

**MINUTES**  
**SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)**  
**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE JOINT SMTT BOARD OF DIRECTORS & TMD COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2020**  
**DIGITAL ZOOM MEETING VIA SECURE LINK - 5:00PM**

**Call to Order:** Chairman Hirsch called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m. and offered information and hope on the positive reaction of the stock market with the announcement of an upcoming vaccine for covid-19.

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

**Present:** Chairman Damien Hirsch, Vice Chair Albin Gielicz, Treasurer Neil Carrey, Secretary Jan Williamson, Member Darlene Evans, Member Gerry Peck, Member Anuj Gupta, Member Jeff Klocke, Member Rosemary Regalbuto and Member Mark Averett.

**Also, Present:** SMTT President/CEO Misti Kerns, SMTT Director of Operations Evan Edwards, SMTT CMO Kim Sidoriak, SMTT Director of Business Development Brian Wright and Brian Ochoa, CIP Project Manager City of Santa Monica Public Works Department.

**Absent:** Member Lauralee Asch.

**Beach Project Update:** Brian Ochoa project manager, city of Santa Monica provided an update on the North Beach Trail improvement project which is now 95% complete. Project goals are to improve safety and circulation, create separate walk and bike paths, and improve the Ocean Front Walk experience. Project will also include new and improved directional signage and lighting improvements. Questions were posed about overall safety and access to the area and the mitigation of the vendor population and effects during the pandemic and beyond. The board thanked city staff for the work and complimented the improvements.

**CEO Update:** Kerns provided an update on SMTT staffing needs and plan. Economic impact research for SMTT has started back up. We are using a QR code to gain more respondents from visitors, residents and overnight hotel guests. WTF overview and ensuring all received invitation. Next steps on the destination experience plan were reviewed and the integration with city economic recovery goals. She also shared the need to celebrate some of the wins outdoor dining, counter permits etc. that have been implemented. An update on the statewide coalition of convention cities, supported by other surrounding destinations like Santa Monica are strategizing how to approach health department by county to educate and show how safe meetings (including small) to help provide reasonable guidelines when ready to allow. Klocke added an overview on state released amusement park guidelines and the need to work towards change in order to have a chance to survive. Chair Hirsch and Chair of the TMD Peck advised the board of the TMD committee request staff to look into options that may allow collections and tiers to remain as is for the next year so that TMD funding would not be reduced further with any hotel tier changes in 2021.

**City Manager Update:** Deputy City Manager Gupta briefed the group on the recent elections and the preparation steps taken should there have been any civil unrest. He thanked partners including SMTT for the communication and support. He provided an update on leadership of the police department with the interim appointment of Chief Jacqueline Seabrook's. Local elections results show three new city council members will be seated on December 8, 2020 staff is preparing orientation to support the transition. He shared updates on Ocean Ave that will expand bike lanes, sidewalks and outdoor dining. EOC is closely watching numbers related to covid-19 and making changes as needed. Staff has updated the city's website and will be transferring content over in the next few weeks. City launched a virtual permit counter to help support residents and businesses. Kerns and Williamson extended thanks on behalf of all for his leadership during this challenging time.

**Approval of the September 9, 2020 SMTT Board of Directors Meeting Minutes:** Secretary Williamson presented the minutes. Treasurer Carrey made a correction to the minutes, correcting his title from Chairman to President of Kiwanis under For the Good of the Order. Treasurer Carrey moved to approve the minutes with the correction; Member Regalbuto seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Chairman Hirsch abstaining and member Lauralee Asch absent.

**Approval of July 2020 Financials:** Treasurer Carrey presented July 2020 financials. Chairman Hirsch moved to approve the financials; Member Regalbuto seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously with member Lauralee Asch absent.

**Approval of August 2020 Financials:** Treasurer Carrey presented August 2020 financials. Member Regalbuto moved to approve the financials; Secretary Williamson seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously with member Lauralee Asch absent.

**Approval of September 2020 Financials:** Treasurer Carrey presented September 2020 financials. Member Regalbuto moved to approve the financials; Vice Chair Gielicz seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously with member Lauralee Asch absent.

**Approval of June 2020 Financials:** Treasurer Carrey presented June 2020 financials. Member Regalbuto moved to approve the financials; Member Evans seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously with member Lauralee Asch absent.

**SMTT Staff Updates:** Sidoriak gave an update on the Santa Monica Shines paid media campaign performance, which was launched on August 3rd and will run through the end of 2020. To date, the campaign has garnered over 38,000 website engagements on SantaMonicaShines.com 5,600 room nights booked on Expedia channels, representing a 59:1 return on investment and 24 million paid social impressions. Creative was refreshed and re-deployed last week with new photos representing safety practices by hotels and restaurants and socially distanced activities. Sidoriak also congratulated the 6 hotels who have earned the Santa Monica Shines COVID-19 Assurance seal and shared how SMTT is promoting the annual Extra Bedroom Program, which runs now through February 15, 2021. Kerns added how the holiday campaign continues to be a city-wide partnership in outreach and communications.

Wright updated the board on trade and sales efforts over the past months. The team attended six trade shows, three virtual (Go West, Brand USA Travel Week, Visit California Luxury Forum) and three of the first in-person trade shows since the start of the pandemic (Connect Meetings Luxury, Connect Travel RTO South, Connect Tour) with great success and shared how attendees were kept safe. Wright also updated the board on the launch of a combined Trade/MICE newsletter, creation a new COVID compliant CVENT promotions page, development of a new outdoor event and meetings space one-sheet, and gave an update on the HotelBeds/Visit California 5-month domestic program and the progress of a co-op with ATI, Greater Palm Springs and West Hollywood in partnership with AAA, CAA, TravelMole.

Edwards gave an update on internal SMTT Operations and Lane 5. She shared that all SMTT employees restarted weekly electronic updates to the CEO. Edwards then gave details on SMTT's recent team virtual team building lunches to ensure we're staying connected and keeping our culture intact. SMTT is preparing for mid-year respreads, budgets and forecasts to be reviewed in December and approved at the January 2021 Board of Directors Meeting. She gave an update on office and visitor information locations Covid compliance efforts which now include a temperature check station and daily acknowledgement letters that are signed. A review of the TMD frequently asked questions and how the assessment is collected was provided. She then gave an update on all of the Santa MoniCARES programs in place this winter which include Take 2 for you! Hotel rooms donated for first responders and healthcare worker's, food, blanket, clothing and sock drives with local tourism business and partners. Treasurer Carrey complimented the SMCARES board and staff and how impressed he is with its meaning and work, others agreed.

**For the Good of the Order** Chairman Hirsch called for the good of the order Carrey shared that the Kiwanis club of Santa Monica is awarding additional grants in the wake of covid-19, working with the SM college foundation and Virginia Ave Park and have increased their financial donations this year.

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

**Adjournment:** Chairman Hirsch adjourned the meeting at 6:55 p.m.