



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors Annual Meeting
Wednesday, May 31, 2023
8:30 am – 11:30 am
Embassy Suites, 333 Madonna Rd, San Luis Obispo, CA

1. CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT: Clint Pearce, Vic Popp, Amar Sohi, Amit Patel, Bryan Bonelli, Nipool Patel, Jed Bickel, Pragna Patel-Mueller, Aaron Graves, Hamish Marshall, Toni LeGras-Price, Mark Eads, Britt Shuford,

STAFF PRESENT: Cathy Cartier, Chuck Davison, Emily Rudge, Annie Braunschweig, Cynthia Gonzalez

ABSENT: Hemant Patel, Sam Miller

Call to order at 8:34am

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thank you for attending the Annual Bash; reminder of Advisory Committee Meeting tomorrow; reminder of EDI Training on August 30; Save the Date for Destination Summit on October 5.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 3. Approval of March 29, 2023 Board of Directors Minutes**
- 4. Approval of March 2023 Visit SLO CAL Financials**
- 5. Approval of April 2023 Visit SLO CAL Financials**
- 6. Re-approval of Public Policy Platform**
- 7. Re-approval of EDI Statement**

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion – None.

ACTION: Moved by **Pearce/N. Patel** to approve the Consent Agenda.

Motion carried: 12:0:1 (Patel- Mueller abstained)

CEO REPORT

8. Visit SLO CAL CEO Report

Davison highlighted the STR report for the month of April, noting that occupancy was down in some areas whereas in many areas ADR was the opposite. Davison shared a recap of CalTravel Advocacy Day and thanked LeGras-Price for attending as well. Davison shared one new bill being proposed: SB 584 which would add a 15% additional tax on short-term rentals and stressed the importance of obtaining opposition support due to its negative impact on the tourism industry. Davison highlighted the advocacy issue surrounding a possible wind energy farm coming to SLO CAL and noted that feedback may soon be requested from the Executive Committee and Board on what position the tourism industry of SLO CAL should take. Davison shared an update on the new interim County Administrative Officer, John Nilon and noted that he will be in attendance at tomorrow's Advisory Committee meeting. Davison shared an update on the Cal Poly EIM Department regarding a leadership change: Joey Gray will be stepping down as the head of the EIM department, returning to a professor role in August. Davison highlighted an update on the AG TBID as it has moved from oversight by the South County Chamber to the Parks & Recreation department and Sheridan Bohlken will now serve as Arroyo Grande's tourism leader on the VSC Marketing Committee. Davison shared an update on the SLO CAL Welcome numbers and noted the changes to the Board meeting dates and location beginning in the new fiscal year and shared the meeting dates for the next year. Davison noted the six-month engagement with Michael Gunther and Collaboration, sharing that the internal work has begun and the external work with the Executive Committee will begin in early June. Davison shared a staffing update regarding the VP of Community Engagement & Advocacy role which has been filled by Antonio "Tony" Turretto Ramos and he'll join the team on June 12. Davison highlighted the non-trade items of significance at IPW and noted his upcoming travel schedule through August.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion

Business Items

9. Board Member Selection Process

Davison reviewed the Board Member application process which was open from April 4 – May 3, noting that there were three appointed seats up for re-appointment (Jim Hamilton- County seat, Hemant Patel- Morro Bay seat, Amar Sohi- Atascadero seat) and two current Board members reapplied for elected seats (Aaron Graves, EverlyGrove Brokers and Pragna Patel- Mueller, Samata Management, Inc). Davison provided a reminder of the remaining open seats: B&B, Arroyo Grande, RV Park, Grover Beach. Davison reviewed the two new applications received: Bram Winter, Moonstone Hotels; Denis Volic, Hotel SLO.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by **N. Patel/ Popp** to re-elect Aaron Graves (at-large seat) to the Visit SLO CAL Board, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion carried: 12:0:1 (Graves abstained)

ACTION: Moved by **Pearce/ N. Patel** to elect Pragna Patel- Mueller (at-large seat) to the Visit SLO CAL Board, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion carried: 12:0:1 (Patel- Mueller abstained)

10. Executive Committee Seats

Davison reviewed the current structure of the Executive Committee seats: Chair- Aaron Graves, Vice Chair- Amar Sohi, Secretary- Mark Eads, Treasurer- Clint Pearce, Past Chair: Hemant Patel. Davison shared that the Executive Committee is expanding to seven seats in order to create a stronger foundation and add additional perspective, and the Committee is recommending Toni LeGras-Price and Hamish Marshall to join effective July 1, 2023. Graves reviewed the current structure and requested feedback on what the new slate should be.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion. Graves shared his desire to move into the Past Chair seat, commenting that the terms are typically one year and his schedule is now too robust for the demands of the Chair seat. Sohi noted he is not ready to take the Chair seat and would like to stay in the Vice Chair seat but recommended Eads for the Chair seat. Eads voiced he felt honored to be considered and would be happy to take the Chair seat.

