



MINUTES: Meeting of the Board of Directors

Thursday, May 11, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

The Catalina Island Tourism Authority (CITA) meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Board Chair, Bryce Noll. This meeting was held in the Founders Room of US Bank with three board members attending via Zoom: Ben Villalobos, IEX - could not attend in person due to taking care of his father. Ben was on camera from his office at John Wayne Airport; Andrew Allen could not attend the meeting in person due to business operations requiring additional staffing and attended the meeting from Two Harbors on camera, alone; Dave Stevenson joined the meeting at 1:11pm on camera from his office in Irvine due to obligations on behalf of the organization. NOTE: As of Jan 31, 2023 must take roll-call votes on all action items. CITA is not required to meet the Brown Act standards at this time, but has been advised by legal counsel to do so as much as possible.

DIRECTORS PRESENT IN-PERSON (15)

Noll, Bombard, Cassidy, Fornasiere, Kielpinski, Bradley, Flathers, Glass, Hohenstein, Maistros, Paret, Ponce, Teng, Vega, Wright (in-room quorum established)

DIRECTORS ATTENDING REMOTELY VIA ZOOM (3)

Allen, Stevenson, Villalobos

DIRECTORS ABSENT (1)

Foley

STAFF PRESENT (4)

Luttjohann, Miller, Warner, DeMyer

GUESTS (1)

Tyler Wilson

CONSENT ITEMS

Approval of Minutes from April 20, 2023

Motion for approval Ponce, second Hohenstein; roll-call vote passed with one abstention by Cassidy.

Approval of March and April 2023 Monthly Financials

Motion for approval Fornasiere, second Ponce; roll-call vote passed with one abstention by Cassidy.

REPORT OF THE CHAIR

There was an issue with conduct by a member during the April 20, 2023 Mixer. Noll is conducting outreach and plans to further address this issue at the June meeting.

Noll asked the Board for volunteers to serve on the 2023-24 Finance Committee. There were no volunteers.

Villalobos and Allen requested the Board to excuse their meeting absences for March and April 2023. Villalobos submitted a letter outlining work commitments that precluded his attending these meetings. Allen submitted a letter stating his work and travel conflicts precluding him from attending the meetings.

Motion for approval of excused absences by Ponce, second Hohenstein; roll-call vote passed with abstentions by Villalobos and Allen.

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

Luttjohann submitted his written report included in the Board packet. He included a proposed meeting schedule for 2023-2024 including, if approved, dates for Charney Associate meeting dates for two-day board retreat on February 28-29, 2024. Hohenstein voiced a conflict with the schedule; she will miss the January 18, 2024 meeting. No other conflicts were voiced with the proposed schedule.

During the March 6, 2023 Board Workshop the Board requested Luttjohann acquire a proposal from Charney Associates to review CITA Bylaws for recommended changes. Charney Associates provided two estimates: one estimate of \$33K included Bill Charney and Tom Keyse attending the workshop; the second estimate of \$22K has only Keyse attending the workshop. Glass and Stevenson indicated they would prefer to use this budget allocation for marketing. There was a question as to this being the only bid submitted. (Luttjohann explained that it was a Board request made at the Board Workshop and therefore the only bid received.) Noll said having this additional training and review of the organization's bylaws will lessen the time he recently spent dealing with potential litigations in his seat as Board President. Ongoing discussion of this expense included CITA's previous exposure to legal action, the desire of the organization to be risk averse, the need to plan for the future relating to ongoing training of the Board beyond these immediate expenses, current Directors and Officers insurance coverage, current retainers of attorneys (none), the ability of this training to be a great opportunity for small businesses to learn, and the ability of this training to make CITA's Board more functional and effective. Fornasiere asked if a project or expense must go if this item is approved. Luttjohann explained, no, as earned revenue has been largely untouched this year. Luttjohann explained this project will be deducted from membership dues income as opposed to TOT income.

Motion for approval of the \$32K expenditure Kielpinski, second Paret; passed with roll-call vote, 16 ayes and two nays (Stevenson and Glass).

This year is the 50th Anniversary of the New Year's Eve Gala and it is intended to elevate the dining experience. The menu cost increases from \$78 p/p to \$100 p/p and will be absorbed in the ticket price. In order to move forward with the planning of this event, Board approval is needed for the venue rental of \$10K, a deposit of \$15,562.50 (includes refundable deposit) upon contract signing, and entertainment expenses of \$23,474.65 with a deposit of \$5K due upon signing.

Motion for approval of these expenditures Glass, second Bombard; roll-call vote passed with one abstention by Stevenson.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

Bombard chaired the Nominating Committee and presented the following Slate of Officers for 2023-24 for approval: Chair - Amanda Bombard, Past Chair - Bryce Noll, Chair Elect - Dave Stevenson, Treasurer - Ben Villalobos, Marketing - Gail Fornasiere (subject to change due to Charney recommendations/follow-up session), CEO - (non-voting) Jim Luttjohann.

Motion for approval Cassidy, second Glass. Passed with a roll-call vote, all ayes.

