

**AIRPORT COMMISSION
MARKETING AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, July 12, 2023 – 3:30 P.M.

ACTION SUMMARY MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Committee Chairman Burke called the Committee to order at 3:30 p.m.

2. POSTING OF AGENDA: Agenda posted on July 5, 2023.

3. ROLL CALL:

Committee Members Present: Adams, Burke, Hughes, Suero*, and Wiseman.

*Committee Member Suero joined the meeting at 3:32 p.m.

Staff Present:

Harry Barrett, Airport Executive Director

Daniel Meier, Deputy Director of Aviation, Marketing & Air Service

Christina Brown, Airport Executive Administrative Assistant

4. ACCEPTANCE OF AGENDA:

ACTION: Accept the agenda as presented. **Moved by Committee Member Wiseman and seconded by Committee Member Hughes and unanimously approved noting the absence of Committee Member Suero.**

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS: None

6. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

ACTION: Approve the minutes of the Marketing and Business Development Committee meeting held on February 22, 2023. **Moved by Committee Member Adams, seconded by Committee Member Wiseman and unanimously approved noting the absence of Committee Member Suero.**

7. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS:

7.A Brand Launch Update

Deputy Director of Aviation, Marketing & Air Service Meier provided a presentation for the Committee. He stated that moving forward the goal for this Committee would be to have at least one presentation at the beginning of the fiscal year to review the plans for the following twelve months and conduct additional meetings throughout the year, as needed.

Mr. Meier said that in regard to the brand launch update, a soft launch of the new website was initiated on July 6, 2023, because many of the features of the website needed time to learn the Airport's information. He said that glitches were experienced, especially with what the system was showing as TSA security checkpoint wait times versus actual wait times.

Mr. Meier reported that all social media was switched over to the new brand and a full announcement was issued and received good coverage by KESQ, The Desert Sun, and other media outlets. He said that the system chatbot (ChatGPT) had been monitored for questions from the public as well as any responses provided to ensure that any incorrect information delivered has been updated, and a media backdrop for press conferences and a new podium appropriately branded was acquired.

Mr. Meiers said that phase one included updating the Airport's online material, advertising and general information regarding construction updates, new routes, and general awareness and that it had all been rolled out by the advertising agency. He said that new lanyards were issued, light blue for the Airport staff and green for the Airport tenants. New uniforms were provided to Airport Navigators who would begin providing passenger assistance in the secure area starting in the Fall and they will be wearing fully branded shirts and jackets with bright yellow lanyards that say, "Voluntary Navigator." Operations and Maintenance staff uniforms were in process, new full color acrylic terminal signage would be going up that week in different areas, new branded rugs had been laid out, and the roadway banners would be replaced. Mr. Meiers said that there were other items that had been planned in three phases over the course of the next six months and that phases two and three would include the branding of the Airport vehicles and more visuals.

Mr. Meier noted that he was currently interviewing candidates for a Marketing position and that he believed that he would have someone on board by August. Committee Member Adams asked if there were plans for the old faded brown southwestern-looking signage on the roadway and whether that signage was a part of the renovation. Mr. Meier stated that the signage would be part of landside project which there was not a timeframe for the project at this time, and he assured the Committee that the signage would match the new branding as much as possible because there are also road signage regulations that must be followed.

Committee Chairman Burke commented that it all looked fantastic and the website functions very well. He acknowledged that Mr. Meier and the Aviatrix Communications

team did a very thorough job, and he asked if any comments were provided by the staff. Mr. Meier stated that the staff were all in support of the new branding and website, and he said that staff had provided their feedback prior to launching the website and after the website was launched, as was the case with the Committee Members.

Mr. Meier indicated that parking updates need to be done manually as there is no technology currently in place to automatically provide updates. He said that the parking vendor, ABM, reports back to Operations every four hours by parking lot section and the Operations team manually updates the system to reflect the status as: full, limited or fully open. Any lot(s) marked limited indicates there are less than 20 spaces available in that section which in turn will assist the customer with deciding whether to look for a space or drive to an alternate lot.

