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## MINUTES

In-person meeting held at Deerhurst Resort on **March 23, 2023, 3:00 p.m.**

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**Present:** Jeff Suddaby, Steve Carr, Chirag Patel, Scott Morrison, Bob Stone, Nate Smith  
**Regrets:** Jesse Hamilton  
**Staff:** Kelly Haywood, Dawn Huddleston  
**Guests:** Lauren MacDermid and Kirstin Maxwell, Town of Huntsville; Sheena Repath

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### 1. Welcome and agenda approval

**Motion:** *To accept the agenda as presented.*

Moved by: Steve Carr

Seconded by: Chirag Patel

**CARRIED**

### 2. Declaration of conflict of interest – none

### 3. Approval of meeting minutes

**Motion:** *To accept the minutes from the February 24, 2023 meeting as presented*

Moved by: Chirag Patel

Seconded by: Steve Carr

**CARRIED**

### 4. Delegations

- a. Sheena Repath, Muskoka Highlands Academy. No funding request; for information only.

The Academy is working to raise funds for an inflatable sports dome for use by the school, local sports clubs, daycares and day camps, etc. and which could also be used as a tourism draw for tournaments and events. There is no funding ask today, however, the school will return with an ask for seed money in the future.

**Discussion:**

The board requested additional information on the timeline for installing the dome. The Academy is hoping to have it in place within 18-24 months. The dome takes 12 months to manufacture and the proposed property has no road or services.

There was general discussion of the tourism benefits of a facility such as this.

- b. Jean-Francois Couture and Mike Stiell, The Trekking Group

The Trekking Group presented possible additions to Eclipse or development of a new attraction, including treetop boardwalks and netting.

**Discussion:**



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The board likes the potential for an attraction like this. Discussion regarding the challenges of the Muskoka Heritage Place property, the possibility of incorporating Cann Lake, and whether sourcing private vs. municipal land for the attraction would be easier.

There was general discussion regarding admission pricing, staffing, the sustainability of and public interest in an attraction like this, how to potentially combine it with the lighting at Eclipse, its potential for year-round use and how well it might be used in the winter, parking woes, and the ability to incorporate nature, the arts, etc. into an attraction like this.

Kelly to arrange a date for Mike and Jean-Francois to tour the current Eclipse property and perhaps other options. Board members are welcome to attend.

### 5. Staff update

#### a. Eclipse update

The Eclipse season ended on March 17. Kelly Haywood provided an overview of the season. Revenue was slightly less than hoped for, in part due to unpredictable weather and a shift in attendance (more hotel guests who attended for free, and fewer locals). Lights will be removed at the end of April, but staff are in discussion with the Town about leaving some of them in place as removal and installation are expensive (about \$250k per year for both). Whatever remains could be used for MHP events through the summer. The lights at Kent Park will remain in place, and staff are hoping those on Town Hall will remain as well.

#### **Discussion:**

The board discussed dropping free vouchers for hotel guests. Eclipse as it is today is expensive to operate and may not be sustainable. Nordic ski trails are needed. The brand, whatever it ends up being in the future, needs to focus on outdoor activity.

### 6. Adjournment & Next Meeting

- **Next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. at 3 Guys and a Stove.

- **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 4:31 p.m.

**Moved by:** Nate Smith

**Seconded by:** Scott Morrison

**CARRIED**