

**MEETING MINUTES  
SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2023  
1212 SANTA MONICA – PRIVATE DINING ROOM**

**Call to Order:** Chairman Carrey called the meeting to order at 5:12 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, Treasurer Charlie Lopez-Quintana, Secretary Darlene Evans, 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 Executive Assistant Jennifer Hover, Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce President Judy Kruger, and Downtown Santa Monica CEO Andrew Thomas.

**Absent:** Vice Chair Younes Atallah, Member Lauralee Asch.

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

**City Manager Update:** City Liaison Gupta updated the Board of Directors that the City Council is in the process of onboarding and swearing in the newly elected members, with Mayor Glean Davis and Mayor Protem Lana Negrete. He advised that Lindsey Call provided an update to City Council following COVID-19 response and moving forward the local emergency declaration will end. Gupta also advised the Board the Big Outdoor digital program was approved by City Council.

He informed the Board about the celebration for Black History Month to commence on January 24<sup>th</sup> with the reading of Black History Month Proclamation at 5:30pm in the City Council Chamber, the event will be livestreamed on the City's YouTube page. On February 1<sup>st</sup> there will be a kickoff event at City Hall featuring food trucks and dancing, the theme for 2023 is Black Resistance, with additional events throughout the city during the month of February.

Additionally, Gupta informed of the Frieze Art Fair taking place next month during Presidents Weekend, February 16-19 at the Santa Monica Airport. The event will feature more than 120 galleries from across the world.

**Downtown Santa Monica Update:** Downtown Santa Monica CEO Andrew Thomas introduced himself to the Board of Directors and provided an overview of what DTSM central pillars are; Advisory, Advocate, Marking/Partnership/Sponsorship, and Maintenance/Hospitality. Thomas went on to explain the Downtown Santa Monica (DTSM) organization is in a rebuilding phase with the additions of new employees, board members and visions for DTSM and are determining the core of what they want to accomplish.

Thomas explained much of the core services they want to accomplish are focused with the core services, such as contract with city and DTSM's role with partners, stakeholders, businesses, and residents. Additionally, a focus on improving the parking structure experience and the infrastructure of downtown and promenade areas.

Secretary Evans asked if there is a plan for the vacancies in the Promenade? Thomas advised it is a shared effort and responsibility, specifically the property owners and brokers. They need to explore who the right tenant is for the space and how spaces can be adjusted to accommodate new tenants to give visitors and residents a choice of where they shop.

Secretary Evans asked about increases to shopping locally? Thomas advised looking into potential discussion with City Parking, creating creative solutions and resources for residents parking while in DTSM. Additionally, adding more diversity to businesses and improving access for small businesses to gain space at the Promenade. He discussed looking at how other locations such as Main Street or 2<sup>nd</sup> Street are having success in growth, how does DTSM and the Promenade incentivize businesses to open there.

Member Ginsberg asked about updates to the reimage of promenade 3.0? Thomas responded there was a shift in the plan, and it was downsized. They are looking at both plans and reviewing what is best, looking for creative opportunities to finance, grants, etc. Member Ginsberg asked if it would enable large events to happen from one block to another? Thomas explained that the pedestrian street is what makes 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade unique, and currently there is a struggle to make use of the outside space.

**Approval of the November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Board Meeting Minutes:** Secretary Evans presented the Meeting Minutes. Member Williamson moved to approve the minutes and Treasurer Lopez-Quintana seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Vice Chair Atallah and Member Asch absent.

**Acceptance of the October & November 2022 Financials:** Treasurer Lopez-Quintana presented the October and November 2022 Financial Memos. Secretary Evans moved to accept October 2022 Financials, Member Kayani second the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Vice Chair Atallah and Member Asch absent. Treasurer Lopez-Quintana motioned to acceptance of November 2022 Financials, Member Blades-Snell moved to accept, Secretary Evans second the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Vice Chair Atallah and Member Asch absent.

