



# Minutes

---

## Visit Morro Bay Board of Directors

### Visit Morro Bay Board of Directors Minutes

Thursday, January 27, 2022

9:00 am – 11:00 am

Virtual via Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83572784421?pwd=UXNmK3NzT3BxSzNVa1dQcDB5M0k4Zz09>

Meeting ID: 835 7278 4421 Passcode: 634919

Call-In Phone Number: 1(669)900-6833

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Amish Patel called the meeting to order at 9:03 am

**PRESENT (VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE)** Amish Patel, Steven Allen, Joan Solu, and Robert Elzer  
Val Seymour joined the meeting at 9:06 am. Christopher Kosteka Joined the meeting at 9:10 am.

**ABSENT:** Scott Collins

**STAFF PRESENT:** Michael Wambolt, Elizabeth Gilson

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Morro Bay City Council Person Jen Ford, resident, and vacation rental owner Sean Green, Visit SLO CAL staff members Catherine Cropp and Melissa Murray, and THE ABBI Agency staff Ty Whitaker, Warren Phan, Liz Bowling, Caroline Sexton, Zach, and Angela Rudolph who came on the call when their agenda item was up.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)**

Council person Jen Ford explained the misunderstanding about being appointed City Council liaison to the Board and stated that she was not appointed but interested in what is going on and will keep in touch with Michael Wambolt.

Resident and vacation rental owner suggested that all Board Members attend meetings and asked that big ticket items that will be coming in front of the City Council be put on future meeting agendas to be discussed by the Board producing an official statement to be taken to City Council meetings. He also spoke on the Libertine parcel on the Embarcadero and suggested it would be a great place for a multi-use event space.

The Board discussed Sean Green's suggestion.

<b>ANNOUNCEMENTS</b>	<b>M. Wambolt</b>
----------------------	-------------------

Board member Steven Allen commented on the Winter Bird Festival being cancelled and wanted it clarified for the record that Visit Morro Bay Tourism office was not responsible for the cancellation of the event. Executive Director Michael Wambolt stated that he had explained what had happened to those who contacted him and that he would be in closer contact with event holders in the future.

<b>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT</b>	<b>M. Wambolt</b>
----------------------------------	-------------------

3. **Executive Director Report (30 min)**

Michael Wambolt explained the monthly STR report numbers for December 2021 and stated that numbers are up.

Thanked the Board for their participation in the interviews for the upcoming Strategic plan and spoke about what would be occurring during the focus groups on February 9<sup>th</sup> at the Inn at Morro bay and what would be the process moving forward.

Stated that he had gone through sales leads from Visit SLO CAL and passed on relevant ones to the Inn at Morro Bay and then to other properties and compiled a list of bird watching groups.

Working with The ABBI Agency on cohesive vision for new LOGO.

Spoke on the upcoming Visit CA Outlook Forum February 14- 16 and explained what it is and what he will be doing.

Spoke on the Visit SLO CAL UK mission and that he had been asked to go as the current Director of sales cannot go. He asked Board for comments and permission to go. The Board discussed and said yes.

Stated that he will be doing a vacation rental audit mailer to get update information.

Stated that he will be re assessing his vacation that was scheduled for April.

Board member Joan Solu asked that a header column be added to the TOT report in agenda packet.

**CONSENT AGENDA – *motion required***

**M. Wambolt**

**4. Approval of November 18, 2021 Board of Directors Meeting Minutes (5 mins)**

**5. Approval of December 16, 2021 Special Board Meeting Minutes**

**ACTION:** Moved by Joan Solu and seconded by Steven Allen to approve meeting minutes for both meetings

**MOTION: Carried 6:0**

**PUBLIC COMMENT: None**

**BUSINESS ITEMS & DISCUSSIONS**

**M. Wambolt**

**6. Visit Morro Bay Secretary – (10 min) – *motion required***

*Visit Morro Bay is secretary position is currently vacant due to Sarah Maggette vacating her board seat. Board will make recommendation for secretary of Visit Morro Bay and motion to approve.*

Michael Wambolt stated that the Board should make recommendations for a replacement and take a vote.

Board member Joan Solu asked for a point of clarification as she was uncomfortable voting as the addition of the agenda item was less than the 72 hours required by the Brown Act and would be in violation. It was confirmed that it would be in violation, and it was agreed that the item would be revisited at a future meeting.

