

**MEETING MINUTES
SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH, 2022
HILTON SANTA MONICA HOTEL & SUITES – OCEAN PARK NORTH ROOM**

Call to Order: Chairman Carrey called the meeting to order at 5:17 pm.

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

Board Present: Chairman Neil Carrey, Vice Chair Younes Atallah, Treasurer Charlie Lopez-Quintana, Secretary Darlene Evans, Member Lauralee Asch, Member Kera Blades-Snell, Member Karen E. Ginsberg, Member Shahid Kayani, Member Jeff Klocke, Member Jan Williamson, 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 Michael Gurrieri, SMTT Director of Global Business Development Todd Mitsuhata, and SMTT Executive Assistant Jennifer Hover.

Absent: None.

Public Comment: Vice Chairman Carrey called for public comment; there was none.

City Manager Update: City Liaison Gupta informed the Board of Directors that the current Council will conduct their final meeting on Tuesday, November 15th. He stated the following December 6th Council Meeting will include the newly elected members and the swearing in of a Mayor, Pro tem Mayor and Council Members. On December 13th, the council meeting will focus on a review of city departments and organizations.

Gupta updated on the upcoming events the city will be participating. November 13th-18th, the City will partner with Right to Be and joining LA vs Hate in observing United Against Hate week (UAHW) and will be hosting a virtual bystander intervention training on Thursday, November 17th at 6pm, as a tool to empower community members to take an active role in standing up against hate and intolerance. The training is open to all at no cost, spaces are limited. For the second year, on Friday, November 11th the city will be hosting a Veterans Day Celebration on the Pier parking deck with the US Army at 11:00am. Additionally, on November 17th, Gupta shared the community celebration and grand opening of the Sustainable Water Infrastructure Project (SWIP), a first of its kind water recycling facility for storm water and run off recycling program with the focus on improving the water quality by diverting storm water and runoff from the ocean.

Gupta informed that the city council has now adopted a city housing plan that complies with the State of California. The Santa Monica Outdoors program and parklet programs have received minor adjustments and there is a strong number of applicants continuing in the program. SMTT CEO Kerns commented that the city staff's pop-up clinic had a great response in providing direct information. Gupta confirmed that the application process for the program is approximately 96% there.

Approval of the September 14, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes: Secretary Evans presented the Meeting Minutes. Vice Chair Atallah moved to approve the minutes and Treasurer Lopez-Quintana seconded the motion. The motion carried, abstain Member Asch.

Acceptance of the August & September 2022 Financials: Treasurer Lopez-Quintana presented the August and September 2022 Financial Memos. Secretary Evans moved to accept August 2022 Financials, Member Blades-Snell second the motion. The motion carried unanimously. Treasurer Lopez-Quintana motioned to acceptance of September 2022 Financials, Member Ginsberg moved to accept, Secretary Evans second the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

TMD Contingency Request & 2022-2023 Budget Respread: Treasurer Lopez-Quintana presented the TMD Contingency request and the 2022-2023 Budget Respread. Vice Chair Atallah moved to accept, Secretary Evans second the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

SMTT Staff Updates: SMTT CMO Gurrieri shared that the locals only I wish I had an Extra Bedroom program is back, running from November 14, 2022, to January 30, 2023, with 20 hotels signed up to participate. Gurrieri advised hotels to reach out if interested in participating.

Gurrieri updated on the paid media efforts taking place from October 24, 2022, through end of February that focuses on driving hotel bookings during the slower shoulder months, with specific focus on mid-week bookings. The media efforts center on fly markets outside of California, and Santa Monica's big drive markets in New York, Texas, Nevada, Arizona, Illinois, Florida, and Washington. He mentioned SMTT has worked with Visit California's with co-op program to partner with larger media partners, such as TripAdvisor, and Expedia and Visit California matches 25% of dollar spend to help spread the word of Santa Monica through the winter.

He updated on the KindTraveler program, currently with 10 participating hotels and benefiting Santa MonicaCARES. The program will follow Visit California's announcement at end of the year of all California destinations participating in the program.

