

Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association

MINUTES

Virtual Meeting held on **Friday November 26th, 2021 @ 10am**

Present: Jesse Hamilton, Scott Doughty, Nate Smith, Karin Terziano, Steve Carr, Chirag Patel, Jeff Suddaby

Regrets:

Staff: Kelly Haywood, Torin Suddaby, Barbara Bloomfield, Kirsten Maxwell

1. Welcome & Acceptance of Agenda

Motion to begin the meeting

Be it resolved to accept the agenda as presented

Moved by: Scott Doughty

Seconded by: Jeff Suddaby

CARRIED

2. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were brought forward.

3. Deputation

- Ironman Presentation – Nick Stoehr
 - Asking for \$25K to subsidize the licensing fee from Ironman (\$130K)
 - July 10th, 2022
 - Post race discussion on impact on community
 - New run course this year
 - Refer to stats on attached presentation slides

Discussion with Nick Stoehr:

Scott Doughty – thank you for your presentation, can dip in attendance over the years be explained?

Nick Stoehr – September dates problematic for racers, prefer the July/August race dates

Karin Terziano – has new race course been approved by OPP/MTO?

Nick Stoehr – SEAT application has not gone in yet, working with Greg Pilling next week. All parties have new route and are aware of the changes.

Jesse Hamilton – is the approval from Town contingent on the HMATA Board approving this ask? Will the event happen if this ask is denied?

Nick Stoehr – the event is happening, registration is going live next week, with many knocking on our door already. We are asking for support this year, and moving forward.

Jesse Hamilton – There have been discussions around “hotel of choice”, mandate for this Board is to increase visits to Huntsville, regardless of hotel/resort during shoulder season. If moving forward we would want to see support for ALL hotels/resorts – to drive business across the board.

Discussion with Board only:

Nate Smith – Why do the hotels feel they need this event in the summer? From a downtown business perspective it not a great event. Locals stay away on that weekend with notable decrease in sales.

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Karen Terziano – Do we care what heads are in beds? As long as the beds are sold? The July date is not merely the preference for Ironman, but if it were to held in September, the Summit Center would not be available, ice pad is already in and the High School is open.

Scott Doughty – Believes this event belongs in our community. Room nights are booked well in advance which helps in forecasting. Recreational travel depends on weather and tents to book last minute. It is unfortunate on downtown retail business decline over this – can we do anything to help market that better? Silly to loose this event over \$25K.

Steve Carr – really torn over this – we do not see business booked far in advance, only 2 night stays but EDR is higher.

Chirag Patel – this events help to market Huntsville as a destination, put on the map. He sees 4-5 night stays with a higher EDR.

Jeff Suddaby to Karin Terziano – has the contract in the past always had the donation of \$25K? If it is not provided is the contract void? Spending money to buy room nights during the summer when we are already busy goes against what we have all about.

Karin Terziano – This is a new one-year contract where the Town took out the cash commitment of \$25K but kept the in-kind commitment of \$25K. This contract is contingent on the new proposed race route being accepted by everyone.

Nate Smith – if the new race route has no full road closures – the course this past year has many changes at the last minute, no way to guarantee that this won't happen again.

Karin Terziano – The route is not approved yet, the contract will only move forward if approved through the SEAT process.

Jesse Hamilton – optically he believes that this Board should consider paying the \$25K out of respect to the Town arrangement as well as for the history of the event. If we don't, we may risk losing this event to another location in Muskoka. Would like to see promotion of ALL area hotels/resorts as accommodation partners, all treated the same and given recognition for this event.

Jesse Hamilton posed a question to Karin Terziano – did the Town incorporate any clause about having first right of refusal for further agreements?

Karin Terziano – not at this point, it was the Town that only wanted a one year agreement, based on a new course and evaluation afterwards.

Nate Smith – would the hoteliers loose business should their not be an Ironman event?

