

**APPROVED MINUTES
SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS - WEDNESDAY, March 9, 2022
Hilton Santa Monica Hotel & Suites, Malibu I Room**

Call to Order: Chairman Albin Gielicz called the meeting to order at 5:18 p.m.

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

Board Present: Chairman Albin Gielicz, Vice Chair Neil Carrey, Secretary Jan Williamson, Treasurer Younes Atallah, Member Lauralee Asch, Member Shahid Kayani, Member Jeff Klocke, Member Charlie Lopez-Quintana, Member RoseMary Regalbuto, and City Liaison Anuj Gupta.

Also Present: SMTT President/CEO Misti Kerns, SMTT Chief Operating Officer Evan Edwards, SMTT CPO Rachel Lozano, SMTT CMO Michael Gurrieri, SMTT Director of Global Business Development Todd Mitsuata, and SMTT Operations Coordinator Alyssa Dorn.

Absent: Member Darlene Evans.

Public Comment: Chairman Gielicz called for public comment, there was none.

City Manager Update: City Liaison Gupta informed the Board that there was tremendous partnership during Super Bowl weekend that showed the city at its best including on the Today Show and the NBC pre-game show on the Pier. City Council also approved to move forward with the MLB All Star Oceanfront 3-day festival on the Pier and Beach. The city is working with MLB on beach permitting and to support traffic that weekend. This could serve as a test to see whether beach activities like this are feasible enough to change the city's summer beach event policy. Liaison Gupta further updated the board that the community is coming together to ensure Pier visitors' health and safety with regards to vending. The partnership with SMTT, the Pier Corporation, the Chamber, SMPD, SMFD, LA County Health, Pier tenants, and more has shown that the community is dedicated to keeping residents and visitors healthy and safe while supporting our vendors. Member Klocke thanked the city for their support on the Pier and called attention to the teamwork and heavy lifting that all those involved have done to keep the Pier clean and safe. Member Lopez-Quintana asked for a timeline on outdoor dining so retail and hotels can plan. Liaison Gupta responded that they are going to the Council to extend the program for the next 2-3 months and are also currently working with a consultant about how other cities price outdoor dining space to make it work long-term. Chairman Gielicz asked whether the Chess Park would be redesignated or an open space and suggested it could be activated for sports or a vendor area. Liaison Gupta said it will be an open space for now.

Approval of the September 2021 Board Meeting Minutes: Secretary Williamson presented the Meeting Minutes; Vice Chairman Carrey moved to approve the minutes; Member Regalbuto seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Member D. Evans absent.

Acceptance of the November & December 2021 Financials: Treasurer Atallah presented the July 2021 Financial Memo. Vice Chairman Carrey moved to accept the Financial Memo; Member Regalbuto seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Member D. Evans absent.

Approval of the 2022-2023 Annual Report & City Budget Report: SMTT COO Edwards presented the Annual Report and City Budget Report, commenting that it was one of the most collaborative reports yet. SMTT COO Edwards stated that the average DMO staffing is at 34%-38%, and SMTT is at 33.6%, and so is nearing 2019 levels. SMTT CEO Kerns explained that we have one plan and two funding sources, and the reports show each financial source separately and the combined goals are reflected. She also reviewed SMTT's lanes of work, primary markets, and international opportunities including a month-long activation in Brighton, England and a Mexico City CEO mission with top media, airlines, and tour operators. Kerns further informed the Board that group sales for MICE will be laser focused as will growth in social media. SMTT staff and stakeholders will be updating the Santa Monica Experience Management Plan with Coraggio Group. SMTT is interviewing for a communications manager to be the voice of tourism in the community. Kerns then congratulated the team at SMTT for completing the Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) with limited staff, as this defines quality in the industry

through the submission of numerous documents to meet over 110 rigorous standards. SMTT COO Edwards reviewed the TMD forecast and 2022-2023 budget sheet with the Board and added that we are hiring visitor center staff and our contingency funds have remained unused throughout the pandemic. Member Lopez-Quintana asked whether SMTT has ideas if we bounce back faster than expected and have a larger budget; Edwards said that SMTT always plans for cuts and increases and has an ongoing list of areas to apply if needed. Vice Chairman Carrey complimented SMTT's work on the budget and commented that he's been impressed with the financials.