**SMTT Staff Updates:** SMTT CMO Gurrieri provided an update on current and upcoming marketing and communications initiatives including; Initial results for the Fall/Winter Media Campaign and paid media to support the three local College Bowl Games: Jimmy Kimmel LA Bowl, Rose Bowl and National Championship, Selection of Noble Studios as new Agency of Record for SMTT, Holiday recap, Frieze LA coming to Santa Monica in February, Visitors Guide & Map and SMTT awarded a SMARTIES Marketing Award for the LA Loves Brighton Summer 2022 Activation. Also shared that SMTT will be attending IMM North America – International Media Marketplace to connect with top-tier journalists, editors, broadcaster and influencers and local and international news stories promoting Santa Monica.

SMTT CEO Kerns shared the updates for the Global Business Development team, she updated that SMTT invested in a 9-month co-op campaign with Visit California and global wholesaler HotelBeds in effort to drive room nights from domestic and international travelers with the campaign running from February to October 2022. This campaign generated 4,497 room nights, representing 181% increase compared to 2019 for the U.S. and a 36% increase compared to 2019 for the U.K.

Kerns informed that SMTT hosted a German FAM in partnership with Condor Airlines and DMOs Visit Greater Palm Springs and San Diego Tourism Authority. Condor Airlines has added two new routes as of May 2022, Frankfurt – Los Angeles and Frankfurt – San Francisco. This familiarization tour included 5 US product and marketing managers from top tour operators along with one SMTT German account manager. Kerns informed of the recent and upcoming events, including the PROST Holiday Luncheon joined by 9 hotel partners.

In group sales, Kerns updated that the team participated in the PME Texas Roadshow, meeting with 50+ meeting planners in Austin and Dallas, showcasing Santa Monica Hotels, Venues, and upcoming renovations. Additionally, the team attended holiday events including SITE SoCal Holiday event, networking with 240+ planners, sponsoring a table with 3 hotel partners and 4 clients from Chicago, San Diego and LA, and attended the Global Business Travel Associate (GBTA) annual chapter gala, meeting with corporate travel managers and local agencies, companies – BCD, ConferenceDirect, Universal Music Group, MGM Studios.

She informed that the team's upcoming trips include a NorCal Sales Mission to San Francisco and Silicon Valley for client dinners and receptions including office visits for Salesforce and Google, 4 partner hotels

registered to join and a SITE Global & East Coast Sales Calls in New York in February, conducting sales calls with addition of 4-day road show with Retreat Resources in New Jersey, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington D.C.

SMTT COO Evans gave an update of fundraisers and drives Santa MoniCARES hosted during the holiday season. This included a gently used clothing drive in partnership with Fairmont Miramar Hotel & Bungalows to benefit Chrysalis, who supports individuals re-entering the workforce, and a non-perishable food drive in partnership with Le Merigot Santa Monica benefiting the Westside Food Bank. She also shared SMTT holiday donations to 3 Santa Monica charities; The People Concern, Meals on Wheels West and Santa Monica Conservancy in lieu of client incentives.

**SMTT CEO Updates:** SMTT CEO Kerns updated the board of the Tourism Occupancy Tax (TOT) increase passed in the November election and will go into effect on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. The city will be creating an oversight committee to be formed for the increased TOT funds for safe and clean programs. Kerns stressed the need to have some members from the hospitality community included in the composition. Kerns advised the Board of the next meeting is on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and the meeting will virtual via zoom, unless notified differently.

Kerns shared upcoming travel to Japan with a delegation for a trade mission, visit CA CEO and 6 other CA destination leaders with Lt. Governor Kounalakis as International Affairs and Trade Representative and Dee Dee Myers, Senior Advisor to the Governor and Director of the Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) to advance California's economic interests abroad.

**For the Good of the Order:** Chairman Carrey called for any items for good of the order.

Santa Monica Chamber of Commerce Kruger shared that the COC committees are being relaunched and will focus on local and state issues, the website is being updated along with the business directory. Kruger also shared upcoming events for the chamber, on February 25<sup>th</sup> the Soul of Santa Monica, on April 29<sup>th</sup> the Women's Health and Wellness Gala at the Pier, and in June a Family Beach Picnic.

Secretary Evans shared the upcoming 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration on Monday, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023, starting at 9:00am at John Adams Middle School Performing Arts Center.

**Adjournment:** Chairman Carrey called to adjourn the meeting; the meeting was adjourned at 6:44 pm.