

**Board of Directors Special Meeting**

**MINUTES**

April 30, 2020

1:00pm – 3:00pm

**Video Conference**

The Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority Board of Directors will hold a special meeting on April 30, 2020. No Board action will be taken during the Seattle Southside RTA Special Meeting unless specially identified by item on the agenda for action.

**Called to Order at 1:08 pm by Chair Maureen Huffman**

**Roll Call:** Board Members: Maureen Huffman, Embassy Suites; David Sullivan, Cedarbrook Lodge; Elissa Cotero, Westfield Southcenter; Jill Andrews, Certified Folder; Josh Ewing, Hilton Hotels; Donna Rios, Radisson; Ken Stockdale, Crowne Plaza.

**Staff:** President/CEO Katherine Kertzman, Marketing & Communications Vice President Ashley Comar, Sales & Services Vice President Meagan McGuire, Comptroller Cecilia Pollock, Operations Administrator Autumn Lingle, Communications Manager Nick Tolley, Partner & Visitor Services Coordinator Donna Bennett, Business Development Managers Caitlyn Shearer & Noelle Khim, Digital Marketing Manager Rex Price, Social Media & Visitor Services Specialist Adam Stewart

**Guests:** Aleksandr Yeremeyev, City of SeaTac Economic Development Manager; Brandon Miles, City of Tukwila Business Relations Manager; Andrea Reay, President/CEO Seattle Southside Chamber of Commerce, Steve Edmiston, Des Moines citizen

**Agenda**

**1. COVID – 19 Response**

**A. Informational Items:**

- a. Travel & Tourism Industry Impact Data – Katherine provided a PowerPoint regarding the state of the industry. Statistics state the Covid-19 fallout is nine times worse than when 911 occurred. It is the worst record in 35 years of STR collecting data. She discussed RevPAR losses and RTA occupancy (75% rooms empty).
- b. Review Three-year Financial Proforma Updated 4/23/2020 – Katherine reviewed new RTA financial pro forma statement using assumptions or hypothetical conditions that occurred in the past and what may occur in the future based on the Travel & Tourism Industry Data provided in the PowerPoint.
- c. Review April 1, 2020 Enacted Budgets Cuts – the RTA reduced staff; 2 full time positions were laid off, 1 full time position reduced to .8FTE. In addition, remaining staff will each take 9 days of furlough, no bonuses, and employee health benefits premiums increased by 15%. Also, eliminating staff travel.
- d. Modified or Suspended MarCom & Sales Strategies Effective April 1, 2020

1. Sales & Services - Meagan furnished a PowerPoint discussing a modified version of the Sales & Services Business Plan. She noted the Regional Expert Program is still in the works, reinventing the Visitor Center virtually, along with sales and services budget reduction.

2. MarCom – Ashley continued with the PowerPoint discussing Covid-19 response phases, immediate reaction, strategies, and actions to mitigate business loss, build brand affinity plans, shifted marketing and created content for takeout, etc. now planning for recovery phase. Printing cut drastically, among other budget reductions.

- e. Discuss King County Emergency Tourism Recovery Proposal – Katherine spoke on the RTA Recovery Action Plan from coronavirus pandemic. She has had conversations with King County electeds Dow Constantine, Dave Upthegrove and Rod Dembowski. RTA will coordinate with Visit Seattle for travel recovery campaign. The King County Council will vote next Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup>. Ashley and Meagan stated how the funds will be used for the Recovery Plan. RTA will work with Visit Seattle with highlighted Seattle Southside brand. The RTA will develop a meetings sponsorship program. Discussion ensued about hotel brands adopting cleanliness standards. The RTA's role will be as a communicator, branding consumer confidence.
- f. Discuss City of SeaTac Emergency Tourism Recovery Proposal –Katherine has been in discussion with the SeaTac HMAC, Council, and staff regarding a onetime emergency recovery funding proposal. Katherine discussed funding and equity among the TPA cities. Discussion of this topic will continue at next board of directors meeting on May 14<sup>th</sup>.

Note: Ken Stockdale directed a comment to Aleksandr Yeremeyev, City of SeaTac Economic Development Manager, regarding the trash on both sides of the onramp between Pacific Hwy South and Hwy 518 east, along with trash further on Hwy 518 east underneath I-5 overpass. Ken recommended the City invest in cleaning this area as it makes a very poor first impression of our community. Katherine commented Richard Scherzinger, General Manager, Hilton Seattle Airport & Conference Center raised this issue at a City's HMAC meeting recently. Richard suggested the City address this matter as soon as possible.

- g. Scheduling State Audit -Katherine announced Washington State Auditors will be auditing the RTA in May.

**B. Action Items: BOTH ITEMS POSTPONED**

- a. Authorized CEO to amend Green Rubino contract – formal vote not done from King County
- b. Authorized CEO to amend Digital Edge contract – need to address equitable MarCom and Sales and Services funds.

**2. Next Regular Meeting – May 14, 2020**

**3. Adjournment – Meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.**