

Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association

MINUTES

Meeting held on **Tuesday, May 7th, 2019 @ 1:00 pm.**
Partners Hall – 37 Main St. East.

Present: Scott Aitchison, Scott Doughty, Kaushal Gandhi, Jesse Hamilton, Christine Kropp, Ken Patel, Matthew Phillips, Jeff Suddaby

Staff: Derrick Hammond, Scott Ovell, Terri Tebby (recording secretary)

1. Review of Last Meetings Minutes

- a. Approve Minutes – April 23rd, 2019
- The Mayor requested a discussion regarding private vacation rentals be added to the agenda

Be it resolved the minutes of the April 23rd, 2019 Board of Director's meeting be accepted as presented.

Moved by: Matthew Phillips

Seconded by: Scott Doughty

CARRIED

- b. Follow Up Items
- i. Banking
- The Ontario Restaurant Hotel & Motel Association (ORHMA) will collect the first round of tax from hotels on May 20th. The Town expects it will receive its first installment by the end of the month
 - ORHMA's fee will be paid for by the Town. The Town will then invoice the Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association (HMATA) for their portion of the fee
 - The board will consider the Town assisting the organization with their banking. In this model, the Town would hold the organizations funds and all invoices would be submitted to Town and paid by HMATA from the these accounts. This will decrease the workload for HMATA and may be more cost effective.
 - A similar operating model is the BIA. Scott O. and the Mayor will speak with staff to develop a proposal and report back to the board.
 - The cost associated with this model was requested. If the board decides to move forward with this option a staff report to council will be created.
 - Jeff S. noted that the Chamber could offer a similar service
- ii. Accounting
- Audited statements for the organization will be required
 - The Town of Huntsville's accounting firm may be able to audit HMATA's books as an arm's length partner. Future discussion required
- iii. Legal
- Quotes from Barriston Law and Thoms and Currie
 - Fees are approximately \$250.00 – \$400.00 per hour

- iv. Insurance
 - \$1500.00 - \$2000.00/year approximately. This could change based on the budget of the organization as well as the direction the organization takes (example: involvement in high risk events)
 - General Liability and \$2,000,000 coverage
 - Quotes from Hutcheson Reynolds and Caswell Insurance & BFL Canada
 - Incorporation paperwork has been submitted and is expected to be finalized in the next week

2. Governance

- a. Governance Background Papers
- b. Review of Governance Documents
 - Jeff reminded the board that they can amend governance policies in the future. Changes can be made at the AGM
 - The board committed to a monthly review of 3 governance topics at each monthly board meeting to eliminate the need to review the document all at once. The Chair will determine topics for each meeting
- c. Adopt Governance Documents

Be it resolved that the board accepts the governance policy as presented.

Moved by: Jeff Suddaby

Seconded by: Scott Doughty

Be it resolved that the board will review 3 governance items at each monthly board meeting as discussed.

Moved by: Matthew Phillips

Seconded by: Jeff Suddaby

3. New Business

- a. Strategy/Master Plan Discussion
 - Jesse asked the group to determine what they feel are the most important topics HMATA should focus on. For him, HMATA should support, enhance and make possible marketing efforts to our partners in tourism
 - Do not duplicate or compete with current partners
 - Value an effective and positive relationship with the Town of Huntsville
 - Recognize the efforts of accommodators in Huntsville as the collectors of the tax and the burden it places on their business
 - Define tourism as both overnight stays and day visits, recognize that overnight stays will have more economic impact on the community
 - Recognize residents of Huntsville as stakeholders
 - Other items that should be focused on by HMATA include:
 - Increase overnight visits – primary measurement of this is occupancy
 - Increase day visits – is there a way to track shop visits, number of receipts, etc.?
 - Workforce development – work with other agencies and support recruiting efforts
 - Emphasize a push for tourism and occupancy; this will be a top priority in the first 3 years. Occupancy creates the funds for the program

- Develop communication to help local businesses recognize where the money is coming from. 'Heads in beds' is an investment to the entire community
- Jeff S. stated he sees investment as a pillar for the organization and most items fall under it – workforce, marketing, product development, etc.
- Look beyond what others are doing and find ways to support the gaps and achieve priorities through investment
- Clear items where HMATA can drive change with visible measurable
- RTO12 offers travel vouchers that can be used in the community and act as a trackable resource for the organization, Downtown Dollars is a similar model
- 3rd part to assist in building a strategic plan – increasing occupancy in Huntsville is the priority
- Increasing the length of stay for visitors will benefit community
- HMATA acts as a silent partner, both shaping and amplifying other partners by creating a tourism plan that highlights gaps in current marketing initiatives
- No web presence to begin with to allow current partners already guiding tourism to continue to do so. Do not duplicate efforts. The board recognizes that the organization will evolve and a website may be considered in the future

b. Private Vacation Rentals

- Private Vacation Rentals will benefit from the efforts of the MAT tax
- Once private cottage rentals are included in the tax they will be encouraged to join the Huntsville Hotel and Restaurant Association, and through that association they will be given the opportunity to sit on the HMATA board
- Scott O advised that in previous conversations with AirBnB they expressed interest in participating in the tax, as long as other private vacation rental agencies are on board as well (VRBO, etc.)

4. Adjournment

- a. Next Meeting Date – May 21st, 3:00 pm

Be it resolved that the meeting be adjourned at 2:45 pm.

Moved by: Jesse Hamilton

Seconded by: Jeff Suddaby

CARRIED