

**MEETING MINUTES  
SANTA MONICA TRAVEL & TOURISM (SMTT)  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2023  
LE MERIGOT SANTA MONICA – PACIFIC I & II ROOM**

**Call to Order:** Chairman Carrey called the meeting to order at 5:21 PM.

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

**Board Present:** Chairman Neil Carrey, Vice Chairman Younes Atallah, Treasurer Charlie Lopez-Quintana, Secretary Darlene Evans, Member Lauralee Asch, Member Kera Blades-Snell, Member Shahid Kayani, Member Jeff Klocke, Member Jan Williamson, City Liaison David White.

**Also Present:** SMTT President/CEO Misti Kerns, SMTT Chief Operating Officer Evan Edwards, SMTT Chief People Officer Rachel Lozano, SMTT Senior Director of Communications Lauren Salisbury, SMTT Director of Marketing Mandy Eck, SMTT Assistant Manager of Client Services Alyssa Dorn, SMTT Executive Assistant Ellen Keegan.

**Absent:** Member Karen Ginsberg.

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

**Acceptance of the September 2023 Financials:** Treasurer Lopez-Quintana presented the September 2023 financial memo and cash basis. Vice Chair Atallah moved to accept, and Treasurer Lopez-Quintana seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Member Ginsberg absent.

**City Manager Update:** City Manager David White informed the Board that the School District will not be moving forward with plans to renovate the Civic Center. The City of Santa Monica will instead go to the State for Surplus Property designation and further discussions will take place. This designation would offer the City flexibility to lease the building long term, thus allowing any tenant the ability to recoup the necessary renovation costs they would incur.

As for the property at 4th and Colorado, negotiations will soon begin with a developer for a housing and common building where the Santa Monica Daily Press is currently located. 200-300 of these units will be designated as affordable housing. White then shared an update that conversations are moving forward with a more traditional outreach process and they will be going to Council about the project soon.

An upcoming Council meeting will discuss supporting the Spirit Awards returning to Los Angeles, as well as LA Food and Wine hosting an event in Santa Monica. City Council is focused on bringing in several events and activations for next year that will enliven the city as much as possible. These initiatives include a bigger Frieze event to return to Santa Monica, diversifying the economy with two new recreational adult use cannabis stores, DTSM entering into a license agreement for a more sustainability-themed, family-friendly development as well as engaging in negotiations for a Rooftop Cinema Club flagship location. Other new businesses opening downtown include sporting goods stores, restaurants and more.

White shared several public safety updates such as the Police Department applying for a \$6 million grant to deploy a smart technology center that will help fight crime in the city. This would include cameras, automatic license plate readers, drones and more. The intent is not surveillance, but to address crime in an effective and responsible manner.

SMPD is also partnering with The People Concern to have an additional outreach team in the community to assist those experiencing homelessness or facing hardships with their mental health. In early January, the City will be able to deploy an alternative crisis response van, allowing trained professionals better

access to those in need of specialized attention. This would consist of two deployments of 40 hours per week. Staffing is the only setback for getting to 24/7 coverage.

Lastly, White shared that the dispatch system has changed to SPIDR, allowing citizens calling in for certain kinds of support to receive text status updates about their request. He also stated that development on the bowling alley will soon start. Secretary Evans asked about residential demand. White responded that over a billion dollars are being invested into residential projects because the demand is there.

**Approval of the September 13, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes:** Secretary Evans presented the September 13th meeting minutes. Member Kayani moved to approve the minutes and City Manager White seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Member Ginsberg absent.

**SMTT Staff Updates:** SMTT Director of Marketing Mandy Eck updated the Board with a newly formatted Official Santa Monica Visitor Guide and Map. She also shared positive social reach from SXSW Visit California Day and Brand USA events. Eck then presented the MICE booklet to the board with an updated image refresh.

SMTT Senior Director of Communications Lauren Salisbury shared positive earned media coverage from the Visit California Chicago Media Dinner. At this event, Santa Monica story ideas were pitched to 24 Chicago-based writers from outlets including AFAR, Chicago Magazine, Chicago Tribune and Architectural Digest. Additionally, Salisbury shared highlights of October FAMs/Media Visits which generated positive international press coverage from various travel guides, influencers and media outlets.

SMTT Chief Operating Officer Evan Edwards shared Global Business Development updates including several industry trade events attended such as ILTM North America, VCA Top Resa, Brand USA Travel Week, Visit California x Connections Luxury Forum, Retreat Resources and IMEX America. Upcoming events include SITE SoCal Holiday Charity & Gala and American Express INTERaction.

For Operations and Client Services, Edwards informed the board of seven new SMTT staff members and plans to continue growing. She also provided updates on Citywide events including AFM, SantaMoniCares 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Volley-Ween Fundraiser, I Am Santa Monica Workshop and SOCKtober. Upcoming holiday Citywide events include SantaMoniCARES Clothing and Holiday Food Drive as well as the SMTT Vendor/Partner Holiday Party.

Lastly, SMTT Chief People Officer Rachel Lozano shared SMTT Visitor Services participation in several local events including Open Main Street, Locals Night at the Santa Monica Pier as well as SMPD and SMFD Pier Tactical Training. SMTT welcomed over 5,000 guests to the Visitor Information Centers in September, selling over \$9,700 in SMTT branded merchandise at the three locations and online store.

**CEO Update:** SMTT CEO & President Misti Kerns then thanked the team at SMTT for their dedication and hard work in this busy season.

**For the Good of the Order:** Chairman Carrey thanked SMTT employees for supporting the PAL toy drive. Member Blades-Snell informed the Board that the first annual Santa Monica Black Lives Association Gala is sold out.

**Adjournment:** Chairman Carrey adjourned the meeting at 6:08 PM.