

Visit Oakland

481 Water Street
Oakland, CA 94607

Minutes

Wednesday April 14, 2021

Time: 4:00 PM

Location: Zoom (Virtual Meeting)

- I. **Call to Order** (Public Comments/Announcements)
 - a. The meeting was called to order and chaired by Gyasi Edwards, at 4:05.
- II. **Approval of the Agenda** - Chris Sullivan approved, Toni Adams seconded.
- III. **Approval of the Minutes** - minutes from previous meeting were not available.
- IV. **Attendees:** Anand Patel, Barbara Leslie, Dhruv Patel, Gyasi Edwards, Jermaine Gause, John Marsh, Mark Hochstater, Peter Depaschalis, Sam Nassif, Taj Tashombe, Thomas Cavanagh, Paul Tormey, V.Toni Adams
- V. **Reports**
 - a. **Interim CEO Update** –
 - i. I completed 1/1 meetings with staff members, and discussed plans for VO moving forward.
 - ii. Mark Everton, VO's prior CEO, provided a Transition Binder, which was used to focus on the administrative transition.
 - iii. Several individual and small group discussions were held with Executive Committee members, a few hoteliers, and a few Board members.
 - b. **Budget Update**
 - i. Current year-end budget looks in the range of 35%-40% of VO's Pre-pandemic Budget. The actions taken have minimized Covid's negative impact on VO's income.
 - ii. Oakland lost 3-5 hotels and is gaining 2. The net impact should be the neutral (or maybe a net plus) due to more rooms coming on-line at the new hotels.
 - iii. A brief discussion regarding VO's Payroll Protection Loan took place.
 - c. **Marketing Committee**
 - i. Campaigns are focused on the Leisure Markets
 - ii. **Going Somewhere** –Targeting SF-specific searches, 'Bleisure' audience, Family travellers. We are targeting these potential travellers on Priceline, Expedia, and Google Display. Results are encouraging.
 - iii. **VCA 'What If' co-op** – We are participating in Visit CA's 'What-If' co-op marketing campaign with SFTravel & Mt. Diablo region from May-July. This campaign will target LA, Dallas, Seattle & Phoenix, through deeply discounted rates on digital platforms including TripAdvisor, Expedia, ADARA (display ads utilizing pixel retargeting) & social media. We are drafting off of SFTravel and Visit California channels. VO's advertising impressions increase significantly.

- iv. **See Things From Our Side** - Brand campaign – tells a story of Oakland story; the multiculturalism in our neighbourhoods, our cuisine, the social consciousness, and the surprise of natural beauty & great weather.
- v. A healthy discussion followed. Board members made suggestions on how we increase our effectiveness in telling Oakland's story. The suggestions were well-received. All were reminded that the ability to execute the suggestions is tempered by VO's decreased revenue.

d. Digital Marketing

- i. We continue regularly scheduled social media posting of itinerary blogs, inspiring images, re-openings: attractions, indoor dining, events and other establishments, re-sharing partner and city updates.
- ii. We continue to send out monthly e-newsletters to our leisure audience. A 'Day In Oakland' IG story was cited as an example of an effective post.

e. Partnerships

- i. Augmented Reality Activation, Un-Boarding initiative from City Hall, and Involvement of Oakland's youth in Art, were all discussed as part of VO's Re-opening projects.
- ii. Paul Tormey commented that the lack of Measure C PR "partnership" engagement as surfaced by Jean Paul would be a message/symptom of something deeper that should be investigated quickly.

f. Sales...Meetings & Groups

- i. Leads & convention services are in progress! There is a return of small meetings with high interest in outdoor meeting spaces, and promising leads in BIDs proposals, ie Synbiobeta with possible hundreds of attendees in October 2021.
- ii. Our recovery plan re-launches VO's meetings brand campaign to get Oakland back in front of meeting planners by sharing destination information; how hotels & venues are going to keep attendees safe, and how businesses are adapting post-COVID, etc.

VI. VO Recovery Initiatives

- a. Board members made several recommendations regarding re-opening.

VII. Audit Committee

- a. Prior 3 years of Audit are complete. The current year's audit, 2020-2021, will begin as soon as the fiscal year wraps up. Audit Committee Chair, Mark H shared a desire to make sure that VO leadership should address any concerns detailed in the Audit.

VIII. Strategic Operations Committee had no report and has to be set up.

IX. Old Business – no comments

X. New Business

- a. June 15th Re-opening was discussed.

XI. Closed Session

- a. Search Committee update was presented
- b. Discussion on the need to establish a Nominating Committee for addressing Board changes

XII. Adjournment

- a. A Gyasi adjourned the Meeting at 6:10.