



**MARKETING STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY**  
**Wednesday, August 30, 2017**  
**Hawai'i Convention Center**  
**1801 Kalākaua Avenue, Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815**

**MINUTES OF MARKETING STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING**

- COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sean P. Dee (Chair), Fred Atkins, Denise Hayashi Yamaguchi, Kelly Sanders, George Kam
- COMMITTEE MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:** Craig Nakamura
- BOARD MEMBER PRESENT:** N/A
- HTA STAFF PRESENT:** Randy Baldemor, Marc Togashi, Leslie Dance, Laci Goshi, Chris Sadayasu, Caroline Anderson, Chika Miyauchi, Jadie Goo, Jennifer Chun, Minh-Chau Chun, Carole Hagihara, Lauren Fetherston
- GUESTS:** Teri Orton, Lynn Surayan
- LEGAL COUNSEL:** Gregg Kinkley

**1. Call to Order**

Presiding Officer Sean Dee called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m. Mr. Dee noted the current Legislative Special Session regarding rail funding. He acknowledged HTA's publicly stated opposition to any Transient Accommodation Tax (TAT) increase, along with the visitor industry's opposition. It is a delicate balancing act between growth and quality of life for residents and visitors. The Marketing Committee will try to be more ambitious and proactive with its vision and building relationships with stakeholders, including government officials.

Ms. Yamaguchi wondered how proactive HTA is at educating people during the slow time when

the Legislature is not in session, rather than reacting when the Legislature is in session. Maybe meeting informally with officials when they are not in session would be helpful. Mr. Dee noted that the meeting should not stray from the agenda, so the next meeting's agenda can include discussion of the available TAT potential compared to what is actually captured for the State, and methods of educating stakeholders.

## **2. Approval of Minutes from the July 26, 2017 Marketing Standing Committee Meeting**

Mr. Dee asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Marketing Standing Committee Meeting held on July 26, 2017. Ms. Dance asked to be added to the minutes' listing of HTA staff present. The minutes were amended by adding Ms. Dance. Ms. Yamaguchi moved to approve the minutes, and the motion was seconded. The minutes were unanimously approved as amended by all Committee members present.

## **3. GoHawaii.com Update**

Mr. Dee recognized Ms. Dance who presented updates on the GoHawaii.com website. The new website has been receiving very positive reviews. Ms. Dance brought up Ms. Surayan to assist with presenting data collected during the second half of August. The website has additional improvements that are forthcoming. For example, the images paired with the opening chant will be expanded, and an additional "Learn More" button will be added on the homepage to provide more content.

Ms. Surayan presented statistics for the site's traffic. She noted these numbers were from the first 12 days of the site being live and were very healthy. On average, visitors viewed 3.01 pages per session on the site. This was up 4.7% from 2016. The average session duration was 3 minutes, up 6% from 2016. The bounce rate was 55% for the entire website and 42% for the home page. Ms. Surayan explained that the bounce rate is the percentage of visitors to a particular website who navigate away from the site after viewing only one page. Mr. Atkins noted that the chant on the opening page is 2 minutes. This is quite a long chant, seeing as the average session duration was 3 minutes.

Ms. Surayan has asked the developers about what all the statistics mean and how they compare to other sites. The developers have said that context matters and the website's goal dictates what statistics are useful to the organization. HTA's site is focused on marketing, so maximizing site visitor engagement with content is important.

Ms. Dance presented statistics regarding the type of device site visitors were using. About 40% were using mobile devices currently. As people get used to the mobile functionality, this number should grow. Mr. Dee noted that many companies bundle tablet and mobile statistics, so including tablets with mobile already accounts for 50% of the site's visitors.

Mr. Dee asked whether any expectations regarding duration or engagement of traffic existed. Ms. Surayan responded that no numbers for targets existed currently, but the team is reviewing



those. In addition, the URLs for the Big Island would be updated to “Island of Hawaii.” While this change may result in lower search traffic because of the new terminology, the island chapter partner requested the change. This was done in order to condition people to call the island the Island of Hawaii, rather than the Big Island. Ms. Dance also noted that at the next meeting, specific goals for duration and engagement of site traffic would be discussed.

Ms. Dance next presented the top ten pages. After the homepage, the top pages involved the islands of Kauai, Hawaii, and Maui. Ms. Dance recognized that the name change to Hawaii Island may cause a shift in these top ten pages.

