



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Advisory Committee

Visit SLO CAL Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, December 7, 2017

3:00pm

Embassy Suites

333 Madonna Road, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

1. CALL TO ORDER: Clint Pearce

PRESENT: Matthew Bronson, Scott Collins, Tom Frutchey, Barbara Harmon, Heidi Harmon, Erik Howell, Derek Johnson, Jim Lewis, Steve Martin, Guy Savage, Mariam Shah

ABSENT: Jim Bergman, Lynn Compton, Red Davis, Heather Moreno, Rachele Rickard

STAFF PRESENT: Chuck Davison, Brooke Burnham, Michael Wambolt, Brendan Pringle, Pam Roberts, Jordan Carson, Kimberly Headington

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Arnold, Aaron Graves, Jim Hamilton, Jay Jamison, Sarah Maggelet, Clint Pearce, Val Seymour, Roger Wightman

MARKETING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Jim Allen, Audrey Arellano, Molly Cano, Cheryl Cuming, Gordon Jackson, Jennifer Little, Jill Tweedie

Call to Order at 3:10 pm.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of June 1, 2017 Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by Lewis/Bronson to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion carried: 11:0

BUSINESS ITEMS

4. Funding and Allocation

Pringle provided a breakdown of the FY2017/18 Budget, noting that 80 percent of funds are directed toward marketing, communications and travel trade. Annual fully loaded staffing costs for all approved positions represents 20.4 percent of the budget. Pringle also reviewed FY2017/18 TMD funding received to-date through November 2017, and provided an overview of staffing. Visit SLO CAL completed its second successful audit under the Management District Plan for FY 2016/17, which found no material weaknesses or deficiencies in internal controls. The mid-year budget re-forecast will be presented to the Board at its January 17, 2018 meeting for approval. Pringle reminded the Committee about the importance of on-time assessment remittance and encouraged the communities to use ACH for payment.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – None.

5. District Highlights to Date

Davison outlined the goals of the Tourism Marketing District. Davison provided an overview of VSC's Highway One communication efforts, including meetings with government officials like Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom, its partnership with Visit California and its involvement in the Best Buddies Challenge. He recapped the success of new flight service from Denver and Seattle and described the SLO CAL banners that welcome passengers in the new airport terminal.

Wambolt provided an update on VSC's travel trade efforts, noting the international markets it is focusing on: UK/Ireland, China and Mexico. Wambolt highlighted the trade shows, sales missions and other representation VSC has in these key markets. The Committee viewed examples of the sales materials that VSC has translated. Wambolt also noted VSC's efforts to support the unique lodging mix, and its work in the meetings and conferences sphere.

Burnham highlighted some of Film SLO CAL (the Film Commission)'s key statistics for 2017 to-date and called out some of the recent productions filmed in SLO CAL. She also recapped some of VSC's major strategic marketing initiatives, including its SAVOR on the Road activation at the San Diego Bay Wine + Food Festival, which provided a great firsthand experience for potential guests. The Committee viewed some of the 8K aerial footage that VSC obtained as it builds its assets. Burnham described its social media aggregation co-op with other local DMOs and offered a breakdown of the agencies that VSC currently partners with: Goodway Group (media agency), Turner PR (public relations agency), BCF (brand and campaign creative design) and Simpleview (website, SEO, CRM and extranet agency). Burnham provided an overview of VSC's Brand Lift Study and the monthly arrivals that the organization has tracked through Arrivalist thus far in its spring and fall campaigns. She outlined VSC's target markets and showcased some of the key metrics and creative from VSC's Fall Campaign.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion. Lewis commented on how he always hoped VSC would be leveraging the opportunities that communities can't do on their own, and commended VSC for providing these kinds of opportunities in abundance. Frutchet asked what VSC is doing to counter the negative perception conveyed at the federal level to international visitors. Davison and Wambolt discussed how VSC works with VCA under the tourism funnel to combat these negative perceptions including VSC's trips to international markets this year. Davison specifically noted his participation in a Mexico-Canada CEO mission as part of VCA's All Dreams Welcome initiative to ensure neighboring countries they are welcome in California. Frutchet asked about the insights gained from the Fall Campaign data. Davison responded that the data helps to optimize the message that we are serving consumers and identify the time that it takes to activate target markets and noted the details are shared with the Marketing Committee.

