



## **MINUTES: Meeting of the Board of Directors**

**Thursday, February 13, 2020**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:01pm by Chair Michael Ponce

**DIRECTORS PRESENT (15)** Ponce, Hohenstein, Noll, Stevenson, Fornasiere, Glass, Hoefs, Paret, Say, Foley, Bradley, Lavelle, Kielpinski, Perico, Radde

### **DIRECTORS ABSENT (4)**

Alkibay, Villalobos, Salinas, Sanchez

### **STAFF PRESENT (4)**

Luttjohann, Miller, Warner, DeMyer

### **GUESTS (4)**

Ignacio Ocegueda, Carl Ribaud, Amanda Bombard, Ron Truppa on the phone

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Ron Truppa was on speaker phone for the Catalina Island Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau (CICC&VB) Board meeting. Truppa explained 2020 will be the 10th Anniversary of Catalina Island Film Institute. This organization has provided ten film-making project grants this year along with student grants for university study. They offer free film festival admission for Avalon students. Truppa asked CICC&VB to support the Catalina Island Film Institute by allocating \$10K to the festival. Once Truppa had left the call, the Board discussed his financial request and for several reasons recommended the CICC&VB not financially support this event. It was suggested CICC&VB offer non-monetary support of this event.

Carl Ribaud with Strategic Marketing Partners presented the results of the recently conducted Resident and Business Tourism Impact Sentiment Study. Ribaud explained the study's methodology stating there were 608 completed surveys by residents and 211 responses from island businesses. Ribaud reviewed the study results with the CICC&VB. Overall, residents understand the tradeoffs of living in a tourism destination. Cruise ship visitation drove the largest negative sentiment from Avalon citizens followed by the degradation of resources and community services. Public works, infrastructure and housing were also key concerns of locals and they have a poor perception of City and County governmental agencies. Residents further feel there is room for improvement in respect to trust and services offered by the CICC&VB. Internet speed was another problem cited. Even with the concerns, Avalon residents said the quality of life is better here than it would be elsewhere.

Island business's perception is that the visitor experience on the island has improved and that visitation does not have a negative impact on the island. Other problems identified by businesses were the same as residents, although for different reasons. Businesses feel the lack of quality affordable housing impacts their ability to recruit the caliber of employees they

desire. As does the poor perception of the local school and lack of community services combined with a failing infrastructure. The businesses feel the positives of doing business outweigh the negative perceptions. Confidence in City and County government was also perceived poorly by businesses and again confidence in the CICC&VB can definitely improve. Businesses also perceive the quality of life to be superior to elsewhere.

Ribaudo explained that while the problems among these two focus groups are basically the same; the three main issues of perceived overcrowding, lack of housing and labor shortage all get lumped together. Ribaudo suggested these problems need to be separated as the CICC&VB cannot impact most of the perceived problems like housing and labor. However, the CICC&VB can address the peak tourism issue. There is a big division and perception disparity among residents and business regarding peak tourism visitation. Residents perceive it has a negative impact (namely cruise ship visitation) while businesses do not think visitation has a negative impact. And while the CICC&VB can't fix all three of the main issues, they can work to provide solutions and change perceptions of the cruise ship visitation. Ribaudo suggested the CICC&VB become a solution provider and catalyst for change.

### **CONSENT ITEMS**

Approval of Minutes from January 2020

Motion for approval Kielpinski, second Stevenson. Passed unanimously

### **REPORT OF THE CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

Noll asked Luttjohann to present the financials. Luttjohann made brief explanations, including 2019 NYE sales update and special event costs. Noll called for a motion of approval.

Approval of Financials January 2020

Motion for approval by Hohenstein, second Bradley. Passed unanimously

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT**

Hohenstein said this committee will not meet until after the elections and known conflict of interests are presented to the Board. A question arose regarding the recent candidate forum and asking separate questions of the candidates. Hohenstein reminded the CICC&VB that this was not a Chamber of Commerce (COC) event. The COC facilitated the effort but did not conduct the forum. A group of volunteers compiled the candidate questions and grouped them into like categories. People were asked to submit questions to the group and/or a specific candidate. After discussion by the Board, it was advised that people only submit questions to the candidates as a group and not ask different questions by candidate.