Ms. Surayan then discussed the site’s post-launch persona development, which would create personas from the data collected to better target site visitors. The site recently began utilizing Acquia Lift to collect anonymous and identified visitor data. Other initial components, in addition to data collection, include analyzing the data to identify trends, creating segments and triggers, designing a personalization program, implementing the program, refining personalization, and identifying goals for personalization. This initial stage of post-launch persona development would take place through November 2017, with continued refinement ongoing.

Summarizing takeaways from the GoHawaii.com update, Ms. Dance emphasized that user engagement has gone up since the site’s launch. The team is continuing to focus on traffic from searches and personalization through Acquia data analysis.

Mr. Dee referred back to the minutes from the previous session. He asked whether a dedicated media budget existed and whether a paid marketing plan to drive re-targeting was in place. Ms. Dance responded that she had discussed with Miles, their consultant, about increasing re-targeting efforts, though no plan was currently in place. Mr. Dee also asked whether any paid media was supporting the sites. Ms. Dance responded that there were none from HTA’s perspective. Mr. Dee advised that he was used to an environment where, “if you build it, you need to tell people to come.” Ms. Dance noted that social media platforms were in place and the team was looking at paid advertisement globally. Mr. Togashi stated that the digital marketing strategy and related budget could be reviewed to maximize these opportunities. Ms. Surayan added that global paid advertisements would be important once the full suite of language capabilities for the website were in place.

Mr. Sanders inquired about the timeline for translating pages into other languages and their launch. Ms. Dance responded that the contracted date is in December. Currently, when other languages are selected, the page defaults back to the old format of the website. Mr. Sanders suggested a big launch for all the pages to let people know about them. Mr. Dee noted a prior comment that the translations for the old format of the website would be done by September. Ms. Surayan concurred that was for the website’s old format, and mentioned that the new translations would be done in the order of Japanese, Chinese, Korean, French, and Spanish by December. Mr. Dee requested that the team come back to the Marketing Committee with recommendations for funding and targeting visitors. HTA is spending a lot of money on this

project, so having the measurements in place are very important. This will guide the team on areas of focus and spending to maximize visits to Hawaii. Ms. Dance agreed, stating that they would work with Mr. Togashi to do so appropriately and get the funding.

Ms. Yamaguchi asked how the website was integrated with the Hawaii Visitors and Convention Bureau (HVCB). Ms. Dance responded that HVCB is directing to this site. Ms. Yamaguchi followed up asking whether HVCB has a budget for targeting of advertisements. Ms. Dance responded that HVCB has a budget for their market, which is the USA market. Mr. Atkins asked whether HTA has reviewed HVCB's digital marketing plans. Ms. Dance responded that HTA has reviewed them and will be discussing more with HVCB at the Global Tourism Summit. Mr. Togashi also stated that he was considering whether to ask HTA's GMTs to include these opportunities in their BNPs.

Mr. Dee then noted that first time visitors to Hawaii are visiting the site for content. Ms. Dance concurred and added that the team also hopes to link to HTUSA, HVCB's targeting of millennials. More than any other market, the US market is where the most money is spent, but marketing it needs to be a concerted effort.

Mr. Dee summarized the goals for the next Marketing Committee meeting and the end of the year. The team would have the site fully translated by December and in Japanese by September (hopefully by the Summit). In addition, the team would develop a marketing support plan to drive traffic leveraging existing GMT plans and/or additional funding, if required. These would be based on agreed-upon metrics that would be approved by the leadership team first. Mr. Kam clarified that the marketing support plan would need to be in place before December.

Ms. Surayan clarified, regarding the translated pages, that the goal is to have a marketing strategy for each page, not just merely translations. The strategy would match the social media platforms for each country.

Mr. Atkins was encouraged that the website has received 95-99% positive reviews. The website is one of the most important tools for HTA, and it needs to stay current with evolving technologies. Ms. Surayan noted that Miles is making sure HTA stays on top of Search Engine Optimization. Mr. Atkins wondered whether the team would need money to advertise on other platforms, for example, what can be done on Facebook for paid advertising. Mr. Togashi commented on the timing for funding. Through December, the GMT's funding is spoken for, but opportunities may arise in January to include advertising in the new BNPs because funds will free up then. Mr. Baldemor added that HTA did not go big and bold with the website, but rather did it in stages, because HTA wanted to do it right. He agreed that the GoHawaii website is one of HTA's most important assets. HTA wanted to make sure the site works before blasting it out to the whole world.