Committee Chairman Burke remarked that it would be interesting to see the stats and perhaps those could be included in the September Airport Commission meeting, and specifically where people are going to on the website. Mr. Meier agreed to provide those stats and information.

7.B Customer Experience Review

Mr. Meier reported that Airport Executive Director Barrett had allocated \$250,000 to Marketing for customer experience initiatives to improve the Palm Springs International Airport customer experience and that the City Council had approved the Marketing Communication Specialist position for which he was interviewing candidates and would also be adding two Customer Experience Specialist positions to the Marketing team. He did not have a timeframe for these two additional positions, and he was hopeful that it would be this fiscal year even though the positions were slated for the next fiscal year and that Mr. Barrett had indicated that he may try to expedite this hiring to assist with getting many of the marketing projects off the ground.

Mr. Meier shared some of the technology and mobile applications (app) currently being researched to make the Airport more accessible to many kinds of travelers. The GoodMaps app that provides phone navigation for the visually impaired which gives users an accurate navigation experience down to the meter. The app's reliability allows users to move independently, taking control of their experience which helps the visually impaired navigate through the terminal or any type of structure.

The MagnusCards app that provides Airport navigation for passengers with autism through digital "card decks" that provide step-by-step instructions that take users through the activities associated with air travel such as check-in, security screening and aircraft boarding.

The SkySquad mobile app that provides a service that is similar to a concierge service that provides a celebrity-style greeting for the everyday traveler, and the fee ranges from \$49 to \$99, depending on chosen service. SkySquad offers airport assistance at airports across the U.S. for parents, seniors, and those who need translation assistance. A personal assistant greets the passenger curbside or at the gate and they can help carry bags, assist with the check-in process, and they provide many other concierge-type services.

Mr. Meier said that SkySquad was currently providing service at six airports, including Austin and Cincinnati, and like any other concessionaire, they were asking the Airport for assistance and incentives to get started. He said that they were asking the Airport to invest \$50,000.00 which included \$20,000.00 in set up fees for hiring and uniforms, and another \$25,000.00 to use to give out the first 500 customer assistances for free as part of their marketing. Mr. Meier said that the investment in SkySquad could fall under the new customer experience budget, as it would be a one-time fee and SkySquad would be on their own after that, and staff believes that this would be a good service to add to the Airport, especially with the Airport's demographics.

Mr. Meier said that he was looking into a Dementia Friendly certification for the Airport and that staff would receive training on how to interact with passengers with dementia, and he said that Tulsa Airport was Dementia Friendly certified. Mr. Meier said that he was also looking into the Sunflower Lanyard Program which would allow passengers with hidden disabilities to request a sunflower lanyard to alert Airport staff and tenants that they will may need extra assistance and patience, and therapy dog program to help relieve anxiety for travelers.

Committee Chairman Burke stated that he loved all of the ideas and that anything the Airport can do to demonstrate that the Airport is thinking about its customers' needs and wants. Committee Member Wiseman mentioned that a local charity organization, Guide Dogs of the Desert, may be a good resource for therapy dogs.

Mr. Meier provided an overview of how the Airport was working on making things easier and more fun at the Airport which included the purchase of the Liff Happens online lost and found application for \$485 for the first year and \$849 each year after, and the PSP Stay and Play Pass Program which is a pass that gives non-ticket holders the ability to go post-security to shop, dine, greet friends and relatives as they arrive at the gate, or accompany travelers before their departing flight. The pass will have day and hour limitations, staff was planning to roll the program out in September with a large public relations event associated with the roll out of this new program, and the set-up fee is \$12,000 and there is a \$2,000 monthly fee.

Fly My Airport is a new link on flypsp.com that the Airport will try for five months, and it is a search-to-book tool, powered by KAYAK which is localized information to benefit the participating airport. The software provides data related to user engagement,

search frequency, trending destinations, clicks to providers and purchases, and it also links the data back to advertising channels and the creative team for improved visibility to marketing effectiveness. The cost will be \$10,000 for the trial period.