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Luttjohann explained that as the marketing committee is now meeting on a quarterly basis with their next meeting taking place in April, he plans to alternate the other committee meetings (Membership and Cruise committees) on a quarterly basis in rotation. The membership committee met today and the cruise committee will meet in March. Jim explained that Civitas is still compiling data. The TOT committee will meet once Civitas submits their report and the CICC&VB will be updated next month. Regarding stewardship, Luttjohann asked if there were questions for the planning commission to address, i.e.: a historic preservation plan. He asked the Board to give this some thought and let him know. Luttjohann said a draft of the Crisis Communication plan has been distributed to the original committee for feedback. He is waiting to broach the topic of a two-year rolling budget until we hear about the TBID. Luttjohann said there is a job fair being held at the Avalon Schools gym on March 10 from 5-7pm. And finally, Luttjohann reported the membership committee met today and brainstormed target members and discussed member benefits.

## **MARKETING COMMITTEE REPORT**

Stevenson reported the 2020 Advertising & Marketing Opportunities outline is included in this week's Thursday Update and is also on the website. Stevenson encouraged members to have a look as it helps members understand, in a quick format, how to get involved and market their businesses. Love Catalina and the Roam Wild campaign are set to launch on April 1. Work with Crown & Greyhound's PR team, 62Above, continues as they develop a PR campaign to support this brand launch. CICC&VB submitted an application to participate in Visit California's April 28 Los Angeles media event and was selected as a partner. This venue will provide a platform to support the CICC&VB brand launch of Love Catalina's Roam Wild. CICC&VB staff attended educational seminars while at Visit California's Outlook Forum in San Diego, February 10-12. The seminars included topics on industry new best practices for PR and social media efforts and new tracking methods, along with workshops on brand voice and content development and user generated content (UGC) best use practices. There was a presentation from new media companies on new geo tracking tech that supports digital marketing efforts.

## **EVENTS REPORT**

Summer Concert series— DeMyer provided updates on three Xceptional Music concerts: Saturday, July 11, Mick Adams and the Stones; Saturday, August 15, ABBA Tribute; Saturday, September 5, Venice/Pine Mountain Logs. There will be raffle prizes and a beer/wine garden with each of these concerts. DeMyer is working with Mary Stein on scheduling one local concert in July or August.

Mixers— Tonight's Mixer is at Bluewater 6-8pm. All months for the 2020 calendar year have been filled, the next three Mixer hosts are: March 19, The Cove at the Holiday Inn Resort; April 16, Zane Grey Pueblo Hotel; May 21, Catalina Tile & Pottery.

Fixers— Three Fixers are currently in the works; no firm dates yet. Planned are: how to become more environmentally conscious/green on an individual and business level with Oceanic Bioplastics (combo event with Care for Catalina in March or Earth Day, April 22); customer service for owners, managers and front-line staff—focusing on turning the day visitor into a super fan converting them into an overnight visitor; and shredding, planned for after tax season.

Lodging Open House—2020 Lodging Open House is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 5:30-9pm. This will tie in with National Travel & Tourism Week. DeMyer will solicit Hotels, Bed & Breakfast Inns and Vacation Rentals to participate.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

A request from Board Member Alkibay to please read a statement in his absence to the CICC&VB Board, members and guests is as follows:

"As we all know Los Angeles has been nominated to host the 2028 summer Olympics. I have been talking to the Olympic Committee specifically to the 'USA Swimming Team' about hosting swim-related events here on the island. Past weekend, I had the ear of the USA Swimming Team President/CEO and I got a commitment out of him to come out to explore our island for open-water swim events. This will be a huge win for us if we get this nomination. The team USA will be sending a delegation in the very near future to start looking around and talk to us about partnering here in Avalon. I have already secured a sponsor for this group (which is a major commitment from Coca Cola USA) and we will probably host some swim events for them prior to the Olympics. Hopefully successful execution of these events will lead us to the nomination of the 2028 open-water swim venue. There is no guarantee here but a great start with huge upside. Let's make Catalina Island/Avalon a home, destination for 'Team USA Swimming.' Looking forward to a great partnership."

Luttjohann added an update regarding the Otillo event.

## Board Member Reports

Stevenson reminded the group about the country music concert on Sunday night in the Casino. The Saturday night Casino concert is cancelled.

Fornasiere reported Charlie Canby is doing a presentation at the Museum on Saturday night. The event begins at 5pm and will be held outside. The Catalina Painting Exhibit is now open.

Bombard said that at the request of lodging members as a service to visitors, Catalina Express now has text messaging to businesses for weather events creating changes to the boat schedule. Each business is allowed one number for this purpose.

Perico provided the group an update on how work with Avalon Schools is going and reminded all that a new School Superintendent takes over in July 2020.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Ponce adjourned the meeting at 3:18pm