

**MINUTES**  
**SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)**  
**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE JOINT SMTT BOARD OF DIRECTORS & TMD COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2020**  
**DIGITAL ZOOM MEETING VIA SECURE LINK - 5:00PM**

**Call to Order:** Vice Chairman Hirsch called the meeting to order at 5:04 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, Member Rosemary Regalbuto, Member Jan Williamson and Lauren Rosen, President Santa Monica Chamber.

**Also, Present:** SMTT President/CEO Misti Kerns, SMTT Director of Operations Evan Edwards, SMTT Director of Visitor Experience Rachel Lozano, SMTT CMO Kim Sidoriak, Ellis O'Connor and Dustin Peterson of the Fairmont Miramar Hotel and Bungalows.

**CLOSED SESSION**

Ellis O'Connor and Dustin Peterson of the Fairmont Miramar Hotel and Bungalows gave a presentation on the progress of the hotel's remodel approval efforts. They shared a video and presentation detailing the progress and architectural plans. O'Connor shared that the hotel is old and functionally obsolete, over the years it has suffered from inadequate investment and lack of cohesive planning under prior ownership. The property is no longer competitive with other luxury hotels available in the market. O'Connor stated that the infrastructure is inadequate to support a modern luxury hotel and that the marketplace is extremely competitive. Peterson shared a timeline of their efforts with City to garner approval over the years and the current status of the remodeling project. Peterson stated that after over 10 years of concerted effort and extensive stakeholder input, they are excited that the proposed redevelopment project is finally scheduled to move forward into public hearings. They currently anticipate presenting to the Planning Commission on Wednesday, September 2, 2020. They both shared their excitement at having reached this important milestone and believe that the new Miramar can and will be a key component of Santa Monica's economic recovery.

**Closed Session ended at 5:53 p.m.**

**Approval of the June 10, 2020 Special SMTT Board of Directors Meeting Minutes:** Member Asch moved to approve the minutes; Member Peck seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**Acceptance of March, April and May 2020 Financials:** Treasurer Gielicz presented the budget and noted that the fluctuations in revenues we normally see don't exist due to Covid-19. Member Regalbuto moved to accept the financials; Member Carrey seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Kerns noted that SMTT's sublease tenant Chocolate Sun had closed its doors and will be looking for a new tenant.

**Approval of SBA Loan Funds:** Kerns provided an update on the approval and receipt of SBA economic recovery loan funds to be used for additional marketing programs to assist with City of Santa Monica recovery. The length of the repayment of the loan is 30 years. The funds are included in the city budget submission going before City Council on July 14, 2020. Kerns noted SMTT will only use the funds if needed, the total funds received were \$159,000.00 with \$10,000 being forgivable. Member Carrey moved to approve the use of SBA Loan Funds; Member Gielicz seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**City Manager Update:** Gupta gave a brief update what the City of Santa Monica has been focused on, the top item being emergency response due to Covid-19. He stated that emergency response is closely tracking guidance from the LA County Department of Public Health, specifically focusing on hospitalizations and hospital capacity. The emergency ops center met with staff from St. Johns and UCLA to determine if they would have capacity for a surge in Covid-19 cases and the City feels extremely confident after that meeting. He stated that

the City is focused on safety and compliance such as face coverings, businesses and residents following City guidelines. They want to make sure they provide adequate public health guidance for businesses. Gupta then stated the soft reopening of the Pier was a success. He gave accolades to Kerns and Member Klocke for their support in reopening of the Pier. He shared that the City of Santa Monica issues over 100 permits for businesses to operate outdoors to comply with LA County Public Health guidelines. He stated the City is close to finalizing a training certification on sensitivity and compliance for Covid-19 and mentioned that Kerns played a big part in that development. He stated that at the upcoming City Council Meeting on July 14, 2020 he would be giving an update on the progress of Covid-19 compliance and recovery. Gupta shared that the City is forming a Racial Justice and Equity Advisory Committee and to expect an update on that committee at the City Council meeting in September 2020. The focus of the committee will be use of force policies and assessing the City's spending on public safety and public health. In addition, the City of Santa Monica has begun an internal assessment of racial and equity policies. He then gave an update on the re-districting lawsuit and the vacancy left by Councilmember Moreno leaving a vacancy on council that when opened the City received 117 applicants.

**SMTT Staff Updates:** Sidoriak gave an update on Santa Monica Cares and Buy Local, stressing the importance of buying local to the City's economic recovery. She shared that SMTT has collected 51 specials from businesses and 13 hotels have offered resident only specials and those 64 offers will be in the next issue of Sea Scope. She shared that SMTT has offered the community many tools via the Visitor Center at 2427 Main Street – including signage, floor clings and more. She gave an update on the Santa Monica Shines campaign and the delay in launching due to the recent surge in cases, we are closely watching the LA County Health Department guidelines. She also noted the SMTT Experience Management is still in process and being adjusted to include City of Santa Monica economic recovery.

Lozano gave an update on Visitor Information locations being open with the necessary Covid-19 compliance items. She stated that all locations are open Wednesday through Sunday from 11am to 4pm. Lozano shared that we have been able to re-hire one of our fulltime Travel Specialists to staff at locations. She gave an update on the tools available for pick up at the locations and that SMTT will be offering masks designed by a local resident artist.

Edwards gave an update on operations stressing the importance of our crisis budget management, reviewing our cash flow and cutting costs on a daily basis. She gave a rundown on the operational savings, additional plans for cost savings going forward. She then talked about the efforts made to prepare the office for post-Covid operations and the compliance steps being taken to ensure staff safety. She shared that in addition to the rehire of a fulltime Travel Specialist who was previously laid off due to Covid-19 we were able to rehire Amanda Trytek, Senior Sales Coordinator on a part-time basis with the intention of bringing her to fulltime in the fall. Amanda will be supporting the Group Sales and Business Development Departments with a focus on Economic Recovery. She ended with an update on Santa MoniCARES planning neighborhood cleanups once the LA County Department of Health provides additional guidance on safe distancing.

**CEO Update:** Kerns provided an update on the openings and closures of large businesses, the state of the airline industry and reiterated the updates of the SMTT team that SMTT's main focus is economic recovery. She wished everyone good health.

**For the Good of the Order** Vice Chair Hirsch called for the Good of the Order.

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

**Adjournment:** Vice Chair Hirsch adjourned the meeting at 6:56 p.m.