

Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association

MINUTES

Virtual Meeting held on **Wednesday October 28, 2020 @ 11:00 am**

Present: Jesse Hamilton, Christine Kropp, Kaushal Gandhi, Scott Doughty, Jeff Suddaby
Staff: Kelly Haywood, Bill Farnsworth, Torin Suddaby, Morgan Richter, Steve Carr,

1. Welcome

Motion to begin the meeting

Be it resolved that the meeting will begin

Moved by: Christine Kropp

Seconded by: Jeff Suddaby

CARRIED

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were brought forward.

3. Discussion of Winter Lighting Project

Jesse Hamilton opened by saying that the costs of hosting the project at Muskoka Heritage Place (MHP) are growing and that the number of players/organizations that need to be involved is also growing. He said that it seems Town staff are not in support of the project and that we currently do not have enough information to present to Council to try to get them on board. Jesse wants to know if the Board will commit to up to \$50,000 to have Stage 1 of the project completed by Limbic Media. This stage would include the artistic and creative direction and consultation and provide more details to give to the Town. He believes if we start now the installation could open for mid-February.

Kelly Haywood says the Chamber is working with the Town to identify and prepare the necessary reports to take to Council. She asked what the Board thinks is a fair monetary contribution from the Town for this project? She agrees with Jesse that we are looking to have the first phase of the project completed.

Torin Suddaby reported that the scope of work for this first phase is to include a clear budget for the project, details about each individual lighting installation and a visual/creative outline and drawing of each installation and where it will be situated within MHP. Kelly says this information is a key step in engaging Town Council to agree to come on board for this project.

Scott Doughty says he can agree to pay for having a consultation done, but he has questions:

- 1) What would the seasonal changeover costs be? Kelly says we are unsure of that at the moment.
- 2) How much money are we asking the Town to contribute? Kelly said \$70,000.
- 3) When can the project start? Torin Suddaby responded that the earliest start could be end of

January if the Board agrees to pay the full amount know. Kelly says she is worried about rushing the project through without Town approval.

Jeff Suddaby said he would like the Board to consider the Pollara survey results that stated customers are looking for more than just attractions. He said to spend \$250,000 he would like to see the program used more year-round than just an 8 week program. He feels it should run in the summer as well and that we need to consider whether MHP is willing and able to host the installation all year. He also asked if we could make do with 3 installations at MHP and 1 downtown to save costs. Scott Doughty pointed out that keeping the show running year-round would likely require significantly more money for management, utilities, maintenance etc.

Christine Kropp says she is worried that the installation will lose its zest if it runs all year and thinks that 10 weeks might be the appropriate length.

Jesse Hamilton suggested that HMATA would buy the equipment for the installations and then maybe the Huntsville Festival of the Arts could provide the artistic direction for their use in subsequent years. He pointed out that \$300,000 is equivalent to approximately 2,000 room nights at a \$149 room rate and that this is a reasonable number with a good ROI.

Jesse Hamilton said that he thinks HMATA needs to pay for the artistic direction before we can answer most of the questions about the number of installations and long-term costs etc. He reminded the Board that this would simply be paying for the first stage of a multi-stage project.

Torin Suddaby informed the Board that MHP has told him they would like the light show infrastructure to be taken down for the June – September summer season. He also said that Limbic has been informed that MHP may not end up being the project location.

Jesse Hamilton suggested the Board approve a motion to pay Limbic up to \$50,000 for the first phase of the project.

Be it resolved that HMATA will pay Limbic Media up to \$50,000 for the completion of Phase 1 of the proposed Winter Lighting Installation Project.

Moved by: Christine Kropp

Seconded by: Jeff Suddaby

Motion Approved

4. Pollara Survey Report

Kelly Haywood asked Jesse Hamilton if he would be willing to present the Pollara Survey report in a public webinar. Jesse said he is happy with the presentation report and proposed media release created by Bill Farnsworth and that he would present at a webinar. Kelly suggested that the rest of the Board provide their feedback or approval of the documents and she will set up a date and time for the webinar.

5. Adjournment

Be it resolved to adjourn meeting at 11:40am

Moved by: Christine Kropp

Seconded by: Scott Doughty