



# MINUTES

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## Visit SLO CAL Advisory Committee

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#### Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 1, 2017

3:00pm

Avila Lighthouse Suites

550 Front St, Avila Beach, CA 93424

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER: Clint Pearce

**PRESENT:** Jim Bergman, Matthew Bronson, Lynn Compton, Red Davis, Tom Frutchey, Barbara Harmon, Heidi Harmon, Trevor Keith, Jim Lewis, Katie Lichtig, Steve Martin, Rachelle Rickard, Craig Schmollinger, Mariam Shah, Ed Waage

**ABSENT:** Tom O'Malley

**STAFF PRESENT:** Chuck Davison, Brooke Burnham, Michael Wambolt, Brendan Pringle, Pam Roberts, Jordan Carson, Chie Evans

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** John Arnold, Aaron Graves, Jay Jamison, Sarah Maggelet, Noreen Martin, Sam Miller, Clint Pearce, Val Seymour, Roger Wightman

**MARKETING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Terrie Banish, Molly Cano, Lori Keller Heather Muran,

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Call to Order at 3:07 pm.

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

None.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### CONSENT AGENDA

#### 3. Approval of December 8, 2016 Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

**ACTION:** Moved by Waage/Frutchey to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

**Motion carried: 15:0**

#### BUSINESS ITEMS

#### 4. Funding and Allocation

Pringle provided a breakdown of the FY2016/17 Re-forecasted Budget, and noted that it is based on 14 months of revenue due to VSC's switch from cash to accrual based accounting. Annual fully loaded staffing costs for all approved positions represents 15.3 percent of the budget. Pringle also reviewed FY2016/17 TMD funding received to date through March 2017, and provided an overview of staffing. He gave a breakdown of the FY2017/18 budget, approved by the Board in May. Annual fully loaded staffing costs for all approved positions in FY 2017/18 represents 19.9% of the budget, and Marketing, Travel Trade and Communications make up 80 percent of the budget. Pringle reminded the Committee about the importance of on-time assessment remittance and usage of the remittance template for documentation purposes, and encouraged the communities to use ACH for payment.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion. Lewis said he appreciated how VSC listed the portion of the budget going to Marketing, Communications and Travel Trade.

#### 5. District Highlights to Date

Davison outlined the goals of the Tourism Marketing District. Davison provided an overview of brand development, highlighting the research that informed the new SLO CAL brand. He described the target personas, and showcased the SLO CAL brand video and newly-attained 8k aerial footage of the county.

Davison noted that VSC has invested \$245,000 to activate the Seattle market, and that Alaska Airlines allows SLO CAL passengers to bring a case of wine home through their Wine Flies Free program. On June 8, 2017, United Airlines will launch direct service from Denver. VSC has allocated \$215,000 for activation of this market. Davison also provided an update on the Conference Center Feasibility Plan, noting that a detailed report was released on May 8, 2017. He presented some of the key findings of the report.

Davison provided an overview of VSC's Highway 1 Closure communication efforts. Wambolt gave an update on VSC's efforts to target international markets, including China and the UK/Ireland. Davison just returned from the Visit California Mexico & Canada CEO Mission, which included heads of state and CEOs. Wambolt recapped the FAMs, trade shows and sales missions from the last 6 months.

Burnham recapped some of the major strategic marketing initiatives. She discussed the SAVOR on the Road activations at the San Diego Bay Wine + Food Festival and the Seattle Wine and Food Experience, both of which provided a great firsthand experience for potential guests. She recapped the highlights of VSC's sponsorship of AMGEN Tour of California, noting the value of this partnership.

Burnham showcased the Alaska Airlines *Beyond* in-flight magazine advertorial co-op and creative from VSC's paid media campaign. Burnham noted that during the month of April, the VSC website reached 510,000 visitors, with much of the traffic coming from VSC's target markets. Burnham highlighted the features of VSC's interactive website landing page and played VSC's year in review video.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion. B. Harmon asked about the follow-up process on travel trade appointments and leads. Wambolt noted that leads are sent to stakeholders at large, and that VSC follows up with leads to make sure they are able to make connections with SLO CAL stakeholders. Frutchey asked about the audience for the year in review video, and Davison responded that it was produced for VSC's stakeholders, constituents and members. Frutchey also observed that there is not an adequate awareness of what tourism brings to local communities, and asked about ways to show the public the benefit of tourism. Davison directed him to the VSC Report Card that was shared with the Committee at the meeting. Frutchey asked if there was anything he could do to help fill VSC's open positions. Davison noted that VSC will continue to reach out as there are opportunities. Waage complimented VSC's efforts, and pointed out that the organization's advantage right now is that it's more nimble.

## **6. Moving Forward**

Wambolt noted that VSC is working to translate website and sales materials, will offer more opportunities to participate in educational, training and sales missions, and will continue to advance SLO CAL's unique lodging mix. Burnham discussed VSC's long-term strategy for Highway 1 messaging and marketing, as well as its strategies for brand development and marketing partnerships, including one with The Clymb. Burnham reviewed VSC's six target markets. She noted that VSC will be expanding its SAVOR and large-reach event activations, will hire a new national PR firm and key market PR representation and will be launching a new SLO CAL website. Davison discussed VSC's efforts to attain new air service from Dallas.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion. Frutchev asked about the key areas for opportunity moving forward. Davison noted that the key areas of opportunity lie in capturing the international market. Lewis noted that the main question VSC should consider is how the one percent VSC is spending adds value. Waage pointed out the need for better ground transportation in SLO CAL.

## **7. Open Questions and Discussion**

Davison requested feedback on the following open questions:

1. In your conversations, what are you hearing Visit SLO CAL is doing well?
2. In your conversations, what criticisms are you hearing of Visit SLO CAL and what areas of improvement should we consider?
3. In your specific communities, what can Visit SLO CAL do for you?

He also noted that there are two items that VSC would like the Committee to share with government officials and the League of California Cities. The Committee can continue to encourage state officials and Caltrans to complete the work on re-opening Highway 1 as early as possible. Also, he asked that they remind congressional officials about the importance of Brand USA as the national DMO attracting visitors to the USA.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion. Martin noted that a lot of Paso Robles residents aren't familiar with VSC, and that VSC needs to sell the tourism industry to residents. Wightman added that the communities can do a better job of communicating this impact, and Waage agreed that it should be the cities' and County's responsibility to get the message out. Davis complimented VSC and noted that Morro Bay supports its efforts. Waage asked if smaller properties are seeing the value that VSC offers. Davison noted that this is a continuous effort, and that Wambolt has been conducting outreach efforts. Bergman and B. Harmon noted that Arroyo Grande's TBID currently works with a marketing firm from the Los Angeles area, and asked how they can work closer with VSC. Davison responded that the Marketing Committee seat for Arroyo Grande has remained vacant, and encouraged them to fill this seat.

## **8. Tourism Impact**

Davison highlighted some of the key tourism impact numbers for SLO CAL, including guest spending, tourism jobs and the tax revenue generated by tourism. Davison also asked the Committee to save the date for the next Advisory Committee meeting on December 7, 2017.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 5:08 pm.