

Huntsville Municipal Accommodation Tax Association

MINUTES

Virtual Meeting held on Monday February 14th, 2022 @ 1:00pm

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

Regrets: Nil

Staff: Kelly Haywood, Torin Suddaby, Rhonda Christianson, Halley Clover, Barbara Bloomfield

Guests: Lauren MacDermid, Morgan Richter

1. Welcome & Acceptance of Agenda

Motion to begin the meeting at 1:05pm

Be it resolved to accept the agenda as presented

Moved by: Jeff Suddaby

Seconded by: Nate Smith

CARRIED

2. Deputation – moved to later in the meeting.

3. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

No conflicts were brought forward.

4. Minute Acceptance

Motion to accept the minutes from the November 26th, 2021 meeting

Be it resolved to accept the minutes from the November 26th, 2021 meeting

Moved by: Nate Smith

Seconded by: Steve Carr

CARRIED

5. Staff Update:

Kelly Haywood introduced Lauren MacDermid, former Marketing Co-ordinator with the Town of Huntsville, now replacing Scott Ovell as the Economic Development Co-ordinator.

Kelly Haywood also introduced new members to the Chamber of Commerce Team:

- Halley Clover in Business Development
- Rhonda Christianson in Accounting

Financials

- Review of the income statement (see attached)
- Board suggested that group discussion to be held during next meeting and to table the approval of the budget for next meeting

Eclipse Walk with Light

- Celebrate grant was approved for payment to Limbic due to the fact that no company in Ontario provides the same product/service.
- PowerPoint presentation by Torin Suddaby with statistics and budget

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- Suggested that due to time change and spring thaw conditions Eclipse close for the season on April 2nd.
 - Discussions:
 - Jesse Hamilton - agrees with closing attraction on April 2nd
 - Nate Smith – many visitors to downtown either before or after visit to Eclipse.
 - Jeff Suddaby – would like to see the attraction remain open through April – mandate of HMATA to bring business in shoulder season.
 - Karin Terziano – would like to see numbers per month to compare
 - Scott Doughty – great presentation, really eye opening on number of people through attraction.

Fednor Update

- After 22 months the Chamber has officially been approved for a digital marketing grant request
 - Approved for \$191,500 from FedNor
 - Entire campaign totals \$518,000 of which \$368,600 will be going directly towards digital marketing campaigns, website enhancements, photography & video.
 - Remainder of spend goes towards administration (including youth intern) & marketing of events
- Campaign Overview:
 - The project activities include an innovative and collaborative marketing campaign comprised of multi-platform digital media techniques and tourism events.
 - To thrive as a tourism destination, we are focusing on niche markets that align with our product base – nature, outdoor lifestyle, abundant accommodations, and facility infrastructure. Our plan outlines the need for additional economic development that will sustain our existing business community, address challenges with seasonal and part-time employment, and foster tourism marketing initiatives.
- Key Activities:
 - Tourism Website Enhancements
 - The Huntsville designated tourism website will be enhanced in order to modernize our online presence and create a more user-friendly experience. As the backbone of our online presence, every type of communication, piece of content, or advertisement will drive the consumer back to our website. As such, it's important that our website provides consumers with an easy-to-use platform for their online journey.

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- Digital Marketing Campaign
 - The HLOB Chamber of Commerce will be working with digital marketing experts on this multi-pronged approach to mitigate the risk of future unknown circumstances and to ensure maximum results are achieved with available dollars.
 - With this in mind, it is our intention to create content in the following categories:
 - Step 1: “Escape to the Great Outdoors”
 - Step 2: “Book Your Stay”
 - Step 3: “Huntsville is Open for Business”
 - The strategy for this digital marketing campaign is to generate strong reach and frequency numbers amongst our core target audience throughout their online journey, in order to build awareness that will influence conversions.
 - To attract this audience, a relevant and consistent content marketing approach will be applied utilizing online and social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Google Search, Display Ads etc.)

The HLOB Chamber will be coming to HMATA to formerly make the below request - we would like to use the previously allotted \$50,000 Chamber funds from both 2021 and 2022 (\$100,000) for this campaign for digital marketing, website enhancements, photography and video.

6. New Business

RFP Update

- We received three applications:
 - Floor 13:
 - met all criteria 100%
 - recently completed similar project with Muskoka Tourism
 - Comparable references
 - Price point is better for more
 - The New Business:
 - Good overall for Marketing
 - Missing business action part
 - Launch & Prosper Consulting Group:
 - High level application
 - Did not touch on any categories
- Discussion
 - \$22,050 from Floor 13, \$25,000 from The New Business – would like a day or two to through the applications.
 - Business plan perspective have we connected with any of the references.
 - Floor 13 had it all together, Launch & Prosper was lacking in information. Need to check out references. Have come across The New Business work on social media and it looks great.
 - Floor 13 would be more familiar with Muskoka area after working with Muskoka Tourism.

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Motion: Be it resolved that the Board grants the RFP to Floor 13

Motioner: Jeff Suddaby

Seconded: Karin Terziano

CARRIED

BIA Drone Show Update – Morgan Lonsdale

- Morgan Lonsdale updated the Board on the Holiday Market. Great event, 40 vendors from the area on the street.
- \$10K was earmarked for the drone show which did not happen. Unfortunately the drones froze in the air and were in danger of falling into the river as well as on people on the street. The BIA is working with the company to reschedule a new date in either the spring or the fall. They will keep the same pricing for us.
- The Board was in support of moving the event to the Fall.

Deputation – Knights of Columbus – Bill Weber

- The Knights of Columbus have been hosting a hockey tournament for the past 8 years (would have been 10 but COVID halted this for two years) for Novice and Atom aged kids (8-11 years old).
- This is a fundraiser for the Knights of Columbus
- 24 teams come from out of town
- 2/3 of attendees are first time visitors
- Typically, there is a 100+ item auction as well as various events at the arena for the players making it a complete experience for all participants. With COVID restrictions we are not able to offer any of these add ons.
- We are looking for financial support to enhance the experience
 - \$3,300 for \$10 gift certificates to put in goodie bags for players
 - \$1,000 for time keepers/score keepers
 - \$3,000 for ice time
 - Total ask is \$7,300
- Steve Carr (Comfort Inn), Scott Doughty (Hidden Valley Resort) and Chirag Patel (Rodeway Inn) all stated that teams stay at their respective places.
- Karin Terziano suggested a one-time charitable donation to help support the Knights of Columbus due to COVID challenges.
- The Board agreed to making a one-time donation of \$5,000.

7. Adjournment

Be it resolved to adjourn meeting

Moved by: Jeff Suddaby

Next Meeting: Wednesday March 2nd, 2022 – 3:00pm via ZOOM