



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

8:30am – 10:30am

Visit SLO CAL Office, 81 Higuera St, Ste 220, San Luis Obispo, CA

1. CALL TO ORDER

PRESENT: Mark Eads, Toni LeGras-Price, Bryan Bonelli, Clint Pearce, Britt Shuford, Hemant Patel, Vic Popp, Nipool Patel, Amar Sohi, Jed Bickel, Jim Hamilton, Amit Patel, Hamish Marshall (arrived after Consent Agenda at 8:44 am)

STAFF PRESENT: Chuck Davison, Annie Braunschweig, Emily Rudge, Kristen Carlson

ABSENT: Aaron Graves, Pragna Patel- Mueller, Cathy Cartier

Call to order at 8:33am

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The SLO CAL Branded Apparel was distributed; Vic Popp announced the PRWCA Gala on February 8 which will honor Alex and Monica Villicana as the 2023 Persons of the Year.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of November 14, 2023 Board of Directors Annual Meeting Minutes

4. Approval of October 2023 Visit SLO CAL Financials

5. Approval of November 2023 Visit SLO CAL Financials

6. Approval of December 2023 Visit SLO CAL Financials

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion – None.

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

Motion carried: 12:0 (Marshall arrived after the Consent Agenda)

CEO REPORT

7. Visit SLO CAL CEO Report

Davison reviewed the STR report for the week of January 7, noting that occupancy is up versus the same time last year, with ADR and RevPAR up slightly. Davison reviewed the December monthly STR report, noting that occupancy and rate are flat YOY, and room availability is up due to more inventory. Davison also reviewed the calendar 2023 YTD STR report, noting that occupancy is off almost 4 points, while rate is flat and RevPAR is down 4 points; the pacing wasn't as good as forecasted due to the heavy rainfall between January -March of 2023, but the year did perform well overall outside of those three months. Davison highlighted data from STR and Tourism Economics 2024 U.S. Lodging Forecast from the recent Americans Lodging Investments Conference, sharing their projections for occupancy to slightly increase, while RevPAR will be down for the next three years, as well as their estimation for luxury growth beginning to decrease, while upper mid-scale will begin to increase. Davison shared an update from U.S. Travel on the visa wait times in which the U.S. State Department will now offer a visa interview waiver authority for certain low-risk applicants. Davison provided a reminder of the changes to CA state government lodging reimbursement rates being increased as of January 1 and shared a reminder of the new California laws regarding fee transparency which go into effect on July 1. Davison provided a recap of the REACH Ideas + Action Summit held on January 17 in Santa Barbara. Davison highlighted an update on the Highway 1 road closure, sharing that CalTrans has officially announced a reopening date targeting spring of 2024, and Visit SLO CAL is targeting a follow up meeting with Visit California, See Monterey, and Congressman Panetta in February. Davison provided an update on the South County Chamber regarding a change in leadership and noted that the Chamber will cease visitor center operations as a California Welcome Center on June 30, 2024 and won't seek ongoing sponsorship funding from VSC; VSC notified Visit California of the interest to find another location for the California Welcome Center in SLO CAL. Davison provided an update on the 2023 metrics for SBP's passenger activity, highlighting that they had a record year with a 19.4% increase compared to 2022; Davison also provided a recap of the initial metrics on the inaugural Alaska Airlines LAS-SBP flight which launched on December 14, highlighting that the flight will end in March and return in December as a year-round flight (depending on performance). Davison provided a staffing update, as well as an update on the filing of the renewal of the SLO CAL Trademark. Davison highlighted several items following the December Advisory Committee meeting, including strong positive feedback from the Advisory Committee members and follow up meetings with REACH, SLOCOG and Jim Lewis to further discuss workforce housing and noted he is seeking direction from the Board on VSC's involvement in this space. Davison noted his upcoming travel schedule.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

Business Items

8. Countywide Sales Strategy

Kristen Carlson, Director of Sales, introduced Wendy Olson Killion, consultant at Guzo, to present an overview of the Countywide Sales Strategy. Olson Killion outlined the extensive process for how the strategy was developed, the findings from their SWOT analysis, and shared the recommendations for group, leisure, education, and goals for increased engagement through items such as a high impact incentive program. Olson Killion highlighted next steps for strategy adoption and implementation (education seminar, identifying incentive opportunities to encourage bookings, a collateral and web reboot, as well as development of an events & co-op calendar).

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by **Pearce/Marshall** to approve Visit SLO CAL's Countywide Sales Strategy as presented by Guzo Agency.

Motion carried: 13:0

9. FY 2023/24 Mid- Year Budget Reforecast

Braunschweig reviewed the FY 2023/24 mid-year budget reforecast, highlighting a decrease in TMD revenue that is projected to continue for the rest of the fiscal year. Braunschweig reviewed significant differences in each department.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by **Sohi/N. Patel** to approve Visit SLO CAL's FY 2023/24 Mid-Year Budget Reforecast.

Motion carried: 13:0

10. Travel Trade & Marketing Update

In Cartier's absence, Davison provided the travel trade and marketing update. Davison shared the trophy that the PR team received for winning the Travel Weekly Award Gold Magellan Award for the Dylan Efron "Home Again" series. Davison provided an update on the IPW California Plaza Activation and shared a proof of the activation design. Davison also announced that VSC Board Members are invited to participate in the IPW Activation and will only need to secure their own transportation. Davison shared that SLO CAL will be included in a post- IPW FAM with buyers and media. Davison shared an update on the website UX study including findings, recommendations, and next steps. Davison noted metrics from the SLO CAL Open at Morro Bay and shared a recap video. Davison highlighted an update on the Events & Festivals Strategy, noting that the calendar is a separated project from the overall strategy, and the team has begun to discuss creation and implementation with Artsopolis, as well as reconvene with the Events & Festivals Strategy working group.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion. Pearce suggested using a TV in the IPW Tradeshow booth to show the Cal Poly Break-A-Wave Rodeo event.

Davison provided a reminder for the upcoming March 27 Board of Directors meeting.

ADJOURN 10:29am