Mr. Kam asked whether Mr. Baldemor felt good about the December timeline for translations, etc. Mr. Baldemor has told Miles that December is the target date, but the team will need to



keep monitoring because the website is a very complex project and much work still exists.

Mr. Atkins asked whether a rollout was planned for the Tourism Summit. Ms. Dance responded none was planned yet, but Miles would have a booth there and get more feedback. Mr. Dee added that if HTA can promote GoHawaii through the work of international contractors, without having to spend money, it should do that.

#### **4. Global Tourism Summit Update**

Ms. Dance next called up the core team members to present updates on the Global Tourism Summit (Summit). She added that Ms. Anderson and her staff have been working very hard on the Summit.

Ms. Anderson noted that the Summit was 19 days away. Currently, the Summit has 927 registrants, and the public goal is 3,000. HTA would be happy with a solid 2,000 plus registrants. Of the 927 registrants, 600 are paid, and 327 are comped. A few comped participants still have not registered yet. Registration income is currently \$176,000.

Ms. Dance noted that website statistics show that 576 people have begun registering but did not complete the registration. Mr. Sanders responded that it was very hard to get through registrations because the last click to register never clicks over. Ms. Dance asked if others had experienced this because it was the first time she had heard of the problem. She would let her team know. Mr. Kam suggested reaching out to the ones who did not complete the registration. Ms. Anderson stated that HTA planned to send out an email blast and make calls to key stakeholders.

Ms. Anderson noted that registrations were on pace with last year at this time. Interest in the B2B sessions was very high, as 82 companies and many countries were currently represented. She also mentioned that an ad in the paper would highlight the Summit. The Anthology communications team would work with Paragon to spread word of the Summit. Ms. Anderson added that everyone who registered for the Summit should have received an email blast that went out that morning. She also planned to ask the Board members tomorrow for a lunch and meal count.

Mr. Dee asked if the Legacy Lunch was announced as a separate event, and whether it was worth considering having that as a standalone event. Capitalizing on the Hōkūle'a's return voyage celebration would be a great opportunity. Ms. Orton noted that about 2,000 people attended the function at the Convention Center and she has thought about reaching out to people through the Polynesian Voyaging Society database. Mr. Baldemor acknowledged these as good ideas, but added that HTA considered the possibility that if the Legacy Lunch was a standalone event, other aspects of the Summit may lose participation.

Ms. Dance has spoken with the Dean of the UH Travel Industry Management (TIM) school. HTA plans to do another popup event on campus to help students register. Promoting at the TIM

school is a good opportunity. The team will make sure the Summit's costs are covered, while trying to generate additional interest.

Ms. Dance discussed the updated website statistics. Since the launch date, the website has received about 50,000 views and about 6,587 new users. The average view time is 4 minutes. Mr. Dee asked how more of the new visitors could be captured. Ms. Dance responded that she had no answer about why more of the new visitors have not registered and would have to look more into it. Mr. Baldemor stated that the new Summit is more global, so maybe more viewers visit the site, but cannot attend because of timing or other reasons. Mr. Dee asked whether a plan was in place in the next two weeks to re-engage those people. Mr. Baldemor stated that he would look into it. Ms. Dance added that she has talked to the island chapters and encouraged them to blast out news of the Summit. Island Air has put out some advertising. In addition, additional highlights about panel speakers have been added. Paragon is also designing new social media images to share, some of which involve Neil Everett and Billy Beane.

Regarding sponsorship, Ms. Dance noted that new levels of sponsorship had been added on the website. Mr. Sadayasu discussed the current amount of sponsorship, which was at \$253,650. The Polynesian Cultural Center and Marriott International Hotels just became Summit sponsors. All of HTA's partners have been reaching out to their partners, and in-kind sponsorship is going up. The Summit is nearing its goal of cash and in-kind sponsorship of \$400,000. Ms. Dance listed additional sponsors as Hawaiian Hotels & Resorts, Enterprise, Alamo, and National Car Rental, among others.

