

MINUTES
SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)
MEETING OF THE SMTT BOARD OF DIRECTORS WEDNESDAY, January 13, 2021
DIGITAL ZOOM MEETING VIA SECURE LINK - 5:00PM

Call to Order: Chairman Hirsch called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

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, Member Darlene Evans, Member Lauralee Asch, 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 SMTT Director of Visitor Experience Rachel Lozano..

Absent: Secretary Williamson.

Approval of the Novemebr 2020 Board Meeting Minutes: Chair Hirsch presented the minutes. Member Regalbuto moved to approve the minutes; Member Evans seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Secretary Williamson absent.

Acceptance of the October 2020 Financials: Treasurer Carrey presented October 2020 financials. Member Peck moved to accept the financials; Member Regalbuto seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously with Secretary Williamson absent.

Acceptance of the Novemebr 2020 Financials: Treasurer Carrey presented November 2020 financials. Chairman Hirsch moved to accept the financials; Member Regalbuto seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously with Secretary Williamson absent.

Acceptance of the 2021/2022 & 2022/2023 Budget & Forecast: Treasurer Carrey, Edwards and Kerns presented the 2021/2022 & 2022/2023 Budget & Forecast. Vice Chair Gielicz moved to accept the budget and forecast; Regalbuto seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously with Secretary Williamson absent. Treasurer Carrey acknowledge SMTT staff members on the good management of funds during a difficult time. Chairman Hirsch noted that he was impressed with the salary and benefit expenses to income and congratulated the team on this and the management of the financials as a whole.

PPP Funds Request for Approval to Apply and to Receive: Treasurer Carrey presented the PPP loan request for SMTT and allocations for usage. Chairman Hirsch Moved for approval and Regalbuto seconded the motion; the motion carried unanimously with Secretary Williamson absent.

City Manager Update: Deputy City Manager Gupta provided updates from the previous evening's City Council meeting and the reconfirmation vote of Mayor Sue Himmelrich and Mayor Pro Tem Kristin McCowan for two-year terms each. The public safety reform and oversight commission was adopted and will serve as civilian police oversight applications will be open to the public shortly. Gupta acknowledged the work being done by interim Police Chief Seabrooks and the heightened awareness of potential disruptive activities now and in the near future. Public health update, we remain in one of the most restricted health guidelines, provided information on crowds and the need to close the Pier in order to mitigate potential public health related issues. This is all supported by health ambassadors in the area reminding of mask use. Council also appointed a sub-committee to lead the search for new City Manager as Dilg is scheduled to depart in April. Susan Kline has been appointed interim assistant city manager to assist with the transition and the next search will be for a new Chief of Police.

SMTT Staff Updates: Sidoriak provided an overview of areas the marketing department will be focused on over the next several months. Reviewing results of a recent city survey to help define the needs of local businesses. SHINES campaign continues and working on creative. The projected date launch of a campaign (May) first locally, regionally, statewide and surrounding states and then expansion domestically and finally international. While no paid media is being placed currently the work is being done to have all creative and ad buys ready. She provided a recap of work of the city communications team aligned with the Economic Recovery Taskforce. A video series is being created for each of our 8 neighborhoods to showcase the current experience and is planned to launch as soon as the stay-at-home order is lifted. New photo shoot and content for web and social marketing is being developed to share the experience in Santa Monica post Covid. And continuing our Public Relations work with an outside consultant until June as we plan to hire back our internal PR team. Responsible travel and the information and role SMTT are playing in communicating was reviewed by request of members.

Wright advised the board of directors of steps the sales team has taken to be prepared to be out selling again. Tools and resources have been updated; virtual trade shows staff is/has participated in was offered. A review of future in person trade shows was reviewed. Newsletters to clients are continuing in order to maintain relationships for future bookings. Plan is to ease back into international markets starting April 1 by reestablishing international offices and representation.

Lozano shared activities and hours of our Visitor Information locations and the plan to have fully opened 7 days a week by Spring. Launched a text on demand for information on the 2 days we are currently closed and daily 9am-5pm daily. Expanding our online retail presences and how it will be expanded and promoted. Making needed repairs and outlining needed changes to physical locations for future. Announced that the I Am Santa Monica program will be available online this spring.

Edwards provided a recap of next steps for operations including operational plans and budget due dates. Starting the TMD elections for officers and committee members. Our renewal of DMAP (Destination Marketing Accreditation Program) which is a globally recognized as a visible industry distinction that defines quality and performance standards in destination marketing and management is underway. Discussions underway for a Tourism Summit this spring/summer. Santa MoniCARES was successful in collecting over 600 blankets donated to peoples concern and Westcoast cares. Over 500 pieces of clothing collected so far for Chrysalis. Evans stressed the amount of support from local residents to help make this happen. Kudos to our Visitor Services staff who have been at locations collecting. We found a charity that accepts any laptop repairs them and then donates to teachers and students. Great cause vs. recycling we donated 6 items to the Lap top Elf.

CEO Update: Kerns shared a letter that was sent to City Council on behalf of the board regarding the importance of business having a seat at a table for the public safety reform and oversight commission. Encouraged all who have interest to apply and share the information with others. She mentioned the amount of change that has happened in our community and Member Averett shared his departure from the Georgina hotel and expressed his thanks to the Board. Kerns thanked him for his support and partnership and the board wished him well.

For the Good of the Order Chairman Hirsch called for the good of the order. Member Regalbuto requested that if anyone has a bed for a client of Meals on Wheels to donate it would be appreciated. She shared an idea from the Wellbeing Summit to provide visitors a photo and a keepsake branded Santa Monica. Member Peck shared that the Shore Hotel has an on-site testing location and thanked SMTT for including the information in recent newsletter. Klocke shared that his team is using the service to great satisfaction. Member Evans shared the information on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Westside Coalition and invited all to attend. A multi day event this year. Peck shared an update on the coastal commission requirement and the need to change the CUP with the city, for the hotel to allow for and additional 14 affordable est. at \$191 micro hotel rooms, a café on second street side, and alcohol service for the café, pool and lobby area, current CUP is for retail. He noted that some rooms are allocated year-round for a youth program that allows them to stay at the hotel for free including meals from underprivileged areas and allows them to experience beach life, surf, swim.

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

Adjournment: Chairman Hirsch adjourned the meeting in memorandum of Jean McNeil Wyner former Chair of SMTT (formerly SMCVB) who passed away this month. Members and staff shared highlights of Jean and her love of this city. Meeting was adjourned at 6:24 p.m.