Treasurer Atallah moved to approve the annual report and city budget report; Chairman Gielicz seconded the motion. All members voted aye except for Liaison Gupta, who abstained. The motion carried with Member D. Evans absent.

SMTT Staff Updates: SMTT Director of Global Business Development Mitsuata informed the Board of five key trends we're currently seeing: travel restrictions are lifting, the pandemic solidified the importance of tour operators and travel agents, airlift (we expect all routes to LAX to return by summer, plus additional routes from Germany, France, and Canada), shorter booking windows as visitors book last-minute more often, and luxury clients (including celebration travel) is increasing. Mitsuata also reviewed our key markets overseas including a 3-month campaign in the United Kingdom for July 2022. We are hosting the Vancouver Sun for a familiarization tour next week, and Mitsuata added that airline tickets are often discounted but no longer complimentary for these sales and press FAM visits. Finally, Mitsuata updated the board that Sales & Services Manager Ozzie Otero was on a panel at the West Coast DMO Alliance; Otero and Mitsuata plan to promote group sales and meetings for midweek bookings.

SMTT CMO Gurrieri informed the board that as travel restrictions lessen, the appetite for travel is growing, including for long-haul and global travel. He also updated the Board on our targeted Super Bowl advertising, including a partnership with VCA to produce the end shot of their commercial "California Dreaming" in Santa Monica. He let the Board know that we will get the rights to some of the B-roll that VCA does not use, and that behind-the-scenes videos are coming out now with the featured celebrities to keep interest going. Gurrieri then shared the Board Santa Monica Shines ads that are in digital kiosks in Santa Monica Place, and other shopping centers in New York, and Scottsdale. He also showed the Board an overview of the upcoming santamonica.com website refresh and reviewed the Spring paid media campaign including objectives, channels, sponsored content, and the key audiences of -refined romantics sun soakers, and trendsetting thrill-seekers.

CEO Update: SMTT CEO Kerns and SMTT COO Edwards updated the Board that SMTT is moving forward with the Tourism Improvement District by engaging with the city and hiring Chrysalis to remove trash and graffiti, and report issues to the city. Edwards reminded the Board that they voted to approve the funding in September, and on December 15, 2021, the endeavor received City Council approval. On February 25th Chrysalis performed a cleaning blitz during which they picked up over 700 pounds of trash, removed 46 pieces of graffiti, and painted curbs. The program officially launched on March 1st and the Chrysalis team—composed of formerly unhoused individuals getting back into the workforce—is filling out daily report forms so we will be able to share statistics at the next meeting. Kerns then reviewed SMTT's staffing update with the board, including the new TMD Committee member listing, welcoming Charlie Lopez-Quintana to the Board, and sharing the lanes of work that show the organization's monthly goals. Edwards further informed the board about upcoming events, including the Spring Mixer at the Marriott, the Annual Tourism Summit on May 4th, and plans to have targeted roundtables before mixers as we move ahead.

For the Good of the Order: Member Asch informed the Board of upcoming PAL events: The Rick Crocker Beach Run 5k is May 26th at 4pm, the golf tournament at the Braemar Country Club on June 14th has a need for players and donations, and the Chris Carrey scholarship (which gives out need-based scholarships to high school Juniors and Seniors) is coming back in person this July. Chairman Gielicz announced that Montana Avenue will have an illuminated art installation in the Ficus trees starting this weekend. The Montana Avenue Merchants Association partnered with the art recovery program to create this temporary art exhibit that will run from late March until the holiday season at the end of the year. Chairman Gielicz complimented SMTT for arranging a Spectrum 1 news piece on Montana Avenue that was so successful the outlet now wants to do stories on the other neighborhoods as well.

Adjournment: Chairman Gielicz called to adjourn the meeting and moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Member Regalbutto and with all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.