

Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association

MINUTES

Virtual Meeting held on **Friday May 15, 2020 @ 10:00 am**

Present: Jesse Hamilton, Jeff Suddaby, Karin Terziano, Scott Doughty, Christine Kropp, Mathew Phillips, Kaushal Gandhi
Staff: Kelly Haywood, Bill Farnsworth, Torin Suddaby, Scott Ovell, Morgan Richter, Kirsten Maxwell
Guests: Bob Stone, James Murphy

1. Welcome

Approve Agenda as presented

Be it resolved that the agenda be accepted as presented

Moved by: Jeff Suddaby

Seconded by: Mathew Phillips

CARRIED

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were brought forward.

3. Approval of Minutes

Be it resolved that the minutes from the May 6, 2020 meeting be accepted as presented.

Moved by: Scott Doughty

Seconded by: Jeff Suddaby

CARRIED

4. James Murphy Winter Wonders Program Final Report

James Murphy was on the call to present the final details of the Winter Wonders voucher program. Highlights of the presentation include:

- 3 pieces of unique content were created, and the program ran from January 17 – February 10. The content and marketing created 3.8 million impressions, with a \$0.42 cost per click. Social media generated the most interest and referrals. A wide variety of businesses and accommodators had traffic directed to their websites from the program.
- Economic Impact – Over 500 packages were provided. 14 accommodation partners received overnight stays with a room night spend of \$256,000. 1,600 vouchers were issued and 1200 were redeemed at 24 local businesses for a total of \$32,000.
- The average spend for retail when redeeming a \$25 voucher was \$63.00. James reports this is a conservative number, but this shows that at least \$81,000 was spent in local businesses when redeeming vouchers.
- HMATA invested \$48,000, with a conservative total economic impact of \$337,000, meaning there was a 700% return on investment.

When asked for advice about a future voucher program as part of recovery marketing efforts, James recommended to not complicate things and reported that Huntsville already captures approximately 75% of bookings from their region-wide Fuel and Fun programs. He encouraged local businesses to spend money on their own marketing to amplify the local effects of the program.

James reported that RTO-12 is planning a fall Fuel and Fun voucher program with a tentative start date at the end of August. Some were concerned about marketing too early. James responded that the program would be subject to consultation with municipal leaders, business owners and stakeholders. He also said that there may be potential to run another Winter Wonders program depending upon available funding after the fall Fuel and Fun program.

5. Discussion of Town and Stakeholder Meeting

Karin Terziano gave an update on the meeting held May 13 with Town staff, local boards and business stakeholders. She reported that the purpose was to exchange ideas for a collaborative economic recovery plan and to try to look for duplication or areas that might be missed in creating a program. She said the Town learned a lot from this exchange of ideas.

Jesse Hamilton reported that in his opinion the meeting was a starting point and that everyone involved is brainstorming ideas. He reported that an important takeaway was the idea that the Town of Huntsville might have a role in creating and/or enforcing safety standards for businesses getting ready to reopen. This generated discussion about options from inspections with a “stamp of approval” to in-person visits where a Town staff member visits business owners to advise about safety standards. Karin Terziano said that the Town was working on a plan but, as the announcement just came out about Provincial Stage 1 businesses that are allowed to open next week, there will likely not be time to implement any program of this nature before businesses open.

6. Next Steps Regarding Recovery Marketing Plan

- Jesse Hamilton would like to see Kelly Haywood and James Murphy work to attempt to provide a dollar figure that would be optimal for the HMATA Board to spend on marketing to augment the upcoming RTO-12 Fall Fuel and Fun program.
- The idea of spending money on consumer insight research was brought up in a separate meeting. Jesse Hamilton said that the HMATA Board could be quite nimble in getting such research done quickly. Jeff Suddaby cautioned that opinions and intentions regarding travel are changing as new provincial guidelines are introduced, so insight data may need to be collected more than once to be valuable. Jesse asked that Kelly Haywood do some research into the costs involved in hiring a third-party to complete market research. Kelly Haywood said that sharing whatever information is discovered in such a report with businesses in town would be a way for the HMATA Board to show leadership within the community.
- Christine Kropp asked which entity would be responsible for tourism marketing for the Town of Huntsville once the time is right. Karin Terziano reported that the Town currently funds the Huntsville/Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce for marketing. Scott Doughty agreed that using the Chamber would be a good idea.

7. Adjournment

Be it resolved to adjourn meeting at 11:35 am

Moved by: Jeff Suddaby

Seconded by: Christine Kropp

Next meeting date to be held virtually on Tuesday May 26 at 10:00 am.