**7. Visit Morro Bay Financial Update and Review (15 min)**

Michael Wambolt spoke on the budget spread sheet and current budget numbers.

**8. Visit Morro Bay Marketing Update - Abbi Agency (20 min)**

None of the ABBI staff were on the zoom call at the time this agenda item was introduced. Michael Wambolt stated that they had been notified and that a couple of their staff were on the call and left.

While waiting for The ABBI Agency to join call, Board President Amish Patel introduced new Board member Robert Elzer.

The ABBI Agency staff, Warren Phan, Caroline Sexton, TY Whitaker, Liz Bowling, Angela Rudolf, and Zach Alexander joined the call.

Warren Phan gave a presentation of the Dec. 2021 public relations campaign.

Caroline Sexton Gave an overview of the website and stated that traffic to the site is up but spending less time due to most visits to the site were from local people. The top pages searched were Blogs, the Lighted Boat Parade, and urgent care. The location data of traffic on website came from Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, San Francisco/Oakland area and New York.

Angela Rudolf gave a presentation on Social Media. She stated that there has been an increase on impressions engagement and post link clicks and followers across the website. Top UGC performers on Facebook were the Lighted Boat Parade, Otters, and Morro Rock posts. She stated that the Lighted Boat Parade went live on Facebook. Twitter top posts were the Otters, Lighted Boat Parade, Morro Rock, and boats in the Harbor.

Liz Bowling presented the results on public relations campaign “Why Spend the Winter Holiday in Morro Bay.” Holiday themed events and activities were highlighted. She also explained three media placements one to advertise the open Board member seat.

Board member Amish Patel asked what does UGC stand for? Liz Bowling answered user generated content.

Warren Phan spoke on working on a Logo redo and brand campaign that should be ready by Spring Break.

Board member Steve Allen asked if there had been negative publicity regarding the shark attack on December 24<sup>th</sup>?

Angela Rudolf stated that there was not a lot.

Michael Wambolt stated that he was in contact with Visit CA and Visit SLO CAL, and they recommended to go silent for a week.

Board member Joan Solu asked if the website reporting period that Caroline Sexton spoke of was the month prior or previous year same month.

Caroline Sexton stated the previous month.

**9. Kite Festival Sponsorship – April 28-29, 2022 (10 min) – *motion required***

*Staff will provide an update to the board about the Morro Bay Kite Festival and potential sponsorship. Board will discuss the opportunity and consider a recommendation to approve a sponsorship of \$10,000 and a marketing support spend of \$18,500 from the Abbi Agency. Total recommended approval for the event will be \$28,500.*

Michael Wambolt spoke about working with Shaun Farmer on bringing back the Kite Festival. Shaun will run the festival and stated that he does not charge for the event. Michael spoke on how we would sponsor the event.

The Board discussed. Board member Val Seymour stated that she does not feel the event brings people into the hotels. Joan Solu spoke on the history of TBID support of the festival and other sponsored events. She stated that in her experience with hotel occupancy in the past when she was a hotel owner that there is value in the sponsoring of the Kite Festival. The timing of the event due to Spring break was discussed and Michael Wambolt stated that Shaun Farmer is not stuck on dates and would be ok with movement of the event to not coincide with Spring Break. Board member Joan Solu commented on branding of the event and whether there should be a separate Kite festival website or a micro site on the morrobay.org website. Board member Steven Allen asked how media buy could be scaled back. Michael Wambolt commented on ways to do that. Board member Steven Allen asked if a COVID surge could cause the City to cancel event. Michael Wambolt stated that it is a safe event because it is outdoors and there is a lot of space, and that the City did not cancel the Bird Festival it was cancelled by the Bird Festival Board of Directors. Val Seymour spoke about making the festival more about all wind activities and sports and that May is considered the windiest month. Steven Allen recommended that the sponsorship be scaled down.

