executive Assistant Tammy Ryan, Judith Meister, City of Santa Monica – Community and Cultural Services Administrator, and Brian Ochoa, City of Santa Monica CIP Project Manager.

North Beach Renovation Plan Update: Meister gave an overview of North Beach Renovation Project that will further separate the pedestrian and bike paths. The last major renovation to encourage pedestrian traffic took place twenty years ago. Once the current plan is completed the bike path north of the Pier will be safer and more use-friendly for pedestrians and cyclists. The North Beach Trail Improvement Project will improve approximately 2 miles of the Beach Trail and upgrade roughly 1 mile of Ocean Front Walk pedestrian path. The project will also improve Parking Lot 1550 and will include new and improved wayfinding signage at pedestrian eye-level, as well as commissioned murals.

Ochoa outlined the multiple phases of the construction timeline of the project; including a current status update, as well as estimated date of completion. He stated that sixty percent of the project should be finished by the end of the month.

City Manager Update: Lichtig notified the room that the City continues to move forward with the mid-year budget review, taking the budget to Council in early to mid-February. That the Homeless Count is taking place in January and that participation by all is welcome, stressing the importance of these counts in allocation of State funds for Santa Monica. The Reed Park Ambassador Program, Promenade 3.0, Shared Mobility Pilot extension are all on track with Wilshire safety improvements expected by mid-2020 and the grand opening of City Hall East is on Earth Day, April 22, 2020.

Approval of the November 13, 2019 Regular SMTT Board of Directors Meeting Minutes: Gielicz moved to approve the minutes; Williamson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with all of the Board Members present with the exception of Lehman and Regalbuto who were absent.

Acceptance of Financials: Carrey moved to accept the financials; Peck seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with all of the Board Members present with the exception of Lehman and Regalbuto who were absent.

Approved at the April 22, 2020 Board Meeting

SMTT Staff Updates: Sidoriak gave a recap of SMTT's presence at the Wellbeing Summit which included interviewing over 140 residents and raising awareness of the Santa Monica Experience Management Plan which will be finalized shortly. She also highlighted the most recent Santa Monica hotel guest research results, which noted that 65% of hotel guests are coming from the United States (followed by 6.5% from Canada and 6.1% from Australia). Over 30% of hotel guests are booking their stays directly on the hotel's website. Of the U.S. based hotel guests, 31.3% are from California, followed by 9.7% from New York and 7.6% from Texas.

Holmes provided an overview of the 2020 Santa Monica Restaurant Week campaign, where participating restaurants offered a dish using this year's featured ingredient- the kumquat. He also provided a status update of the soft season domestic Brand Campaign scheduled for a late January launch, which included key strategies, messaging, target markets and creative samples.

Mitsuhata shared the details of SMTT's recent activation in Australia and our partnership with Pier One Sydney Harbour, to launch a groundbreaking six-week activation. The primary goal was to increase destination awareness, visitation and room nights among affluent Australian consumers, as well as top media and travel trade. In addition to multiple sponsorships with several leading industry and consumer partners, three renowned Santa Monica chefs traveled to Australia for culinary collaborations with Chef Thom Gorringer of Pier One's One Hat restaurant, The Gantry. Chef Josiah Citrin, two-star Michelin Chef and owner of California's highly acclaimed Méliisse; Chef Raphael Lunetta, Owner and Chef Proprietor at Santa Monica institutions Lunetta and Lunetta All Day; and Chef Govind Armstrong of Santa Monica icon The Lobster.

During the six-week activation SMTT also hosted a launch event, a series of chef's tables and a sales mission media lunch for top influencers and media. As well as hosting agent events; a sales mission trade lunch for top clients; and a "Luxperience" social event for luxury buyers and suppliers from the APAC region.

Salisbury shared the details of SMTT's media efforts for Santa Monica Restaurant Week resulting in placements in numerous regional outlets including NBC Los Angeles, LA Weekly and Thrillist. As a result of a bespoke pitch, Spectrum News covered Restaurant Week in a segment filmed at Socalo, bringing viewers behind-the-scenes at Santa Monica's newest restaurant with Chefs Mary Sue Milliken and Susan Feniger.

Edwards gave an update on the results of the operational audit and having no reportable conditions. Santa MoniCARES was a co-sponsor of the holiday clothing drive at this year's Under the Fig event and raised over eight-thousand dollars at the inaugural fundraiser, distributing a thousand dollar each to eight local charities. She also announced the creation of the good newsletter and its official title: Sea the Good Newsletter.

Sales/CEO Update: Kerns shared that the date for this year's Tourism Summit is May 6th. Her plans and details for the upcoming CEO Mission to India, accompanying the Lt. Governor to explore Bollywood filmmaking in Santa Monica and the effect it would have on the local economy; as well Santa Monica's role in meeting the needs of India's luxury travel market. She ended her update with a display of the new merchandise recently added to the Visitors Center and online store and detailed the items' respective price points.

For the Good of the Order Vice Chair Hirsch called for the Good of the Order. Carrey informed the room that the Santa Monica Kiwanis Club and the youth they support, will be participating in decorating the Rose Parade floats, which draw around seven thousand volunteers. Peck shared the introduction of a reduced rate "friends and family" program at Shore Hotel.

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

Adjournment: Vice Chair Hirsch adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m.