



MINUTES: Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, February 28, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 8:30am by Chair Amanda Bombard. The Catalina Island Tourism Authority (CITA) meeting was held in the Catalina Canyon Inn Conference Room with in-person attendance only.

DIRECTORS PRESENT (17)

Bombard, Noll, Fornasiere, Stevenson, Alkibay, Allen, Bradley, Cassidy, Flathers, Garcia, Glass, Hohenstein, Latorre, Maistros, Paret, Vega, Wright

DIRECTORS ABSENT (2)

Villalobos, Foley

STAFF PRESENT (4)

Luttjohann, Miller, Warner, Johnson

GUESTS (2)

Tom Keyse, Bill Charney

CONSENT ITEMS

Chair Bombard asked for discussion and approval of Minutes from January 18, 2024

Motion to approve by Glass, second Cassidy.

Approved with abstentions by Hohenstein and Flathers

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

April 30 Special Meeting—Bombard announced the Board Retreat attendees are requested to attend an April 30 meeting for another full day. This will be a discussion with Charney staff in attendance on what is learned today and tomorrow in the Board Workshop. This special meeting date was set after conferring with Charney staff on available dates.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

Financials November/December 2023 and January 2024—Luttjohann reminded that in January he requested a draft of November and December financials be accepted until final reports were complete. He explained adjustments made in the Nov/Dec financials now in the February Board Packet. For November he explained the TOT true-up was applied to receivable for last fiscal year, but would be expensed in this fiscal year. At 8:36am Maistros and Latorre entered the meeting. Luttjohann noted that the December adjustments included a computer network change. The November and December financials in the packet reflect all corrections. Luttjohann highlighted a few items on the January financials and mentioned upcoming expenses for downtown sound system, seasonal décor, and new equipment at the Visitor Center. Paret left the meeting at 8:38am. Fornasiere asked about the unbudgeted co-op revenue in the notes.

Luttjohann explained stakeholders Catalina Express (CatEx), Catalina Island Co (CICo) and CITA are partners in the GoToCatalina campaign. The expenses reimbursed by the stakeholders to CITA become co-op revenue.

Approval of November/December 2023 and January 2024 Monthly Financials

Motion to approve by Cassidy, second Noll.

Roll-call vote approved with abstentions by Bombard, Stevenson, and Allen (Paret was out of the room)

Visitor and Member Services Report—Luttjohann presented new membership applications for approval. Applications for The Kelp Forest, Topside by NDMK, Haunted Catalina Ghost Tours and AVX Networks are included in the packet. Luttjohann advised the applications should be considered individually as abstentions by Latorre and Garcia are necessary. Hohenstein made a motion for approval of each new member.

Approval of New Member Topside by NDMK

Motion for approval Hohenstein, second Glass; passed with abstention by Latorre

Approval of New Member The Kelp Forest

Motion for approval Hohenstein, second Fornasiere; passed with abstention by Garcia

Approval of New Member Haunted Catalina Ghost Tours

Motion for approval Hohenstein, second Glass; passed unanimously

Approval of New Member AVX Networks

Motion for approval Hohenstein, second Fornasiere; passed unanimously

Sales & Marketing Report—Fornasiere turned the floor over to Luttjohann and Miller. Miller reported she was chosen to attend Visit California's Outlook Forum in Palm Springs in March. Luttjohann printed the one-sheet, Oct-Dec 2023, Q4 Marketing Report and was handed to each attendee. The 4th quarter video produced by 62Above was viewed on the meeting screen which highlighted marketing stats. Cassidy asked the difference between impressions and engagement. Miller explained that impressions is visually seeing but engagement is when the viewer clicks.

President's Report—Luttjohann highlighted portions of his written report included in the packet. Luttjohann shared that he will attend the NATJA conference and board meeting in May and FCCA with Vega in September.

Events Report—Luttjohann printed DeMyer's Event Report and distributed to attendees. He read the report including information on Shred Day on April 23 for \$7 per box and other events like Pride, Taste of Avalon, and Fixers. He reminded that tomorrow's Mixer is hosted by Akuario and is at Immersed, 6-8pm at their theater in Island Plaza; March 21, Catalina Divers Supply will host the Mixer. Hohenstein asked if the Lodging event might be canceled. She feels that for her hotels, it does not seem worth the cost. Miller stated the event is for front-line employees to see properties so they can give informed referrals. Hohenstein said front-line employees are at their second job and do not attend. Stevenson recommended it possibly expand beyond lodging. Bombard added that she participated a few years ago and found it helpful and would like to see other main attractions like the museum added to the event. Cassidy suggested it might be put together as a FAM tour.

BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Fornasiere stated the Catalina Island Museum Lasting Impressions painting gallery closes Sunday at 5pm. First Friday has been extended in hours, 5-7pm with free museum admission and a special cocktail available for purchase. April 27 the Tamale Festival is scheduled, 3-7pm. Opening March 23 is a new exhibit with Ann Weber sculptures that are made of cardboard but look like porcelain. A demo will be part of the opening event.

Hohenstein announced The Cove restaurant at the Catalina Canyon Resort has closed.

