

# Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association

## MINUTES

Virtual Meeting held on **Thursday October 22, 2020 @ 2:00 pm**

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**Present:** Jesse Hamilton, Matthew Phillips, Kaushal Gandhi, Karin Terziano, Jeff Suddaby  
**Staff:** Kelly Haywood, Bill Farnsworth, Torin Suddaby, Morgan Richter, Steve Carr,  
Dan Watson, Scott Ovell  
**Guest:** Jake West, Limbic Media

### 1. Welcome

Approve Agenda as presented

**Be it resolved that the agenda be accepted as presented**

**Moved by:** Jeff Suddaby

**Seconded by:** Karin Terziano

**CARRIED**

### 2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were brought forward.

### 3. Approval of Minutes

**Be it resolved that the minutes from the October 7, 2020 meeting be accepted as presented.**

**Moved by:** Jeff Suddaby

**Seconded by:** Karin Terziano

**CARRIED**

### 4. Presentation by Limbic Media

Prior to the presentation Kelly Haywood said that she had been in contact with Blue Mountain about the work Limbic Media did at their site. She reported that the resort is continuing to work with the company and gave them a very positive recommendation. Kelly also told the Board that she is recommending the installation be done at Muskoka Heritage Place (MHP) for several reasons: 1) MHP's site provides some natural security and would reduce the need to hire security staff; 2) It will be much easier to create a safe COVID environment at MHP as it is gated and the number of visitors at any one time can be limited; 3) There is existing power at MHP, whereas other locations may require the installation of electrical infrastructure.

Dan Watson reported that he had a meeting with Jake West and engineer Jason from Limbic where they discussed a Statement of Work. Dan says that the proposed project will include and initial consult, creation of the vision and design, procurement of materials and the oversight of on-site installation.

Jake West from Limbic Media came online for his presentation. The presentation started with a promotional video showing the current project Limbic has produced for Blue Mountain. Jake said COVID caused Blue Mountain to change project to a forest walk, with huge infrastructure

needs to get power to the location. Huntsville would not need such infrastructure so price would be lower. Jake said that the installations are especially popular with 20's and teens. He said \$250,000 is a very tight budget, but that should be enough for the creation and ideation stage, the technical creation and equipment purchase and the cost of 2 engineer to oversee the installation process. He said that the installation process could take between 400-600 hours. Jake also said that, if a reasonable fee is charged for admission, the project could actually pay for itself quickly.

Matthew Phillips asked how much Blue Mountain spent just for lighting equipment and Jake said \$200,000, but that doesn't include any installation. Installation generally takes 1 ½ weeks, but winter adds time. Karin Terziano asked if there is confirmation of power in MHP and Dan Watson says yes. Karin asked if there was sound with the lights and Jake answered that each installation has unique and interactive sound. Jeff Suddaby asked if the project vision was to begin at the MHP gates and travel a roughly 1 km loop and how many installations would that require. Dan Watson says the loop is approximately half a kilometre and Jake recommended 4-5 large installations with some smaller areas in between. Jesse Hamilton asked if there would be lights in Downtown to tie in with this project and Jake answered that it's possible but the project would have to be careful with budget.

Jake West exited the meeting at 3:00pm.

Discussion of the lighting project ensued:

Kelly Haywood says the event marketing plan will focus on more than the light show, with emphasis on outdoor physical activity. Other attractions will be marketed such as trail at Arrowhead Park. Kelly is concerned about how many installation hours Limbic requires from us.

Jesse Hamilton thinks the project should not be a paid installation and that the economic benefit will come from visitors driving to Huntsville and staying overnight to see the installations. Matthew Phillips thought that perhaps a smaller fee would at least help offset set up and take down costs. Karin Terziano thinks you have to charge something to make it financially viable. Jeff Suddaby says there should be a small charge at MHP. Kaushal Gandhi says a token charge will help with crowd control. Torin Suddaby answered that for health unit contact tracing there must be a registration process – this one would be online, and emphasis must be made to limit number of visitors for safety.

Jesse Hamilton asked if Limbic will provide/present a detailed program budget. Kelly Haywood says we should get something from them. Jesse then asked if there was anyone who simply thinks this is too much money and that we should consider alternatives, to which no one stated that they simply do not want to do the project. Karin Terziano said she is concerned that there are no costs in the budget for take down at the end of the season considering Limbic will charge \$50,000 just for installation and we have to provide 400-600 hours. Dan Watson says, from experience, he feels the number of hours is overblown and that tear down always takes considerably less time.

Matthew Phillips asked what the costs of the project will be year over year if we change the project and run it each year. Kelly Haywood said there will definitely be costs associated with changing or expanding the project annually. Matthew asked if there is a chance there could be

grant funding available for this project and Kelly said the Chamber has already submitted a grant application and there are likely more that the project may be eligible for.

Jesse Hamilton asked Karin Terziano if she is comfortable with the Town putting money into the project. Karin says she is worried that a COVID flare up would mean the project would have to close after spending so much money. She said reception of the project by Town staff was not great and that it may be difficult to find staff hours for assistance. She also said there has to be a very detailed budget/breakdown of where Town money will be spent for a decision to be made.

Jess Hamilton asked Kelly Haywood what the next moves are for this project. Kelly said Limbic will require a deposit before the project can go much further. She would like to present to Town Council to find out if they are on board with the project. Kelly asked if the MAT Board is prepared to support the project because it is a large financial commitment. Dan Watson agreed that there needs to be Board support before the project can continue. Karin Terziano reminded the Board that there is a significant number of citizens in the Town who feel strongly that we should not be attracting visitors due to COVID and the Town must take that into consideration.

Jesse Hamilton said the Board decision is difficult because the dollar amount is large and we don't yet know what additional costs there may be for take down and staffing etc. Jesse asked if we should move the lighting to Downtown. Dan Watson said, in his experience with large Downtown events such as Nuit Blanche, there are many additional factors that must be considered. Each building has a separate owner that must be consulted and sometimes they are very difficult to track down. There are also questions around who will pay for the hydro for the installations and there are MTO restrictions surrounding lights and roadways. Dan said he thinks MHP would provide a much larger "wow factor."

Jesse Hamilton asked the Board if there was anyone against at least pursuing the project further, to which no one objected.

Next steps: Try to get a more detailed cost breakdown and get the project before Town Council.

## **5. Adjournment**

**Be it resolved to adjourn meeting at 4:00 pm**

**Moved by:** Kaushal Gandhi

**Seconded by:** Jeff Suddaby

Next meeting date to be determined.