ACTION: Moved by **N. Patel/ Bickel** to approve Toni LeGras-Price and Hamish Marshall to join the Executive Committee effective July 1 as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion carried: 11:0:2 (LeGras- Price and Marshall abstained)

ACTION: Moved by **Graves/ Marshall** to approve the following slate: Chair- Mark Eads, Vice Chair- Amar Sohi, Secretary- Clint Pearce, Treasurer- Hemant Patel, Past Chair- Aaron Graves.

Motion carried: 13:0

11. Marketing Committee Seats

Davison shared the details of the recent Marketing Committee application process which was open from April 3 – May 3; a total of 6 new applications were received plus 2 of the 3 elected seats that were up for renewal (Ashlee Akers and Joel Peterson; Audrey Arellano chose not to reapply). Davison reviewed the candidate that the Marketing Committee recommended to elect: Lydia Bates, Hotel SLO and shared the Executive Committee's recommendation to hold the seat open and approve the re-election of Ashlee Akers and Joel Peterson.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by **Eads/ N. Patel** to re-elect Joel Peterson and Ashlee Akers to the Visit SLO CAL Marketing Committee and hold the additional seat open, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion carried: 13:0

12. FY 24 Business & Marketing Plan Overview

Davison noted that the draft of the FY 24 Business & Marketing Plan was included in the digital agenda packet for review in concept. Davison noted the key strategies that inform the overall vision: SD 2026, ESC 2050, and the 4 organizational objectives. Cartier shared a recap of the ROI on the Brand Awareness Study which was done last year and will be done again in July of this year to understand if SLO CAL has strengthened familiarity in markets which scored low. Cartier shared a new roadmap for an integrated storytelling framework and highlighted areas of focus for new marketing assets & activations. Cartier highlighted the primary audience for FY 24, budget allocations for media (paid, earned, and owned), and areas of focus for partnerships, events, sales, ESC 2050, EDI, and advocacy.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion

ACTION: Moved by **Pearce/Marshall** to recommend approval of the FY 2024 Business & Marketing Plan in concept as presented and recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion carried: 13:0

13. Review of FY 24 Budget

Braunschweig presented the proposed FY 2023/24 TMD revenue projections, noting an estimated 3.9% growth YOY, bringing Visit SLO CAL to a flat TMD Revenue total as was FY 22. Braunschweig provided a high-level overview of items of focus and funding from each department: general & administrative, industry research & resources, sales, PR and communications, marketing, community engagement & advocacy/ESC 2050, staffing & benefits.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion

ACTION: Moved by **Sohi/Shuford** to approve the Visit SLO CAL FY 2024 Budget as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion carried: 13:0

14. Resident Sentiment Survey

Erin Francis- Cummings, President & CEO of Destination Analysts presented the final findings from the 2023 Visit SLO CAL Resident Sentiment Study. Francis- Cummings reviewed in-depth analysis of: the resident profiles, community sentiment, tourism's economic impact, tourism's personal impact on residents, community impact, community highlights, and short-term rentals. Some of the key takeaways included: 2,520 people were polled and only adult residents of the county and of the total residents polled, 84% were transplants and 15% were natives; the top reasons for moving to SLO CAL were pace of life and climate; the top reason for continuing to live in SLO CAL was good quality of life, and 66% felt that tourism is making their community a better place to live.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion

ACTION: Moved by **Marshall/ LeGras-Price** to accept the 2023 Resident Sentiment Study as presented.

Motion carried: 13:0

15. Oceano Dunes Stewardship Study

Chris Fair, President & CEO of Resonance Consultancy presented the findings of the Oceano Dunes Stewardship Study. The study consisted of three objectives: quantify the direct and indirect economic impact of the Oceano Dunes SVRA, identify a range of future use scenarios, and develop potential recommendations for tourism independent of the final outcome of off-road vehicular use. Some of the key takeaways included the following 2019 data: \$511 million total economic impact, \$336 million in direct visitor spending, \$31 million total state & local tax revenues, and 5,600 jobs created. The report included 20 stewardship recommendations for the community to review and consider advancing.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion

ACTION: Moved by **Sohi/ Marshall** to accept the 2023 Oceano Dunes Stewardship Study as presented.

Motion carried: 13:0

16. Travel Trade & Marketing Update

Gonzalez provided an IPW recap and Cartier shared an updated on the following travel trade & marketing initiatives: the SBP Attitudes and Usage Research recently conducted by Heart & Mind Strategies to help identify the factors that play a role in air travel behavior and airport selection. Cartier shared assets from the recent hero brand shoot in partnership with Pensara.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion

Davison outlined the upcoming meetings.

ADJOURN 11:25 am