



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Advisory Committee

Visit SLO CAL Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 7, 2018

3:00pm

Embassy Suites

333 Madonna Road, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

1. CALL TO ORDER: Clint Pearce

PRESENT: Jim Bergman, Marcia Guthrie, Barbara Harmon, Heidi Harmon, Wade Horton, Derek Johnson, Steve Martin, Tom O'Malley, Rachelle Rickard, Mariam Shah

ABSENT: Matthew Bronson, Scott Collins, Lynn Compton, Red Davis, Tom Frutchey, Jim Lewis

STAFF PRESENT: Chuck Davison, Brooke Burnham, Christine Robertson, Michael Wambolt, Keba Baird, Brendan Pringle, Yarina Valverde, Jordan Carson

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: John Arnold, Kathy Bonelli, Jim Hamilton, Jay Jamison, Clint Pearce, Val Seymour, Amar Sohi

MARKETING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Jocelyn Brennan, Molly Cano, Cheryl Cuming, Jill Tweedie

Call to Order at 3:05 pm.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of December 7, 2017 Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by B. Harmon/Johnson to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion carried: 9:0
H. Harmon arrived after the vote.

BUSINESS ITEMS

4. Funding and Allocation

Pringle provided a breakdown of the FY 2017/18 Re-Forecasted Budget, noting that 82 percent of funds are directed toward marketing, communications and travel trade. Annual fully loaded staffing costs for all approved positions represents 20.6 percent of the budget. Pringle also provided an overview of staffing and discussed some of the major updates on the FY2018/19 budget process and TMD assessment collection. He reviewed the FY 2018/19 Budget, noting that 73 percent of funds will be directed towards marketing, communications and travel trade, and that annual fully loaded staffing costs for all approved positions represents 25.1 percent of the budget. Pringle reminded the Committee about the importance of on-time assessment remittance and encouraged the communities to use ACH for payment. He noted that this process is currently being used by the County of San Luis Obispo, City of Pismo Beach and the City of Grover Beach.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Bergman asked for clarification on the use of ACH.

5. District Highlights to Date

Davison outlined the goals of the Tourism Marketing District. He noted the strategic partnerships involved in air service development and recapped the success of new flight service from Denver and Seattle. Robertson provided an overview of VSC's Destination Management Strategy efforts and recent updates. Davison recapped Highway 1 communication efforts, including advocacy with government officials and support for North Coast partners. VSC is working with Visit California on a re-opening activation at IPW 2018, an international tradeshow, as well.

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, familiarization (FAM) trips and other representation VSC has had in the Tour & Travel market, as well as its targeting of the Meetings & Conferences market. Wambolt also noted that VSC produced professional photos for RV parks to feature on their website listings and to be used for future marketing efforts.

Burnham recapped some of VSC's major strategic marketing initiatives, including its SAVOR on the Road activation at the San Diego Bay Wine + Food Festival and Taste Washington, which provided a great firsthand experience for potential guests. She offered a breakdown of the agencies with which VSC currently partners, and noted that VSC's Life's Too Beautiful to Rush campaign won the Visit California Poppy Award for 2018 Best Digital Campaign, beating out destinations like San Diego, who have a much larger budget. She discussed the success of VSC's first digital ad co-op, earned media efforts and the launch of VSC's new website: SLOCAL.com. She highlighted some of Film SLO CAL (the Film Commission)'s key statistics for 2017 and called out some of the recent productions filmed in SLO CAL. She also noted that SLO CAL (Pismo Beach) was featured on the front cover of Locations Magazine, a film location scouting publication, this year. The Committee viewed VSC's FY2017/18 Year in Review video.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Johnson asked if VSC was able to measure the impact of additional air travel converted to dollars. Davison noted that VSC is preparing to release an economic impact analysis which will have a robust detail of economic impact of the local tourism industry.