**ACTION:** Moved by Steven Allen that the Sponsorship be scaled down to \$25,000.00. Seconded by Joan Solu.

**MOTION: Carried 6:0**

**10. Morro Bay Citywide Yard Sale – April 1-3, 2022 (10 min) – *motion required***

*Staff will provide an update to board about the City Yard Sale. Board will discuss the opportunity and consider a recommendation to approve a sponsorship of \$7,000.*

Michael Wambolt stated that the big trash pickup dates do not coincide with the dates that historically the City-Wide Yard Sale is held and that if held on the usual weekend in April he would be coordinating with Goodwill and other thrift shops & services in area that pick-up items. He then brought up for discussion moving the Yard Sale to May or October.

Board President Amish Patel stated that during the Yard Sale there was an increase in hotel stays mostly from the Central Valley but that over the last 2 years despite there not being a Yard Sale people still came.

Board member Joan Solu stated that she was not ok with the Yard Sale being the week before Spring Break this year because of the residual trash and that the Sale should happen to coincide with the big trash pickup in October and that there should be at least 3 other services to help with the pick-up of leftover trash. She then asked Board member Robert Elzer his feelings about the event.

Board member Robert Elzer stated that he was for doing the Sale in October to coincide with the big trash pick up and doesn't think that other removal services would want to participate.

Board member Joan Solu then stated that the sale has been cancelled the last 2 years and that now would be the time to change the date of the event.

Michael Wambolt stated that he would have a conversation with Waste Management Services to see about making the big trash pickup dates more flexible.

Board President Amish Patel stated that he would like to see the sale moved to May.

Board member Solu stated that March would be good.

Michael Wambolt stated that it was up to the Board to decide.

Board member Robert Elzer recommended that it be moved to May this year.

Board member Steven Allen asked if there could be a reduction in \$7,000.00 sponsorship.

Michael Wambolt stated that the \$7,000.00 could be lowered to \$3,000.00.

Board member Steven Allen was in support of lowering the sponsorship to \$3,000.00

**ACTION:** Moved by Steven Allen that Visit Morro Bay sponsor the City-Wide Yard Sale for \$3,000.00 with Michael Wambolt reaching out to Waste Management Services to prepare for it. Seconded by Amish Patel.

Board member Joan Solu stated that she was not in support of the sponsorship because the big trash pickup is not connected with it and recommended that Michael Wambolt talk to The City to help with trash pickup assistance.

**MOTION: Carried 5:1**

Michael Wambolt requested 10 more minutes of meeting time.

Board member Val Seymour stated that she had to leave and asked if there was a vote on the next item.

Michael Wambolt stated yes.

Board member Val Seymour said ok and left the meeting at 11:00 am.

**ACTION:** Moved by Joan Solu to add ten more minutes to the meeting time. Steven Allen seconded.

**MOTION: Carried 5:0**

**11. Visit SLO CAL Countywide Events and Festivals Strategy (20 min)– *motion required***

*Melissa Murry from Visit SLO CAL will give a presentation and answer questions from the board. Board will discuss and consider approval to sign Visit SLO CAL's commitment.*

Melissa Murray from Visit SLO CAL presented the Visit SLO CAL Events and Festivals Strategy and the formation of a County wide master calendar of Events. She spoke on the benefits to SLO County, its municipalities DMO's, and residents. She stated that there would be no additional financial investment by Visit Morro Bay but that there is a commitment to collaborate agreement that would need to be signed and explained that agreement in more detail.

The Board discussed.

**ACTION: Moved by Joan Solu to approve the signing of the agreement. Seconded by Steven Allen.**

**MOTION: Carried 5:0**

## **12. Declaration of Future Agenda Items**

## **13. Next Board of Directors meeting – March 24, 2022 – 9:00am – 11:00am – Via Zoom**

**ADJOURN:** Meeting was adjourned by Board President Amish Patel at 11:13

Brown Act Notice: Each speaker is limited to two minutes of public comment for items not on the agenda. Public comment for each agenda item will be called for separately and is also limited to 2 minutes per speaker. State law does not allow the Board of Directors to discuss or take action on issues not on the agenda, except that member of the Board may briefly respond to statements made or questions posed by the person giving public comment. Staff may be directed by the Board to follow-up on such items and/or place them on the next Board agenda. The order of agenda items is listed for reference and items may be taken in any order deemed appropriate by the Board.

ADA Notice: Meeting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. If you require special assistance to participate in the meeting, notify Liz Gilson at (805) 225-7411 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.