Scott Doughty – this event runs rain or shine so business would be there. Without the event, business is dependent on the weather

Motion:

Be it resolved that the HMATA Board will approve the \$25K licensing fee for the 2022 Ironman race on the agreement that the Town of Huntsville and HMATA will be given first right of refusal for a 3-year contract after the 2022 race.

Motioner: Jesse Hamilton

Secunder: Scott Doughty

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Jesse Hamilton – Let’s do all that we can do to promote the BIA, Downtown during this weekend. Should the BIA wish to provide downtown dollars to athletes they could approach this Board for assistance.

Nate Smith – We haven’t discussed this yet, but perhaps revitalizing the brochure “10 Things to do …” would help too.

4. Minute Acceptance

Motion to accept the minutes from the October 29th, 2021 meeting

Be it resolved to accept the minutes from the October 29th 2021 meeting

Moved by: Jeff Suddaby

Seconded by: Steve Carr

CARRIED

5. Staff Updates:

- **Eclipse Walk with Light**

- Extremely well received
- Operationally there have been challenges
 - Pathway lighting
 - Weather, wetness
 - New technology
- Hired a good team, facing a few challenges here too
 - Comfort level of leaving them on their own
 - Decision making ability
 - Responsibility
 - Workforce challenges
- Town Hall installation next week. Delays due to insurance coverage and requirement of engineered drawings.
- Kent Park will not be completed in time, discussion of having that installation done at Town Hall Courtyard, however further investment of approx. \$4K would be needed to meet the requirements similar to Town Hall.
Jesse Hamilton would like to see some forecasting for year end budget and then discussion can be had on changes for next year.
- Canvas Brewery is there on weekends and working on getting Beavertails there with poutine and beavertails.
- Putting together ideas for events to be held there:
 - NYE
 - St. Patrick’s Day
 - We are hosting our first in-person BAH event on December 8th there.
- Marketing
 - Online Sales (November 25):
 - Adults: 2801
 - Hotel Stays: 376
 - Youth: 918

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- **Total: 4095**
 - Local: 1585
 - Out of Town: 1541 (Roughly 800 are Muskoka)
 - Unknown (Did not submit postal code): 969

- Walk-up Sales (November 25):

- **Total: 758**

- **4853 people** have attended.
- **\$17,848** ticket revenue made to date.
- Open for 20 days out of 192 total.

1. Facebook & Instagram:

- Content: <https://huntsvilleadventures.com/eclipse-walk-with-light-walking-trail/>
- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dFzdaKxLYmU>
 - Running until mid-December
 - Roughly \$3500 spent of planned \$5425

2. BlogTO

- Content: <https://www.blogto.com/sponsored/2021/11/eclipse-walk-with-light/>
- Stay & Play Contest 1: <https://www.blogto.com/contests/contest-eclipse-walk-light-huntsville/>
 - Running until December 5
 - \$6500 Spend

Full stats will be in by next meeting.

Upcoming:

1. Streetlight Banners – go up Thursday December 2nd (following road opening)
 2. Influencer Campaign – partnership with Muskoka Tourism
 3. TikTok Ad Buy – partnership with Muskoka Tourism
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1. Restaurant Date Night Package – Spend \$30 at a Participating Restaurant a Receive 2 tickets to Eclipse (must be used that night – only valid on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday)
 - Restaurants must advertise in exchange – put out display & promote on digital platforms
 2. Arrowhead Package – will be approaching Arrowhead for a new package starting in the end of January
 - Fire & Ice Nights are happening every Friday & Saturday starting the end of January
 - Plan to promote hotel package – Free Eclipse Ticket for Thursday and Arrowhead entry Friday (included in stay)
 - Encourage Thursday night overnight stays

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6. New Business

- **Application Process**

Waiting on the RFP Process and finalization of the marketing plan before putting out call for applications/partnerships.

In the meantime, anyone interested in support from HMATA should be invited to a meeting to present their proposal.

7. Adjournment

Be it resolved to adjourn meeting at 11:29pm

Moved by: Nate Smith

Next Meeting: Friday January 28th, 2022 – 1:00pm