Bombard reported the spring schedule has been extended while they await approval of the summer schedule. She thanked all for their patience while CatEx transfers to Fare Harbor, the new reservation system. CatEx will present to City Council next month. Hohenstein said she would like to see how many tickets are left in her virtual book. Bombard explained when on the CatEx site, the drop down shows how many tickets available and that is the number left in the virtual book. She said a video has been created by Fare Harbor to assist commuters with issues and should be available shortly. Hohenstein said the new program is helpful to merchants as they can tell how full the boat is and encourage visitors to book before it is sold out. Bombard likes all feedback as it helps to improve the system. CatEx listened and changed the cancellation policy for commuters. If a reservation is made and a commuter misses the boat, they have 24 hours to add that ticket back into their book. The commuter program was built for CatEx by Fare Harbor so they are still working on it and tweaking things that need to be fixed. An important feature is that now CatEx knows who is traveling on the boat and that is necessary if the port moves to a higher security level and can be helpful in other situations.

Stevenson announced the Island Spa is closed as a spa for now. The premise can be used as a venue through the next busy season. The biggest challenge is staffing for the spa. The CCo tried a third party but they required a large commission. CCo is open to ideas and are not ready to give up yet. Cassidy asked about gift cards for the spa and was assured that CCo would take them at other CCo places of business.

Allen reported no updates on horseback riding after being asked about the activity but is hopeful for it to begin this year. Stevenson said the El Rancho Escondido experience will be offered one day a week, beginning March 2. This tour is \$179 per person and lasts 3.5 hours.

Maistros updated on the new public transport electric vehicles that will replace the Garibaldi bus. The green Circuit vehicles run in other mainland locations. This is an app-based system that will map out the route. Clients can buy space to use as transport. The app allows for the driver to pick up passengers where the app is beeping. There are seven vehicles to allow time for some to recharge as all will not be on the road at the same time. They will not be restricted to the Garibaldi route and will pick up and drop off anywhere. When the driver is not engaged with a specific client, they will drive the route. Hohenstein stated this seems much like a taxi and asked if the taxi company was closing. Maistros discussed the new system with Christy Lins because both systems will be in operation. He also reminded that the Garibaldi bus was often out of commission and the dial-a-ride program has limitations. The new program should better serve the community. Hohenstein asked if travelers can schedule a pickup in advance at the boat to take them to a hotel. Flathers mentioned that would mean luggage is okay. Maistros said there is a luggage rack on each vehicle so luggage is allowed to a certain point. Glass mentioned, currently when a boat comes in the wait for a taxi can be quite long. Maistros said that with essentially two companies operating it will help that situation and they will work together. Circuit is the operator and they are hiring drivers. Garcia asked how many drivers would be hired. Maistros said there would be at least four but more will be added as needed. Hohenstein wanted to know if the cost has been determined. Bombard wondered if there will be vehicle sharing giving the example of multiple people requesting Hamilton Cove as their destination. Maistros said it will be \$2 per person and at times the vehicle will be shared. Bombard is concerned about the information in the current CatEx magazine onboard their vessels as the transport ad has a QR code for the Garibaldi bus. Garcia wonders how many will not want to pay to rent a golf cart and use the vehicle to take them to Mt Ada for a cheap and convenient method to reach the hilltop views. Maistros hopes that will not happen. Cassidy reminded the Garibaldi did not work to get locals to the boat and dial-a-ride required them to leave home too early. She hopes the new system, constantly roving will work better as local transport. Wright believes the Long Beach transport system is utilized more by residents to get to work and is used by visitors in lower numbers. Maistros said Circuit hours will be from the first boat to the last and special events will extend operation hours. Luttjohann reminded that international travelers assume there is a transit system and it is important to communicate for all visitors to use.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Fornasiere requested a future discussion on the possibility of volunteer guides to welcome visitors. Downtown San Diego and New Zealand are examples of successful programs. Luttjohann stated that in Ventura they wore red vests and received visitor training. Later, they wore green vests when another company took over and the volunteers covered more topics. Fornasiere said maps are handed out along with information.

CLOSED SESSION

Moved to Closed Session at 9:33am for Board Retreat Workshop. Board Members listed on attendance sheet and staff, Luttjohann and Miller attended this two-day closed session. The time Paret re-entered the meeting during closed session is unknown.

RECESS OF SESSION

Recess for lunch at 12noon, February 28, 2024.

CLOSED SESSION

Resumed Closed Session at 12:30pm

RECESS OF SESSION

Recess February 28, 2024 until next day at 5:13pm

CLOSED SESSION

Resumed Closed Session 8:00am on February 29, 2024. All of yesterday's attendees arrived by 8am with exceptions: Alkibay arrived at 8:02 am, Wright entered the meeting at 8:03am, Latorre joined at 8:05am. Maistros left the meeting for a previous commitment at 8:57am, returning at 10:25am.

RECESS OF SESSION

Recess for lunch at 11:50am, February 29, 2024.

CLOSED SESSION

Resumed Closed Session at 12:31pm. Late attendees were: Noll and Allen at 12:35pm, Flathers at 12:38pm and Cassidy at 1:33pm. Allen left the meeting at 2:41 due to a work-related issue.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Bombard adjourned the closed session and board meeting at 3:05pm, February 29, 2024.