Mr. Sadayasu noted that the Networking Lounge is being filled. Kapiolani Community College may join, and the team has reached out to UH. Ms. Dance explained that HTA is continuing to look for partners. Mr. Atkins asked if the team was using newspaper articles to play up the conference and speakers. Ms. Dance responded that some speakers were doing interviews, like Olof Yrr Aladottir from Iceland, and Neil Everett, too. The team was getting on every morning and afternoon TV show with different angles. Mr. Sadayasu added that Paragon, Anthology, and Charlene Chan have a plan to distribute the word. Mr. Atkins offered his help in spreading the word in the newspapers if HTA provided him with a package.

Ms. Dance then discussed the Aloha Reception, which would feature 18 chefs. Every island would be represented. George Szigeti was also considering adding a few more chefs and working with distributors to have beer and wine in every corner. Koloa Rum was sponsoring the networking event on the first night. Ms. Dance acknowledged that Ms. Orton did a fantastic food tasting for the Summit. Blaine Asing would perform at the Reception and be the centerpiece of the event. In addition, a VIP lounge would make the event first class. The Reception has enough room for 20 chefs, but may go over by 1. Ms. Anderson noted that HTA reached out to 75 chefs; some have declined and some have not responded.

Mr. Sanders asked about the WeShare app. Ms. Dance would speak to Charlene Chan about handling that; it is a good opportunity. Mr. Sanders was concerned about spending lots of money on the app, but no one downloading it. Ms. Dance responded that a Facebook live feed



could be set up for the Aloha Reception. The app has more potential than just being a community app. Ms. Yamaguchi added that it takes a lot for people to download an app, so the app needs to be useful.

Mr. Baldemor thanked the staff for all their efforts and mentioned that HTA had an overall sponsor for the Aloha reception, though he could not disclose who it was. Taking a big picture view, Mr. Baldemor pointed out that every area has seen improvement. In the beginning, there were only 5-10 sponsors max, and now the event has many. The Aloha Reception was a nice addition, and so are the new speakers on various topics. The Summit has received plenty of help from HTA staff, the steering committee, and the Board. Many people helped, and we should all take pride in our work.

Mr. Dee wanted to echo Mr. Atkins regarding creating a buzz about the Aloha reception as a party not people should not want to miss. Many people may not realize that as part of the Aloha Reception, they get to go to a Convention Center event with new restaurants and live entertainment. It is worth advertising in the paper that the Aloha Reception is a key part of the Summit.

Mr. Baldemor asked for any other suggestions on the Summit. Mr. Atkins noted that it was not too late yet for a final advertising push, as locals may be considering registering at the last minute. Now is the time to promote and push. Mr. Dee added that the only other observation he had was that people want to attend an event when they know who will be there. For example, Mud Hen Water will be there, but will Chef Kenney be there? Letting people interact with a celebrity will make the Aloha Reception a more popular event. Ms. Yamaguchi noted that Roy Yamaguchi gave a great plug for the Tourism Summit and WeShare live. She would try to cut a short clip from WeShare live for HTA to share on social media.

Mr. Atkins asked whether someone was going on talkshows to promote the Summit. Ms. Yamaguchi added that it was important to have a chef talk not just about the event, but tie it to tourism. Mr. Baldemor added that that focus should be on delivering content in different ways. Involve more voices and put them out there. Mr. Atkins concurred that it would help to get the speakers involved. Mr. Baldemor further noted that the Board has extensive contacts and HTA can leverage them. He also emphasized the great opportunities from the B2Bs because the Japan Summit is rolled into HTA's Summit. The Japan Summit is comprised of all the Japanese stakeholders that had gone to the HTJ (Hawaii Tourism Japan) Summit previously. Those who are interested in the Japan market can just attend HTA's Summit and can get all the information there.

## **5. UH Athletics**

Mr. Dee stated that the Committee needed to enter into Executive session for the next 3 topics on the agenda in order to protect Hawaii's competitive edge as an international destination. He added that Executive Session is allowed by Hawaii Revised Statutes sections 201B-4(a)(1)&(2).

The meeting was recessed for an Executive Session at 12:12 pm.  
The Executive Session ended at 1:17 pm.

## 8. Adjournment

Mr. Dee asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Kam made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Atkins seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by all the Committee members present.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

  
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Nathan C. Yang  
Recorder