6. Moving Forward

Davison noted that, with the passage of Prop 64, VSC has taken on the role of educating constituents on what to consider as they operate in an approved Prop 64 California. CalTravel is creating a one-sheet of "items to consider" based on the learnings discovered from other states with legal recreational cannabis, and VSC is currently vetting eight questions with

Visit California to provide additional direction. Davison added that, at the present time, VSC does not accept or promote members in this space, and will continue to monitor the direction of our local communities and VCA before asserting a position on membership and marketing of cannabis-related activities for the future, as directed by our Board.

Burnham outlined some of the key features of VSC's upcoming spring marketing campaign and noted how it will be supported by a new website that is set to launch in February. VSC invested in a photographer to obtain high-resolution exterior photos of SLO CAL's 170+ lodging properties, which will be made available to the lodging partners. Davison added that this was an opportunity to give back to SLO CAL's smaller properties who don't currently have these high resolution digital assets available to market their establishment. Burnham noted that VSC will be taking SAVOR to Taste Washington—a new activation for the organization.

Wambolt provided an overview of upcoming travel trade efforts, including digital prospecting, education, training and sales missions and a continued international focus. He noted that VisaVue data helps VSC select which countries to target.

Davison outlined the process, purpose, timeline and estimated cost of VSC's initiative to develop a long-term Destination Development Plan and noted that the organization is working toward a destination security educational summit in the first quarter of 2018 to educate the community on this timely topic. Davison outlined VSC's strategies for expanding air service development. He also reminded the Committee that its members can always feel free to use VSC as a resource to assist with tourism messaging.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion. Frutchev said he believes the destination security summit is a great idea, but that VSC shouldn't have to do it all alone. Johnson noted how San Luis Obispo is participating in regional training on the topic. Frutchev mentioned that Paso Robles is working on an agreement with Airbnb to collect TOT and assessment funds. Shah agreed that it is right for VSC to pause on the marketing and membership of cannabis-related activities, but requested that this process doesn't come to a complete halt. Davison noted that VSC wants to act strategically in this space and that it's important that the organization doesn't ignore the issue. Pearce added that VSC's Board wants to make sure that the first step is the right step. Frutchev asked how VSC will achieve consensus in with the Destination Development Plan. Davison noted that the consensus will be in the programs that the stakeholders want to pursue. He added that it is important for all communities to be involved. Johnson asked about the timeline of the plan, and Davison responded that a contract would begin in March or April of 2018.

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?
4. In your specific communities, what are you doing to take advantage of and better expand the impact of tourism?

Davison also asked the Committee members to continue to encourage state officials and Caltrans to complete the work on re-opening Highway 1 as early as possible.

Public Comment – Cheryl Cuming, CBID, noted that VSC has done a great job of bringing the communities together and creating opportunities that communities aren't able to fund on their own. She added that VSC has brought the economic impact of tourism to the forefront as seen by its visibility in the Central Coast Economic Forecast. Jennifer Little, Morro Bay Tourism Bureau, said she would love to see the film commission grow even more.

Committee Discussion. H. Harmon noted that in the letters she's received from people who have visited the county, the feedback has all been positive. Johnson noted that VSC's analytics have been outstanding, and commended VSC for sharing it with the communities. He added that the county's air service development couldn't have been possible without VSC's

partnership and that VSC's crisis communication efforts on the Highway 1 closure have been critical. Frutche noted that VSC has successfully addressed key issues and keeps ramping up its efforts. Lewis complimented VSC on how it has assembled its structure. Bronson noted that VSC's brand marketing presence is outstanding on all levels and that VSC represents the truest sense of regionalism in the County, showing the uniqueness of all the communities with a regional lens. Collins said he was blown away by the sophistication of VSC's operation.

B. Harmon noted that when she tells people about SLOCAL.com, some get it confused with the SLO EVC. Shah noted how she would love to work with VSC on getting more Grover Beach restaurants to participate in Restaurant Month. Johnson asked about VSC's "hook" for smaller operators to get involved and connected.

Johnson noted that VSC's shoulder season efforts are greatly appreciated by San Luis Obispo. Davison pointed out that San Luis Obispo is doing a great job of incorporating the SLO CAL brand into its messaging.

8. Tourism Impact

Davison highlighted some of the key tourism impact numbers for SLO CAL, including TOT as a percentage of each community's general fund, tourism industry job numbers (as reported in the Central Coast Economic Forecast), the 2018 tourism forecast (reported by CBRE Hotels) and key growth trends.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:09 pm.