



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

**Thursday, March 19, 2020**

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 1:06pm by Chair Michael Ponce. Due to novel CoronaVirus known as COVID-19 this meeting was held via conference call for all participants. Attendance and voting utilized roll call procedure.

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

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

Alkibay, Foley, Salinas, Sanchez

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

Luttjohann, Miller, Warner, Johnson, DeMyer

### **GUESTS (2)**

Greg Bombard, Amanda Bombard

### **CONSENT ITEMS**

Approval of Minutes from February 2020

There were four corrections made to the minutes. Motion to approve with noted changes by Hohenstein, second Fornasiere. Passed unanimously

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

Noll deferred to Luttjohann as he did not have time to fully study the financials. Luttjohann stated there are no significant differences than prior month. Ponce asked for questions and when none were presented, called for a motion of approval.

Approval of Financials February 2020

Motion for approval by Glass, second Stevenson. Passed unanimously

### **PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Luttjohann explained his report is a different format as 90% of staff time has been consumed with COVID-19 and the very fluid changes. He reported that the City of Avalon (COA) has pulled together a great team for meetings to work on the ever-changing issues related to COVID-19. Luttjohann then asked each attendee to report updates on their business and any COVID-19 issues that they feel should be addressed.

COVID-19 Impacts—Ponce stated the Seacrest Inn is cancelling and refunding. He noted that bookings through Expedia were the exception but they were working to move reservations that could not be refunded. Some guests want to come but currently he was unsure how to deal with this.

Hohenstein noted that Holiday Inn was also cancelling and refunding but some parties want to travel anyway. She has talked to those that used third party booking and requested they book directly in the future to avoid any strict policies.

Noll stated that Leo's Drugstore is in the process of changing their hours so they can make deliveries; currently hours are normal.

Stevenson announced that the Catalina Island Company (CIC) is shutting down all properties. Groups are shifting to new dates and CIC is delaying new reservations until May 1. Closures include tour, food and beverage, hotels, camping and Two Harbors with the exception of their general store. Perico added that Avalon Grille is open 4-6pm, five days a week for take-out orders only. Stevenson believes that in 60 days the Island will make a roaring comeback. Say agreed, if residents comply with current safety measures requested by government. She warned that if distancing and shut downs are not obeyed, this could last longer.

Fornasiere said Catalina Island Museum decided to close until March 27 with an upcoming public announcement that may extend to a further date. On Monday, the decision will be made about possible cancellation of the Silent Film Festival. She also has hopes the island will bounce back.

Glass reported that 99% of Hamilton Cove Real Estate & Vacation Rentals customers rebooked for October, etc. with only a few requesting refunds. He asked, what is accomplished if closings are until the end of April but people still walk around and kids continue to play with their friends. Lavelle would like to see the COA address the public spaces with possible closure of those places. Bradley is concerned there are still many kids playing basketball on the public courts, especially at night. She does not wish to take away exercise, but sees kids sitting closely on the bench watching and not obeying the six-foot distancing. Radde let the Board know only LA County Public Health can issue a shelter in place. She also noted Joe Machado field was closed after groups were congregating there. Say asked if it were possible to send a mailer in both English and Spanish emphasizing the importance of recent recommendations. Glass added the school might help as they normally call parents with updates; COVID-19 reminders would be helpful every day or once a week. Bradley noted a family was playing on the basketball court right now, saying, as a family it is a good way to get exercise but the groups of students that gather in the evenings should not be bumping into each other and are not obeying social distancing.

Paret announced that Catalina Island Medical Center (CIMC) believes 70% of the population will get this virus. Italy waited too long to take action and it is possible to overwhelm our health care system. He continued, by following social distancing and quarantine, this should lower the numbers infected at one time. UC Irvine is normally 98% full and this virus will stress our system. Glass asked, if as the weather gets warmer will it slow down? Paret responded this so new that everything is an assumption. He hopes summer will be better and that by next winter when it comes back there will be a vaccine available. His main message is that we must slow the spread and avoid a massive amount of people getting this at one time.

Say reported the Hotel Metropole is closed until the end of the month and after that it will be day to day. She is concerned about socialization but also wondered how long the shutdown could be if people don't obey. Radde stated that we can't stop people from going to and from the mainland. Say added their future guests were offered to rebook another date and earn an extra night or given a refund; most all cancelled and took the refund.

Paret requested people watch the video by Dr. Davis which is available on the CIMC website and said that CIMC is lucky to have a great staff and a relationship with UCI that adds group knowledge. Luttjohann asked about the possibility for the community to view the Dr. Davis video in Spanish language, maybe using subtitles. Paret delegated Noll to see if that task is possible. Paret expressed concern over some living arrangements in Avalon where 12 individuals may live in a small home and then one unknown carrier goes to another home and infects 12 other people.

Villalobos reported IEX refunded most reservations and is pretty much serving local commuters only.

Bradley reported that Brown's Bikes refunded any travelers that made reservations. She asked if this should be over by the end of April. Lavelle thinks April 30 is realistic but it could be through Memorial weekend. On a positive note, Say added that Hotel Metropole received a call and booked a reservation for August. Glass likes the idea of a free night and will speak to the owners of units he rents to see if that could be utilized at Hamilton Cove Real Estate & Vacation Rentals.

