

Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association

MINUTES

Virtual Meeting held on **Tuesday May 26, 2020 @ 10:00 am**

Present: Jesse Hamilton, Karin Terziano, Christine Kropp, Mathew Phillips,
Staff: Kelly Haywood, Bill Farnsworth, Torin Suddaby, Scott Ovell, Morgan Richter, Kirsten Maxwell
Guests: Chirag Patel

1. Welcome

Approve Agenda as presented

Be it resolved that the agenda be accepted as presented

Moved by: Christine Kropp

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 15, 2020 meeting be accepted as presented.

Moved by: Christine Kropp

Seconded by: Mathew Phillips

CARRIED

4. Discussion of Community Recovery Marketing Plan

The individual components of the Community Recovery Marketing Plan were discussed

Travel Intentions Study

It was recommended that the MAT Board partner with an analytics company, such as Environics, to conduct a Travel Intentions Study. Kelly Haywood revealed that through discussions with Environics she discovered there was a significant amount of data available for free and that the Environics representative recommended starting with this existing data and targeting people who would normally travel internationally but can't due to COVID-19. Kelly recommended that she invite Environics to another Board meeting to be planned as soon as possible.

Jesse Hamilton says he sees 2 opportunities that can come out of this study: 1) It will allow the Board to try to understand the travel intentions of Huntsville's key markets and 2) It could allow the Board to better understand the perceptions of Huntsville itself as a destination. The second piece of information would be valuable to multiple stakeholders including MAT, the Town of Huntsville, Huntsville BIA and individual

business owners. He also said there would be value in studying intentions as they are changing and maybe there needs to be 2 surveys to measure this change.

The Board agreed in principle that \$40,000 seemed to be a reasonable spend to acquire data about both pieces.

Digital Content Marketing Campaign

Kelly Haywood presented a plan specifically for the MAT Board but said that there is also a collaborative digital marketing campaign in the works with the Town of Huntsville and Huntsville BIA. From previous meetings she said there seems to be consensus that the digital content will “live” on the Huntsville Adventures website. She also revealed that an additional \$39,000 from a Rural Economic Development grant will be part of the collaborative marketing plan.

Jesse Hamilton says that if no collaborative plan is going to be getting underway soon, the Board should be looking at creating their own plan and that the suggested \$30,000 will likely not be enough. He suggested \$50,000 as a more reasonable amount. Talking about a potential collaborative plan, he suggests that if the MAT Board is going to participate it will be dependent on the Town of Huntsville committing money first – he does not feel like MAT should be taking the lead on a collaborative plan. Jesse says a reasonable course of action would be to reach out to a third-party marketing agency to submit a proposal and confirm whether \$50,000 will be an effective amount of money based upon the campaigns goals.

Karin Terziano was asked if she could provide an update from the Town of Huntsville about a potential collaborative plan. She says the Town received a proposal from the Huntsville/Lake of Bays Chamber of Commerce and the Huntsville BIA which will be discussed at the Town Council meeting the following day. Karin asked the question of when a marketing campaign will be implemented. Kelly Haywood recommended that the preparation phase of the plan, which includes creating content, photography, video and collecting travel intention data needs to happen as soon as possible to be ready to launch when restrictions are lifted and travel can begin. Karin asked if the Huntsville Adventures website promotes more than just Chamber members. Kelly responded that there will be a proposal before Council to provide free, 1 year Chamber memberships to every business in Huntsville. Jesse Hamilton suggests that with the current timing it makes sense for the digital content to be anchored on the Huntsville Adventures website.

The Board agreed in principle to set aside between \$30,000 and \$50,000 for digital marketing to launch sometime this summer and that MAT will participate in a collaborative plan provided the Town of Huntsville first commits money to the plan.

Stay and Play Voucher Program

Jesse Hamilton suggested that the recommended \$160,000 in the plan is too high. If partnering with RTO-12 there will not be an opportunity to purchase additional vouchers specific to Huntsville as the RTO cannot promote one region over the others.

He believes the best opportunity for the MAT Board is to set aside money to “amplify” the RTO’s plan when it is launched. After discussion, it was suggested that \$40,000 be set aside for digital marketing to amplify the RTO-12 fall plan, with the potential for additional funds used to create a winter program similar to last year’s Winter Wonders program.

Resolution

The Board agreed in principle (without a formal vote) to allocate \$40,000 to a travel intentions study, \$40,000 to amplify RTO-12’s summer voucher program and up to \$50,000 for a digital marketing campaign. This would leave \$100,000 of the originally budgeted \$230,000 to be used to either top up these programs if necessary or to fund other ideas as approved.

5. New Ideas

Several new ideas for recovery marketing were brought forward:

- A “Christmas in July” program that would provide a discount on accommodation rates for stays booked over Christmas
- Spending money to bring social media influencers to Huntsville
- Spending money to hire travel writers to come to Huntsville

6. Adjournment

Be it resolved to adjourn meeting at 11:05 am

Moved by: Christine Kropp

Seconded by: Mathew Phillips

Next meeting date to be held virtually on Monday June 1 at 11:30 am.