6. Moving Forward

Davison noted VSC's continued efforts in air service development, including VSC's meeting with American Airlines at their headquarters in June to discuss Dallas service. New service to Dallas would open SLO CAL as a one-stop destination to Rome, Sao Paulo, Madrid and several other key international cities. Davison discussed the next steps on the Destination Management Strategy, noting that the final report is due Spring 2019, and that VSC will partner and collaborate with local communities on implementation.

VSC is collaborating with Visit California, Monterey County CVB and the Central Coast Tourism Council on a fall reopening campaign and celebration for Highway 1. VSC is currently pitching media and travel trade about the reopening. Davison

provided an overview of upcoming travel trade efforts, including the translation of website and email marketing materials, education, small and mid-size partner engagement and the expanded use of resources like SLO CAL Connection, VSC's extranet. Davison reviewed the major strategic marketing initiatives VSC is planning for FY2018/19.

Davison reminded the Committee that the Tourism Marketing District sunsets June 30, 2020 without extension, and noted that the renewal process will likely begin Fall 2018, with finalization at the County Board of Supervisors by December 2019. Davison asked the Committee how many hearings each will require before final hearings at the Board of Supervisors, noting that VSC would like to understand how this renewal process will look like in each community.

Public Comment – Jocelyn Brennan, Arroyo Grande & Grover Beach Chamber of Commerce, asked if there is a process outlined for DMO hearings. Davison responded that every community is different, and that each has to confirm the renewal before the Board of Supervisors begins its process.

Committee Discussion. B. Harmon asked if VSC has heard of issues with the air service itself, now that the number of seats have increased. Davison noted that he hadn't heard of any issues. O'Malley noted that VSC has been extremely collaborative and has reached out to the smaller communities, making it easy for them to participate in its efforts. Shah noted that, on the TMD Renewal process, Grover Beach would just need to put the TMD renewal on its agenda. Johnson noted that the decision would first go through the TBID Board and then City Council for approval and suggested VSC work with the individual community TBIDs as a starting point.

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 your communities doing to take advantage of and better expand the impact of tourism?
5. In your specific communities, has there been any further negotiation with Airbnb on a collection contract, similar to that of the County of San Luis Obispo?

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 – None.

Committee Discussion. Horton complimented VSC on its metric-based decision making, noting that stakeholders can take VSC's work to their constituents and say it is value-added. Sohi said he appreciated the effort VSC has made on Highway 1 advocacy. Johnson noted that VSC has been critical in helping the local TBIDs. Rickard noted that FAM tours are making a difference for Atascadero. Martin shared some of the positive feedback he received from Danna Stroud, Executive Director of Travel Paso.

O'Malley noted that internal transportation remains an issue that VSC can address. He added that SLO CAL's assistance in preparing the region for major large events (parking, transportation and venue development) would be beneficial. Pearce noted that VSC is fortunate to have Ron DeCarli of SLOCOG on our Destination Management Strategy Steering Committee.

Shah noted that the Air Pollution Control District is working through the settlement agreement with the State Parks on air quality and that they could really use VSC's help in bringing the focus to the parks not closing and the improvements being made. H. Harmon asked what VSC is doing to make sure visitors are feeling welcome and supported in SLO CAL. Davison discussed VSC's involvement in Visit California's All Dreams Welcome campaign and sales mission to Mexico and Canada, and VSC's diversification of marketing materials.

Johnson noted that San Luis Obispo is working through a contract with AirBnb. Bergman noted that Arroyo Grande has started the process, but it will be several months before a contract is signed. Rickard said Atascadero won't do a contract, but is enacting more concerted code enforcement; the TBID hired a company which found 30-40 VRBOs that were not legal. Shah said that Grover Beach could really use the guidance on a vacation rental ordinance. They have not started the process, and would love a copy of the contract that the County used.

8. Tourism Impact

Staff distributed VSC's end of year scorecard, as Davison highlighted some of the key tourism impact numbers for SLO CAL.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion. B. Harmon asked if RV stays were included in the economic impact numbers for "camping." Davison noted that it was, and that currently, ten RV parks pay TOT.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:09 pm.