Radde added that tonight at 5pm the COA will hold a special COVID-19 meeting to determine what it might mean to the city coffers. This can be viewed tonight or tomorrow. Talk of possible cut backs and the fact that COA deals with five unions must be considered. There is a need to look at possible lawsuits, needless spending, vacation time and more. She admitted that communication has been a struggle and the COA has been behind in getting information out to the public. Jen and Jordan Monroe have updated COA's website, adding a red banner with a link to CoronaVirus updates. COA is now holding daily briefings. Paret warned testing is not happening so the numbers are incorrect; flu-like symptoms would be a better depiction. He added that one theory is that we are two weeks behind Italy and that two weeks out we may see a surge.

Kielpinski noted that Catalina Island Conservancy has given refunds for eco tours. The interior is open for drives or biking for those holding an existing permit, DC Grill will close but Flying Boats will continue to land at the Airport-in-the-Sky.

Perico asked people to stay home, wash their hands and understand how serious this can get. Miller asked about his family in Italy, he responded the town has been hit but his family and friends are doing okay.

Lavelle received comments from Catalina Tours customers on how kind they have been treated when cancelling.

Guest Greg Bombard reported on Catalina Express updates made last night with the shortest schedule since their opening. Some groups travelling have moved to another date and some cancelled. Catalina Express is cancelling and refunding. Tomorrow an abbreviated schedule begins to help get hikers/campers off the island. Beginning Monday, service will only be between Long Beach and Avalon with two departures a day and they request essential travel only. Amanda Bombard added that Catalina Express is sending an email recommending NO non-essential travel.

Luttjohann announced that a request for voluntary closures has been made. He added it was beneficial Catalina Express put out their new information shortly after. He said COA council will look at the Mammoth Lakes policy tonight. Their policy pleasantly asks, "don't come!" Bradley asked when we might expect life to be back to normal. Paret stated that two months ago CIMC staff was not worried. One week ago they became worried but not about the possibility of lasting until the end of June, it was more about how to get through and not relax standards because that could mean getting hit. He is hopeful that impacts from COVID-19 will only last one to two months. The CIMC has moved all long-term-care patients further down the hall. Doors are being sealed and the ER was converted to ICU. There is concern of no medevacs if there is no room at mainland facilities. He stated the CIMC staff is working extra hard to make changes. Tele-medicine is being utilized and X-rays have been postponed. Patients will be seen and receive care if they have insurance or not. CIMC is adapting. Since last week CIMC revenue has dropped by 50% as costs increase. This can only continue for so much time. He requested people write their legislature, representatives, Supervisor Hahn, etc. asking for help.

Election Update— Radde reported this Friday should be the last election update and it usually happens at 4:02pm. Luttjohann asked about the general rule when numbers are close and the possibility of a recount. Radde said that Friday, March 27 final results are posted and that on Saturday a recount can be requested. She reminded that every vote counts as some candidates become elected with less than 10 votes between them. New candidates will be sworn in at an April council meeting. Some of the delay in posting the numbers is that registration was allowed the day of election and registration takes time to verify.

CIVITAS Update—Luttjohann stated that COVID-19 has taken time from all parties and CIVITAS updates have been moved to the next meeting. There have been no executive committee meetings since their presentation in January. He is pleased that Otillo was a success but sorry good publicity has been drowned out by COVID-19.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The Nominating committee is awaiting election results and will schedule a meeting after results are confirmed.

### **CRUISE COMMITTEE**

Luttjohann announced that SeaTrade Spring conference has been postponed until after the beginning of the CICC&VB fiscal year. All existing and new cruise ship calls to Avalon are on hold at this time.

### **MARKETING COMMITTEE**

Stevenson deferred to Miller and she reported on the Love Catalina Brand launch which has been postponed from its April 1 date to May 1. She added all marketing is on hold for two weeks and then CICC&VB will re-evaluate. Funds are allocated but she is revisiting with the agency to delay payments into the next fiscal year.

### **EVENTS REPORT**

Summer Concert series— DeMyer stated three Xceptional Music concerts are planned for the summer months; Mick Adams and the Stones, ABBA Tribute and Venice/Pine Mountain Logs. She has been working with Mary Stein on scheduling one or two local concerts during the summer season.

Mixers— Tonight's Mixer at The Cove and next month's at Zane Grey Pueblo Hotel have been cancelled.

Fixers—Care for Catalina and Earth Day may be postponed; new dates to be determined. The customer service Fixer may be offered as a free video with a live presentation in the Fall.

Lodging Open House—2020 Lodging Open House is scheduled for Thursday, May 7, 5:30-9pm. At this time DeMyer reported the date remains for this event, but it could be moved forward or postponed.

### **Future Agenda Items**

Fornasiere requested that assistance available due to business closures be addressed at another meeting.

### **Board Member Reports**

Paret asked if CIMC educational information is getting out to everyone. Ponce stated that he has seen it and encouraged all to share with others. Lavelle would like to see the myths addressed and cited 'kids don't get COVID-19' as an example. Glass said kids need to know they can kill grandma and grandpa. Radde stated she would ask the school at the morning meeting to help get the word out. Bradley suggested Luttjohann get info to all businesses and request they forward. Paret mentioned that testing takes time and must be done in commercial labs that meet certain criteria. If the lab decides to run a sample then additional samples are requested. He went on to say that if a

patient feels they have COVID-19, they are treated as if they have COVID-19. The novel CoronaVirus is treated like the flu, lasts five days and in some cases reoccurs a few days later with serious lung issues.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Ponce adjourned the meeting at 2:49pm