

SAN FRANCISCO PENINSULA TOURISM MARKETING DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS BOARD MEETING
Embassy Suites Waterfront SFO
150 Anza Blvd., Burlingame, CA 94010
Thursday, March 20, 2025
3:00 p.m. PST

MEETING MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Ongerth called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

Board members present: Lisa Kershner, Casper van Eldik Thieme, Jonathan Powers, Blanca Rivera, Adora Manalo, Daniel Herbst, Yakub Yakubi, Christina Ongerth, Kevin Kretsch, Anthony Buralli, Adrian Vasquez, James Wardell, Randy Johnson (*joined meeting in progress*), Melissa Andretta (*joined meeting in progress*)

Board members absent: Reggie Kumar, Cameron Palmer, Daisy Li, Pravin Punjiya, Christopher Holbrook, Prativ Patel, Simone Harms, Mitch Postel, Christopher Calo

Guests in attendance: John Hutar, President & CEO; Gina Atwood, Vice President & COO; Maggie Lang, Chief Sales & Marketing Officer

INTRODUCTIONS:

Christina Ongerth reported that members of the audience are welcome to address the Board on items on the agenda and items not on the agenda. In accordance with our antitrust policy, there will be no discussions regarding future prices, pricing policies, or competitive practices.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ALL ITEMS:

None

ACTION ITEMS:

1) Consent Agenda: The items on the consent agenda are the minutes of the December 12 Board Meeting, the minutes of the February 12 Board Meeting, the December 31, 2024, Financial Reports, and the February 28, 2025, Financial Reports. There was no request to remove any item. Anthony Buralli moved to approve the consent agenda. Kevin Kretsch seconded the motion. Yes: 12, No: 0, Abstain: 0. (*The vote does not include Melissa Andretta and Randy Johnson, who had not yet arrived.*)

2) Sonesta Hotels San Jose/Milpitas: John Hutar reported that former Board member Robert Brand is the Complex Area General Manager for Sonesta San Jose/Milpitas and Sonesta Silicon Valley. When he saw that Ameswell had joined, he expressed interest in joining the TMD. The Board discussed what parameters we should have for allowing additional properties to join the TMD. There was concern that the properties are much farther south and could cause conflict with other associations in the area. Anthony Buralli moved to do a competitive analysis and then determine the criteria to apply to properties that want to join the TMD in the future. Kevin Kretsch seconded the motion. Yes: 13, No: 0, Abstain: 0. *(The vote includes Randy Johnson. Melissa Andretti had not yet arrived.)* Kevin Kretsch moved to report to Sonesta that we are looking into it, but we can't accept at this time. Casper van Eldik seconded the motion. Yes: 13, No: 0, Abstain: 0. *(The vote includes Randy Johnson. Melissa Andretti had not yet arrived.)*

3) Bay Area Host Committee: John Hutar reported that the Bay Area Host Committee is a sports commission working to attract sporting events to the Bay Area. They are requesting a five-year commitment from us for a total of \$ 300,000. Kevin Kretsch moved to approve the five-year commitment for a total of \$ 300,000. Anthony Buralli seconded the motion. Yes 13, No 0, Abstain 0. *(Melissa Andretti had not yet arrived.)*

INFORMATION ITEMS:

4) Margaret Doyle Vs. Hyatt Corporation, SMCCVB, Unlimited Biking: John Hutar reported that the San Mateo County Convention & Visitors Bureau has been named in a lawsuit along with Hyatt Hotels and Unlimited Biking. The details have been turned over to our insurance agency.

5) Board Goals/Staff KPIs John Hutar reminded the Board of the goals they set at the August Board Planning Session. Maggie Lang shared our Q1 scorecard, noting that group room nights booked are behind schedule, but we are confident that with the entire team on board, we will meet the numbers. She also shared that we are well on our way in booking leisure rooms. We have reached 12,000 thus far this year, with an annual goal of 100,000 per year. Partner referrals from our website, social growth, and website traffic are all tracking ahead of last year. Gina Atwood shared that all mandatory harassment training has been completed, as have the annual performance reviews for staff. Our employee handbook is now being updated by legal. The annual audit is contracted and scheduled to start after April 15. *(Melissa Andretti arrived.)*

6) San Mateo County Event Center: Christina Ongerth shared that County Supervisor Jackie Speier reached out to John Hutar to join a meeting with SAMCEDA and the County Manager regarding the plans for the San Mateo County Event Center. John Hutar reported that we sent a letter to Speier and will have further conversations with her.

7) Bayside 101 Concert Event: John Hutar reported that we are the presenting sponsors of the upcoming Bayside 101 Music Festival.

8) Annual Meeting + Upcoming Events: John Hutar shared that we have just under 200 people signed up to attend the Annual Tourism Luncheon. He encouraged all Board Members to attend. John Hutar also encouraged hotels to send a representative to the upcoming San Mateo County Career Technical Education Advisory Meeting. They will be addressing the needs of the hospitality workforce. John Hutar also reported that he and Maggie Lang will be part of a panel to discuss tourism at the Progress Seminar. John Hutar will be leading the panel discussion.

9) Board Advisory Council + 2025 Strategic Planning: John Hutar shared the names of the committed Board Advisory Council members and noted that they will meet in May. He also shared the feedback from our first focus group, which was with the Directors of Sales. We realized that our information is not reaching them, so we have established a set meeting to report out to them following every Board Meeting.

10) Staff Report: John Hutar shared that we have two new staff members, a Business Partnerships and Community Engagement Manager and a Sales Coordinator. Maggie Lang shared our new investment with Cvent that will result in our hotels being included in their suggested offerings. John Hutar shared that we have contracted with Master Connection Sales to provide training for our sales team and a half-day session for Directors of Sales at Group A hotels. Maggie Lang reported that we have seen a significant uptick in RFPs being submitted through our website. We attribute that to our investment in marketing targeted at group sales.

11) Board Updates: Melissa Andretta reported that they saw a softening last week from Canada, with one carrier pulling its flight. They are also seeing a softening from European countries. Asia continues to do well, and they are expecting a good summer at the airport. They are expecting a 6% increase in international traffic and a 9% increase in domestic traffic. Melissa Andretta also reported that they are seeing more connecting flights rather than SFO being the final destination.

John Hutar reported that Benjamin Duverge is no longer at the Grand Bay.

12) Agenda items for future Board meetings: Continue the discussion regarding the criteria for adding properties outside our current TMD.

The meeting was adjourned without objection at 5:03 p.m.

Approved _____

Date _____