Gurrieri informed on the status of the new Visitor Guide and Map printed and digital in 2023, newly designed with partner Destination Creative Group. DCG is in the process ad sales. The team is also in the process of gathering new assets for this guide, photoshoots to take place in next couple of weeks. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to our marketing team. Regarding recent media coverage, Gurrieri shared SMTT hosted 5 journalist and influencers from the UK, Canada and the US, all of which were vetted by the SMTT team with assistance from our partner agencies and Visit California. These visits produced 7 different articles that reached **over 5 million individuals and generated \$475,000.00 in earned media.**

Gurrieri highlighted that Member Ginsberg assisted with guiding a familiarization tour (FAM) with Visit California and provided a personalized tour of Tongva Park. Kerns added we will reach out to our board and community members to help provide a unique experience for our marketing and communications team to share the stories of Santa Monica firsthand.

SMTT Director of Global Business Development Mitsuhata provided updates, as SMTT had recently invested in a room night driven co-op campaign with Brand USA and Visit California. The campaign ran from April to August 2022 and was targeted to Canadian travelers. Mitsuhata advised that the multi-program included an interactive travel guide along with digital and social ads, which drove traffic to Santa Monica Expedia hotel search page for bookings. The campaign generated **over 4 million impressions along with 3,165 room nights, \$1.6 million in hotel revenue and room nights were distributed across all three TMD hotel tiers.**

Mitsuhata informed that in tandem with this program, SMTT also worked with Brand USA's digital team to launch Santa Monica's first ever landing page on the VisitTheUSA.com, the official consumer facing website for Brand USA. This new landing page will allow our destination to have an evergreen presence on VisitTheUSA.com to provide international audiences with tips, tools, and recommendations to visit our beach city. The page has received over 10,000 pageviews since launching this summer and has been translated into 7 languages across 16 markets, including German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Korean, Japanese, and Chinese.

For SMTT's Group Sales, Mitsuhata updated the team recently participated in IMEX America, the largest trade show in the U.S. for global meetings, events and incentive travel industry professionals held annually in Las Vegas. Buyers represented 60+ countries globally with most buyers coming from U.S., Canada, Mexico, and U.K. SMTT was joined by hotel partners Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel, Hilton Santa Monica Hotel & Suites and Santa Monica Proper. The team met over 154 meeting planners via one-on-one appointments and four hosted-buyer group appointments. To date, 10 leads have been generated as a direct result of the trade show.

SMTT CEO Updates: SMTT CEO Kerns updated on the Experience Management Plan (EMP), held first committee meetings in late October/early November, and plans for a Full Committee Meeting on Thursday, November 17th at the Annenberg Community Beach House where Trever Cartwright will be sharing plan and catalog document to track the work being done within each EMP Committee, and to be used as a tool to watch progress of projects within each Committee. Kerns informed the board if anyone is interested in servicing on one of the five boards, please let us know.

Kerns took a moment to thank Edwards for guiding the accounting team through the completion of another successful audit and staff contributions towards all efforts. Edwards updated on upcoming charity drives Santa MoniCARES will be participating in this holiday season, including a gently used business clothing drive in partnership with Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows with Chrysalis benefitting from the donations, a nonperishable food drive in partnership with Le Marigot Santa Monica with donations going to Westside Foodbank, and hosting a blanket drive with the City for items to be distributed during the City's homeless count.

Edwards thanked all who came out to Volley-Ween in October, the event was a success raising over \$4,000.00 for the local community focusing on human services, such as food, clothing, and housing. Chairman Carrey commented the event was put together so quickly and the results were unbelievable and enjoyed the event and outstanding staff. Edwards added the event would not have been able to be a success without our wonderful sponsors and donations. Kerns noted that the Volley-ween Event is intended to fill a void from a past fundraiser in the Annual Bowl-a-thon and hope to have more fun events as we lead up to the 2028 Olympics, the official date for next year's Volley-Ween is October 25th, 2023.

For the Good of the Order: Chairman Carrey called for any items for good of the order, there was none.

Adjournment: Chairman Carrey called to adjourn the meeting; the meeting was adjourned at 6:14 pm.