Mr. Meier said that staff was looking into setting up a Ship It Home kiosk which would allow travelers who inadvertently packed a prohibited item in their carry-on-luggage the option to mail the item home from the self-service kiosk conveniently located near the security checkpoint. He said that staff was also looking into adding TouchTunes to the Airport which is a commercial digital jukebox that allows travelers to control the music at the Airport and that the Airport could block certain music to make the music appropriate for the venue. There would be no cost to provide this service, it would generate some revenue for the Airport, and when music is not being purchased, general background music would be played in the Airport.

7.C Advertising Review

Mr. Meier reported that the Airport's new advertising company Fuse was doing a phenomenal job, and he noted that the Airport gives final approval on all locations and ads. Mr. Meier said that Fuse was working on a three-year naming rights sponsorship contract with a local sponsor for \$1,500,000, \$500,000 per year, and the Airport would receive \$855,000 over the three-year term, or \$285,000 per year. The sponsor would receive naming rights to the RJ Concourse, and they would place their logo on all jet bridges.

Committee Member Adams voiced his concern in regard to the types of companies that could be interested in the naming sponsorship. Mr. Meier said that the Airport retains sole decision-making authority over who can be a sponsor at the Airport. Committee Member Wiseman voiced his support for the sponsorship opportunity. Committee Member Adams said that he believes that an Airport should be a public service primarily and should be a space that is enjoyable and that the passengers should not have to be exposed to advertising everywhere, and he noted that he did understand the ramifications of the income generated through this advertising. Mr. Meier stated that with all the new staffing and budget increases, this revenue would help offset those costs and avoid raising costs to the airlines. The more economical it is for the airlines to operate at the Airport, the more they will grow and offer additional flights year-round.

Committee Member Suero stated that he understood both sides and that if the designs are done tastefully, it will be positive and it will build the community. Committee Member Hughes stated that she agreed that if the sponsor was selected by the Airport, carefully monitored, and could be controlled, that she did not believe that it was a bad idea. Committee Member Adams said he was concerned with setting a precedent and what could come next. The Marketing Committee was in full agreement that the item could move forward to the Airport Commission.

Mr. Meier presented the advertising recommendations for July through December, and he advised that the planning for January through June of 2024 was still in progress. He said that the Airport's Marketing and Communication Goals included the following six items: 1) Decrease leakage; 2) Increase enplanements; 3) Passenger retention 4) Maintain goodwill in the community; 5) Increase awareness of PSP, its airlines, nonstop destinations, services, and benefits; and 6) Generate awareness of positive changes to come and potential disruptions.

Mr. Meier said that the Airport's target audience for geographic base is the Coachella Valley, geographic growth is the Morongo Basin, Hemet/San Jacinto, The Pass and the Inland Empire East, and demographic is LGBTQ+, residents, snowbirds, seasonal travelers, and international travelers.

Mr. Meier said that the Airport's messaging strategy was to get the word out that the Palm Springs International Airport has many more qualities to offer besides convenience such as non-stop destinations and new service target cities.

8. COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS AND REQUESTS:

Committee Member Adams asked about exploring a quiet airport concept, he said that San Francisco Airport had just implemented the concept which basically eliminates many of the unnecessary glaring public announcements, the concept had been established for years, and it is in many airports around the world. He distributed information on the concept to the Committee. Committee Member Adams said that It is more common in small and medium airports and that it makes for a more positive customer experience. Airport Executive Director Barrett stated that this subject came up at a recent conference that he attended, and the concept was something that the Airport staff was in the initial stages of researching.

Committee Member Suero asked if it would be possible for customers to make dining reservations through Resy or Open Table, at the Airport restaurants, which would complement the customer experience. Mr. Meier said he would speak with Paradies to pass on the request.

9. ADJOURNMENT:

The Airport Marketing and Business Development Committee Meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Paula Pak

Paula Pak
Executive Administrative Assistant