

**MEETING MINUTES  
SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)  
MEETING OF THE TOURISM MARKETING DISTRICT (TMD) COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2022  
VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM**

**Call to Order:** Chairman Atallah called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

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

**Tourism Marketing District Committee (TMD) Present:** Chairman Younes Atallah, Secretary/Treasurer Aileen Carreon, Member Kevin Anawati and Member Juan Viramontes.

**Also Present:** SMTT President/CEO Misti Kerns, SMTT Chief Marketing Officer Michael Gurrieri, SMTT Chief Operating Officer Evan Edwards, SMTT Chief People Officer Rachel Lozano, SMTT Director of Global Business Development Todd Mitsuata, SMTT Executive Assistant Jennifer Hover, The Cottage Santa Monica Owner John Heidt, The Cottage Santa Monica Manager Juana Rosales, Hilton Santa Monica Hotel & Suites General Manager, Shahid Kayani, Shuttlers on the Beach & Casa Del Mar Director Charlie Lopez-Quintana, Le Merigot Santa Monica General Manager Tyler Ward, and Ambrose Hotel General Manager Danielle Goller.

**Absent:** Vice Chairman Sam Jagger, Member Alvarez, Member Graham, Member Rincon and Member Laracine.

**Public Comment:** Chairman Atallah called for public comment; there was none.

**Approval of the September 13, 2022 TMD Committee Meeting Minutes:** Secretary/Treasurer Carreon presented the Meeting Minutes. Chairman Atallah moved to approve the minutes and Member Anawati seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Vice Chair Jagger, Member Alvarez, Member Graham, Member Rincon and Member Laracine absent.

**Acceptance of the TMD Collections Memo:** Secretary/Treasurer Carreon presented the TMD Collections Memo. Chairman Atallah moved to accept the Memo; Member Anawati seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with. The motion carried unanimously with Vice Chair Jagger, Member Alvarez, Member Graham, Member Rincon and Member Laracine absent.

**2023 TMD Increase Letter:** SMTT COO Edwards reviewed the upcoming TMD increase, beginning calendar year January 1, 2023. She explained that at the June 21, 2022 Joint Annual Board and TMD Committee Meeting the TMD Committee unanimously voted to increase by \$0.25 for Tier 1 and Tier 1 hotels and \$0.10 for Tier 3 hotels and to move the annual collection increase date per the SMTMD Plan from July 1, 2022 to January 1, 2023.

Edwards also reminded the committee that beginning January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, if hotels are internally forecasting a tier change at their property based on their 2022 ADR, they should make adjustments in their booking systems to reflect the correct TMD Collection rate. The Official ADR report should be completed by February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. She also explained the notification process to hotels arriving via email, USPS, and hand delivery to each property.

Member Lopez-Quintana inquired if there is any review of tier performance tier rate and ranges based on inflation as the dollar amounts have not been changed per tier over the last few years? CEO Kerns confirmed the tiers have not changed, and the TMD committee should agendaize in the next year to consider any changes to the plan as the plan runs through 2028. Chair Atallah inquired as to the process for change and CEO Kerns provided. Member Viramontes inquired on the 2023 Tier rates, what happens regarding previously booked reservations? Kerns informed that once the changes to their TMD increase are in effect

it becomes law, and SMTT encourages the hotels to include verbiage that taxes and fees may change at any time in all contracts and reservation confirmations.

**SMTT Staff Updates:** SMTT CMO Gurrieri updated the TMD Committee about the programs and paid media campaigns. He mentioned the '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 if not already signed up. Attendee Goller ask if a confirmation will be provided if signed up for the Extra Bedroom program. Gurrieri confirmed that, yes, if signed up online through our website a confirmation should have been sent out, if one has not been received to let him know.

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 is at end of the year of all California destinations participating in the program, near the end of the year.

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 influences 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.**

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 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.

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SMTT CPO Lozano reported that American Film Market (AFM) was back in Santa Monica, and a thank you for everyone's support. The event wrapped on Sunday, November 6<sup>th</sup> and November 8<sup>th</sup> SMTT is hosting a wrap party to celebrate and thank those who have made the event a success. Lozano shared that in preparation for AFM's arrival, SMTT attended the Santa Monica Police Department Roll Call to thank them for their service and to engage and make them aware AFM would be back in destination and those who would be in attendance were international guests. Additionally, she shared SMTT held the AFM Welcome Activation in front of the Loews Santa Monica Beach Hotel the morning of November 1<sup>st</sup>, handing out welcome bags for attendees as they arrived to the hotel and event.

Lozano reviewed the events the SMTT team has and will be attending including the Pier's Local Night on October 20<sup>th</sup>, and will be returning on November 17<sup>th</sup>, tabled at the Main Street Rocktober community event Saturday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, attended the Dios de los Muertos event at the Carousel Building on November 1<sup>st</sup> as they transformed the space and engaged in a focus for community celebration of the holiday. She shared upcoming events for the holiday season SMTT will be attending include Wednesday November 16<sup>th</sup> grand opening of ICE and all major holiday events throughout the community. Lozano shared that SMTT will be hosting their Holiday Partner Mixer on Wednesday December 7<sup>th</sup> at the Main Street Visitor Center.

SMTT COO Edwards advised the TMD Committee that the Board of Directors will receive the audited financials on Wednesday November 9<sup>th</sup> and happy to report the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year was a clean audit. Edwards thanked those who participated in the Volley-ween Event, the event was a huge success raising over \$4,000 to be split between three local charities focusing on human services; food, clothing and housing.

Additionally, she informed the committee of the 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.

**CEO Update:** SMTT CEO Kerns updated TMD Committee members on the Experience Management Plan (EMP), formed five committees inviting local residents, varied representative from community, with a governance committee, highlight and leverage cultural happenings, ensure safe and clean place to live and visit, support livability, and promote diversity of retail, dining and evening experiences. This is a 10 year plan, these are the goals that we are starting in year one. Upcoming meeting a Full Committee Meeting on Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at the Annenberg Community Beach House.

Kerns reminded the committee that there is a RFP out for new agency of record (AOR) and SMTT is looking to start a destination refresh in January once they are onboard. She updated when she and the team have been on the road, demand and interest is still high. She reminded that December 7<sup>th</sup>, SMTT is hosting the Holiday Partner Mixer and to stop by to meet community and industry members. Kerns advised that sustainability is going to be a common focus from travelers as research is showing buyers are looking for sustainable focused programs, giving back and do not mind paying extra. She requested to let our team know of properties who might be doing work in this area, as SMTT is gearing up on public relations to sharing best practices in our community, specifically with sustainability and responsible travel.

**For the Good of the Order:** Chairman Atallah called for any items for good of the order, he thanked SMTT team for work over the last few months with AFM, big feat for everyone. Absolutely marvius to see it come together and thank you to everyone who contributed.

**Adjournment:** Chairman Atallah called to adjourn the meeting; Member Viramontes moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Member Anawati and with all in favor, the meeting was adjourned at 5:49pm.