Visitor & Member Services—Hohenstein stated this committee met earlier today and discussed the need to develop a business code of conduct for the membership. This relates directly to complaints CITA receives on an on-going basis about the inability for current and prospective customers to reach the St. Lauren Hotel. This is affecting the island's reputation negatively. Luttjohann has tried to contact the owner in numerous ways and on numerous occasions. Discussion included the inability to book this accommodation through a website and reservations are accepted through only the OTA, Expedia; also, the inability of reserved guests to reach the property to modify or cancel reservations. The Board directed Luttjohann to send the owner a certified letter outlining the efforts attempted to contact him and the need to have a conversation regarding the customer complaints received. The letter will provide notice for a potential hearing within two weeks and before the next Board Meeting letting the owner know that per Love Catalina's Bylaws, a member business could be expelled from membership by a vote of 75% of the Board unless the problem is addressed and resolved.

Motion by Cassidy to send the St. Lauren's owner a certified letter outlining the above direction, second Kielpinski. Passed with a roll-call vote, all ayes.

Marketing Report—Fornasiere provided the Board with a marketing update. The spring marketing campaign currently running, targeting southern Californians, concludes May 30. Paid media campaign goes dark for the summer and picks

back up in the fall season. Social media efforts will continue through the summer. Currently the Pride event on June 24 is being marketed. The new map is scheduled to go to the printer later this week. The April PR report was distributed in this morning's Thursday Update. Highlights this month include: working closely with News Chief Meteorologist Kevin Charette on his trip to the Island, which included a live segment on April 24.

Press coverage highlights included travel features in *AFAR*, *Locale Magazine*, *NBC LA*, and *KGET-TV-NBC*. Overall, April generated 20 pieces of coverage for a combined audience of 35.7M with 153K estimated views. A big thank you to all the businesses that donated prizes for the trip contest being held for members of the media during next week's North American Travel Journalist Association's (NATJA) annual conference. The overwhelming support allows the give away TWO Catalina Island prize packages during the NATJA event. Miller will attend the conference with an eye forward on the potential of hosting a NATJA event on the island in the near future. A call was made to support, with donations, a Catalina Island Prize package at the annual CalTravel Summit auction and meeting in September. These donations help support CalTravel's legislative advocacy efforts, raise Catalina Island visibility in the tourism industry and showcase individual businesses that donate. Prize donations requested no later than May 29; please contact Michelle Warner to donate. This is National Tourism Week and summer is fast approaching; tourism keeps Catalina Island successful and an exceptional place to work and play.

Events Report—DeMyer provided information on recent events. Carnival Cruise Line (CCL) Shore-ex training on Monday, May 1 saw two representatives from CCL meeting with several island activity and tour operators for shore excursion training. Two training sessions were held at the Catalina Conservancy Trailhead to learn about packaging, tour activities and special offers to visitors. CCL had follow-up visits with some businesses.

Shred day held on April 26 shipped 189 boxes off the island to be shredded. 18 businesses and individuals participated. A big thank you to Avalon Freight Services.

Responsible beverage serving classes are promoted in the Thursday Update with a special discount code; next class is on May 30.

Sexual harassment prevention & training are in the Thursday Update with a promotional discount code; an ongoing program.

The Lodging Open House scheduled for May 10 has been canceled due to lack of participation.

Catalina Pride is June 24 and a generous donation of \$7500 was received from the US Bank. They will be the title sponsor of the event.

Taste around Avalon, 17th annual event on June 1, 5-9pm. Only three participants registered to date; deadline to sign up is Friday, May 19.

Restaurant Week, June 2-8 is the 10th annual. One participant signed up today with sign-up deadline, May 26. Both the Taste Around of Avalon and Restaurant Week are promoted in the Thursday Update and through dedicated emails.

Mixer tonight is at the Catalina Canyon Inn, 6-8pm. There'll be a taco bar, beverages, great raffle prizes, and lots of networking. Come and check out the newly renovated rooms.

BOARD MEMBER UPDATES

Fornasiere stated the Catalina Museum Culture Between Cocktails event on Saturday, May 12 at 1pm is the Avalon Silent Film Showcase. This year it is a double feature and the Catalina Island Company is the title sponsor. On May 27 at noon a Tongva Family Festival will be held at the museum. The First Friday event on June 2 is Taller Tiki Tales welcoming Sven Kirsten back to the island and Shag will be on hand to sign the exhibition poster he created specifically for the Tall Tiki Tales exhibition. The event continues June 3 with Sven Kirsten guiding a trip to the Isthmus. Fornasiere also announced the museum is celebrating its 70th year of operation!

Cassidy suggested that the City offer businesses to have e-waste disposal included in their services. Maistros noted that he had a meeting with Avalon Environmental Services later today and will discuss this suggestion with them.

Stevenson said the Catalina Island Company's (CIC) Flx Bier Garten is scheduled to open on Memorial Day. The Wine Mixer is just three short weeks away. Wesley Alfvn now works with CIC and is operating the Casino which will soon be moving away from programmed tours to an admission-type entry. A new tour being

introduced will include Rancho Escondido, a tour of the saddle room, an Arabian horse show (horses arrive later this week), a look at the chapel and vineyard. The Wine Festival at Two Harbors is scheduled for July 8.

Villalobos announced an IEX Mother's Day package this weekend offering a 50% discount on Mother's Day weekend travel to the island with a 25% discount on Catalina Island Inn lodging.

Paret asked people to please complete the Catalina Island Medical Center Community Health Survey. He announced that on June 8 the fitness center is scheduled to open to the general public. August 5 is the Catalinaville fundraiser.

Noll asked the Board their opinion of the joint meeting held in April. The consensus of the group is that it was worth it and recommended having a combined meeting of the Board and City Council annually.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chair Noll adjourned the meeting at 2:35pm.