

MINUTES
SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS - WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2021
LOEWS SANTA MONICA BEACH HOTEL - VENICE BALLROOM A - 5:00PM

Call to Order: Vice-Chairman Gielicz called the meeting to order at 5:19 p.m.

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

Board Present: Vice-Chairman Albin Gielicz, Treasurer Neil Carrey, Secretary Jan Williamson, Member Lauralee Asch, Member Younes Atallah, Member Gerry Peck, Member Jeff Klocke and City Liaison Anuj Gupta.

Also, Present: SMTT President/CEO Misti Kerns, SMTT Chief Operating Officer Evan Edwards, SMTT Chief People Officer Rachel Lozano, SMTT Chief Marketing Officer Kim Sidoriak, SMTT Director of Global Business Development Todd Mitsuhata and former SMTT Chairman Damien Hirsch.

Absent: Member RoseMary Regalbuto and Member Darlene Evans.

City Manager Update: City Manager Gupta announced that Lana Negrete had been appointed to the vacant City Council seat. Interim City Manager Lane Dilg ended her service with the city, and new Interim City Manager John Jalili has returned as interim City Manager while the recruitment process for the permanent City Manager position continues. Police Chief Seabrooks departs next month, an interview panel for a new Police Chief will be held on July 15, 2021. Fire Chief recruitment continues. City Council adopted its Balanced Budget; the budget includes one-time funds of one million dollars for clean and safe services on the pier and beach. The extra funds will allow the Santa Monica Police Department to bring additional resources for weekend duty through September. Sharing an Open Main Street will begin on July 24-25, 2021, as a pilot program through two blocks of Main Street between Hill Street and Kinney Street to support local businesses and community-wide recovery. Member Klocke shared that the past weekend was the busiest in two years for Pacific Park and the Pier. Vice-Chairman Gielicz stated that homeless encampments are impacting Santa Monica from a crime standpoint.

Approval of the May 12, 2021, Board Meeting Minutes: Secretary Williamson presented the Meeting Minutes; Treasurer Carrey moved to approve the minutes; Member Atallah seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with members Regalbuto and Evans absent.

Acceptance of the April 2021 Financial Memo: Treasurer Carrey presented the April 2021 Financial Memo. Vice-Chairman Gielicz moved to accept the Financial Memo; Member Asch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with members Regalbuto and Evans absent.

Acceptance of the May 2021 Financial Memo: Treasurer Carrey presented the May 2021 Financial Memo. Vice-Chairman Gielicz moved to accept the Financial Memo; Member Asch seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with members Regalbuto and Evans absent.

Approval of the Updated 2021/2022 Budget: SMTT Chief Operating Officer Evan Edwards presented the updated 2021/2022 Budget. Member Klocke moved to accept the updated 2021/2022 Budget; Member Williamson seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with members Regalbuto and Evans absent.

Open Nominations Executive Committee Slate of Officers: Vice Chair Gielicz called for any additional nominations for the Executive Committee Slate of Officers. Receiving no additional, the slate was presented as Vice Chair Gielicz nominated to Chairman; Treasurer Carrey nominated to Vice Chairman, Secretary Williamson nominated as Secretary and Member Atallah nominated as Treasurer. Secretary Williamson called for a motion to approve the Executive Committee Slate of Officers as presented; Member Peck seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with members Regalbuto and Evans absent.

Approval of the 2021-2022 Meeting Schedule: Chairman Gielicz presented the motion to approve the 2021-2022 Meeting Schedule; Vice Chairman Carrey seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with members Regalbutto and Evans absent.

SMTT Staff Updates: Sidoriak shared that paid marketing relaunched at the end of March, and current influencers are couples and individual travelers. Sidoriak provided updates and explained the shared the Identity Project with the city communications team and was completing a residential survey. SMTT marketing is currently overhauling the SantaMonica.com website. She then shared that SMTT won the HSMAI Adrian Award for the Santa Monica Cares and Shines programs.

Mitsuhata provided updates on behalf of the sales department, reporting on current webinars and online trainings, reaching over two hundred travel agents and advisors. He discussed in-person trade shows, reaching one hundred eighty travel agents, tour operators, and meeting planners. Mitsuhata shared information on three campaigns featuring Santa Monica: Bonotel, Virtuoso, and United Airlines. He then provided an update on international travel, sharing that more than two dozen U.S. travel industry groups submitted a proposed roadmap to ease U.S. international entry restrictions for travelers from the U.K., the EU, and Canada. SMTT international representatives actively engage the travel trade via online training, newsletters, and promotions to restart international representation in Western Europe. Mitsuhata mentioned that SMTT's India team also continues to conduct virtual events and training focused on the Santa Monica experience.

Lozano shared information on PPP COVID safety upgrades and maintenance projects at the Visitors Information Center locations; repairs included installing additional security cameras. Lozano mentioned that SMTT would focus on continuing to repair and refresh our visitors' centers. She updated that the online store expanded to feature additional merchandise and wholesale bulk ordering. Lozano offered information on wholesale pricing and purchasing to those needing extra information. She mentioned that the Visitor Information Center has an open Travel Specialist position paying \$17.64 an hour.

Edwards shared that SMTT closed its fiscal year's books, had a successful staff greet and meet beach outing, completed performance reviews, and updated on office operations. She described that SMTT is now offering a new in-person, flexible hybrid work schedule until further notice. Edwards shared that the Annual Tourism Summit will take place the first week of October. She mentioned that the Santa Monica Cares program was a key sponsor for the Queer Prom along with Church at Ocean Park and the City of Santa Monica. She noted that the Cares program was able to donate over three hundred blankets during the pandemic.

CEO Update: Kerns provided staffing updates and stated that Evan Edwards was promoted to SMTT Chief Operating Officer, Rachel Lozano was promoted to SMTT Chief People Officer, and Todd Mitsuhata was promoted to SMTT Director of Global Business Development.

For the Good of the Order: Chairman Gielicz called for the Good of the Order. Member Asch mentioned that the PAL Poker Tournament would be on September 18, 2021. Chairman Gielicz shared that the Montana Avenue Art Walk will take place on September 25, 2021, and the Holiday Art Walk is scheduled for the first Saturday in December. Secretary Williamson shared that Borderless: Beirut will be a virtual art event held on August 4, 2021, at 8am for anyone interested in joining.

Public Comment: Chairman Gielicz called for public comment. Former Chairman Damien Hirsh shared that it was an honor to be a part of SMTT's Board of Directors and with its outstanding leadership and staff.

Adjournment: Chairman Gielicz called to adjourn the meeting, Member Peck moved to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Vice Chairman Carrey, the meeting was adjourned at 6:27 p.m.