

Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association

MINUTES

Meeting held on **Tuesday, June 4th, 2019 @ 3:00 pm.**
Council Chambers – Townhall.

Present: Scott Aitchison, Scott Doughty, Kaushal Gandhi, Jesse Hamilton, Christine Kropp, Ken Patel, Matthew Phillips, Jeff Suddaby

Staff: Kelly Haywood, Kristin Maxwell, Scott Ovell, Morgan Richter, Terri Tebby

1. Review of Last Meetings Minutes

1.1. Approve Minutes – May 21st, 2019

Be it resolved that the minutes of the May 21st, 2019 meeting be approved as presented.

Moved by: Scott Doughty

Seconded by: Jeff Suddaby

CARRIED

2. Previous Business

2.1. Administrative Services

2.1.1. Council Ratification – May 27th, 2019

- The Town has received the first collection cheque from the Ontario Hotel & Motel Association (ORHMA) for the fees collected in the month of April. Cheque amount is \$29,831.28. The cheque was accompanied by an invoice from ORHMA in the amount of \$3390.00 for their administration set-up fee.
- Legal fees associated with the Municipal Accommodation Tax are approximately \$1943.00 to date
- Council approved staff assists the board with administrative support with a sunset clause of December 2019. That date can be amended if the Board determines they wish to seek out a different route for administrative support.
- Town Staff are waiting for Council's approval to move forward on the short term licencing fee project
- Platforms exist where companies will monitor the number of short term vacation rentals on behalf of a municipality. Town staff will research these companies further to see if they would benefit the enforcement of the tax
- The Town and Chamber will continue to offer support to the board. Once the Town begins to focus on the short term rental project they may reach out to the Chamber to take on additional administrative support
- Kelly will speak to the Chamber Board to see what support they are prepared to offer

2.2. Service Agreement with the Town of Huntsville

2.2.1. Council Amendment and Ratification – May 27th, 2019

- Council amended and approved the service agreement at the May 27th Council Meeting. The amendment was to remove the dollar amount associated with the fees for service. Reasoning was the fee for service and marketing our communities amounts may change. By removing amounts now it eliminates the need to amend the bylaw in the future

Motion – be it resolved that the Board approves the Service Agreement with the Town of Huntsville as presented.

Moved by: Matthew Phillips

Seconded by: Jeff Suddaby

CARRIED

- The Board recognizes they need to select a firm for their banking and accounting needs. Kelly H will obtain information from local banks and accountants and bring the information to the next board meeting
- The Town may be able to provide financial support and act as the HMATA's bank, staff are waiting for hear from finance to learn if a fee for service is associated with this support
- ORHMA's monthly summary currently identifies each hotels contribution. ORHMA can amend their reporting so that each hotel appears anonymous. For privacy reasons, the Board directed Scott O to have ORHMA issue anonymous reports moving forward so that they can be reviewed by the Board.

2.3. Private Short-Term Vacation Rentals

2.3.1. Report to Development Services Committee – June 12th, 2019

- A staff report has been submitted to Development Services Committee with a motion requesting direction for staff to move forward on project
- The zoning amendment will be approximately a 3 month process
- Staff to provide Council with a licensing and enforcement report in the fall, may exceed date and complete research sooner
- Request to keep topic on agenda, Scott O will keep the board updated as progress is made
- The Board requested to reach out to Airbnb to encourage them to begin collecting fees before licencing fee is finalized

3. New Business

3.1. Mission/Vision

- Scott O and Kelly H presented the board with the following mission, vision and values for their consideration and discussion:

Mission: To Partner with or Support Organizations with the mandate of growing
Tourism in Huntsville

Vision: Year-Round Tourism Destination

Values: -Low environmental impact

-Collaborative

-Inclusive

- Kelly recommended the board consider themselves as a group chosen to represent the community, primarily meant to be collaborative
- Matthew agreed that the board wants to be collaborative and inclusive, but suggested focus be on positioning Huntsville – something that the board can accomplish. Position ourselves by partnering and supporting organizations. The board's goal could be to position Huntsville against its competitors so that we continue to see strong growth and can compete against locations with more money
- Huntsville as a premier destination/location
- Scott D would like to see Huntsville as the destination of choice to anyone that travels to Ontario, to allow Huntsville to compete with any other location
- Compared to other locations in Muskoka, Huntsville's Chamber has proved to be a leader. It is important not to be seen as a group that is overshadowing the current leaders that continue to work hard to promote Huntsville as a destination. Do not duplicate efforts
- Important the board be sensitive and understanding to other initiatives in the community
- **The board agreed to the mission: To grow tourism business in Huntsville**
- The vision should help the Board to determine if they are successfully moving forward. Examples – year round destination that everyone wants to go – wordsmith accordingly, stay away from 'buzz words'
- Core values are an important part of the board's decision making process. Scott and Kelly presented the following:
 - o Partnerships & Investments
 - Strategy – heads in beds
 - Product Development – events, conferences, packages, cycling/Nordic, fuel & fun, Porter
 - o Marketing – online & social, campaigns (development of marketing objectives), media & fam tours
 - o Investment & Infrastructure – bike packs, something from downtown to Deerhurst/Hidden Valley, etc.
 - Capital & programming
- Partnership and investment ideas were discussed – the board thinking of new initiatives, then finding the right organization or partner to execute. Invite partners to discuss ideas, more collaborative approach than this board being the idea generators. The board wants to hear what other organizations have to say
- Going forward, the board has established one of their top priorities as 'heads in beds'. In order to increase the number of heads in beds, they will need to determine

where the gaps are (example: the month of November) and how to fill those gaps. Potential options to help fill gaps are product development, marketing and infrastructure – or a combination of the three. The board determined they must commit to a strategy that outlines the gaps – future discussion required

- Scott O presented the idea of partnering with the BIA, Chamber, and Town to develop a comprehensive strategy that focuses on tourism and economic development
- Scott outlined the following points related to this strategy:
 - o Goal – a comprehensive strategy focusing on tourism and economic development, partners include the Downtown Huntsville BIA, Chamber, Town and HMATA
 - o Issues – funding, procurement, timing, scope of work
 - o Input – RTO, MTMA, Public
 - o Benefits – synergy, cost sharing, community buy-in, consistency
- This model would allow for equal participation by each partner. This would potentially allow for a brand to form and allow for consistency for all organizations to work together
- To get the strategy going, a possible starting point would be to speak with a consulting firm to hear their input on the concept. Engage with a firm, then look at tackling a tourism study from July to September and have the firm provide the group with a document after that time, then from September to December focus on an economic development component with a document created at the end
- **Next Steps:**
 - o **Guiding Principles – Jesse directed the board to share up to 4 guiding principles or values with him before the next meeting**
 - o **Strategy – Scott to create a comprehensive strategy map and reach out to firms for feedback. Share strategy map with BIA and Chamber to forward to their Board of Directors for consideration**
 - o **Mission – Kelly to clean up mission, vision and strategy piece to share with board at next meeting**

4. Adjournment

4.1. Next Meeting Date – June 18th, 3:00 pm – Council Chambers

- Change next meeting date to Tuesday, June 25th, 2019

Be it resolved that the meeting be adjourned at 4:44 pm.

Moved by: Christine Kropp

Seconded by: Jeff Suddaby

CARRIED