



Minutes

Visit San Luis Obispo County Board of Directors

Visit San Luis Obispo County Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

8:30am

SeaCrest OceanFront Hotel

2241 Price St, Pismo Beach, CA 93449

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Jay Jamison

PRESENT: John Arnold, Kathy Bonelli, James Davison, Mark Eads, Jim Hamilton, Jay Jamison, Noreen Martin, Sam Miller, JP Patel, Rachel Patranella, Clint Pearce, Val Seymour, Roger Wightman

ABSENT: Nipool Patel

STAFF PRESENT: Chuck Davison, Becky Singh, Brendan Pringle, Kylee Jepsen

Call to Order at 8:36am.

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

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Visit San Luis Obispo County has released its new 2016-17 Visitors Magazine.

The Board had the opportunity to view three of VSLOC's newest collateral pieces: a wedding flyer, general travel trade flyer, and a meeting/conference flyer.

C. Davison shared the latest TOT report with the Board.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. **Approval of January 20, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes**

4. **Approval of January VSLOC Financials**

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

ACTION: Moved by Pearce/J. Davison to approve the January 20, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes as presented.

Motion carried: 11:0

ACTION: Moved by J. Davison/Wightman to approve the January Financials as presented.

Motion carried: 11:0

Martin and J. Patel arrived after this motion carried.

BUSINESS ITEMS

5. Booking.com Update

Based on Board approval last month, VSLOC has contracted with Booking.com, and will be working with them to establish placement on the VSLOC website.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

6. Fall Campaign Update

The Board viewed new static and animated banners, pre-roll footage, and Fall Campaign metrics for the month of January 2016.

The Board also viewed details on VSLOC's American Airline Co-op opportunity—a 10-page advertorial feature in the April issue of *American Way*. SLOTBID, Pismo Beach, Avila Beach, Wine Coast Country, Morro Bay, Atascadero, TPRA, and PRWCA are all purchasing pages. The Media Plan approved by the Board called for \$150,000 in print co-op media, and these funds had not yet been spent. The Executive Committee confirmed during their meeting on February 11, 2016 that an allocation of up to \$100,000 toward this opportunity would be a good strategic media purchase.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

7. Research Agency Update

Merrill Research was notified on January 20, 2016 that the Board approved their proposal. All communities are working through their six-question buy-in with Merrill/VSLOC now. The research project is scheduled for April completion.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

8. Strategic Planning

Included in the agenda packet was a draft proposal from Coraggio Group for the creation of a 3-year strategic plan, with an emphasis on reducing duplication between communities. Approval of this proposal now would ensure completion of the project by April/May 2016, in concert with the completion of the Research Project. The cost is \$30,000.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – Bettina Swigger, Executive Director of Festival Mozaic, asked if there would be stakeholder meetings as part of this process. Pearce confirmed, based on SLOTBID's work with them.

ACTION: Moved by Arnold/Martin to allow the CEO to begin contract negotiations with Coraggio Group for a Strategic Plan.

Motion carried: 13:0

9. Marketing Agency Update

VSLOC received 15 intents-to-bid during the FY2016-18 Marketing Agency RFP Process. Three agencies have dropped out, and some who didn't submit ITBs submitted. Proposals are due February 18, 2016. Singh and C. Davison will be reviewing proposals on Friday, February 19, 2016 in advance of the Marketing Committee's review on February 25, 2016. The Marketing Committee will select 3-5 finalists to give oral presentations on March 8, 2016.

Challenges with Catalyst Marketing have persisted. Lack of on-timely delivery/missed deadlines, items falling through the cracks and lack of strategic focus continue to be issues. After receiving legal counsel, VSLOC is requesting a motion to approve the termination of Catalyst's contract with VSLOC as of March 31, 2016. VSLOC will likely have a local agency make media purchases in the interim period prior to the on-boarding of the new agency.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – Aaron Graves, owner of the Burton Inn, asked for details on the RFP process, which C. Davison provided.

ACTION: Moved by Seymour/J. Davison to approve the termination of Catalyst's contract.

Motion carried: 13:0

10. B&B Seat Update

VSLOC received three applications for the B&B seat on the Board: Aaron Graves (Burton Inn, Cambria), Alma Ayon (Sundance B&B, Paso Robles) and Jenna Hartzell (Cass House, Cayucos). Ayon was not able to be present for this meeting. C. Davison provided some of the high level components of each application, and noted that several B&B owners are unable to make the meeting time due to morning responsibilities at their properties. The Board deferred discussion until after hearing from the candidates.

Public Comment – Aaron Graves introduced himself and noted that his company is investing very strongly in the area. He has just purchased the Burton Inn, and is doing a refresh on the property with a full kitchen. He noted that he feels it is his obligation to run high quality properties that are in the top 20%, and to work with other properties to bring them to this standard as well. Jenna Hartzell, Director of Service and Marketing at Cass House, introduced herself and noted that she formerly worked in the arts sector, and has worked to bring events and excursions to the Cass House.

Lila Colma of the Shoreline Inn in Cayucos noted some of the challenges that not only B&Bs, but other small owner operated hotels, encounter with balancing morning duties and morning meetings.

Board Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by Wightman/J. Patel to appoint Aaron Graves to the Board of Directors.

Motion carried: 13:0

The Board also recommended that Jenna Hartzell submit an application for a seat on the Marketing Committee.

11. Sponsorship

VSLOC has \$35,000 remaining in its sponsorship budget.

C. Davison presented event sponsorship applications from Festival Mozaic and the International Chardonnay Symposium.

On February 9, 2016, The Marketing Committee voted (10-2) to recommend \$15,000 sponsorship and \$5,000 in-kind sponsorship for Festival Mozaic, with a required focus on out-of-area marketing. Morro Bay opposed funding the event, believing the demographic was too narrow and due to the event's peak-season timing (July). Boutique Hotel Collection opposed funding the event due to the timing.

The Marketing Committee also voted (7-3) to recommend \$10,000 in seed funding and \$10,000 in marketing funding for the International Chardonnay Symposium. This funding level was based on only \$20,000 available for the balance of the fiscal year. Morro Bay and Hearst Castle opposed funding the event, believing it set a precedent for other food/wine events to request funding. Travel Paso Robles Alliance voted against it, believing it wasn't a true "countywide" event. On February 11, 2016, the Executive Committee recommended that all funds go toward marketing if the Board decides to approve the International Chardonnay Symposium.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – Bettina Swigger, Executive Director of Festival Mozaic, offered more details about FM's sponsorship application. Linda Parker Sanpei, representing the Chardonnay Symposium, offered more details about ICS's sponsorship application.

ACTION: Moved by Pearce/Miller to approve \$15,000 sponsorship and \$5,000 in-kind sponsorship for Festival Mozaic, with a required focus on out-of-area marketing.

Motion carried: 13:0

ACTION: Moved by J. Davison/Miller to approve \$10,000 in out-of-area marketing funding for International Chardonnay Symposium. As a requirement of funding, ICS must also provide data statistics on attendance and provide professional film/photos from the event.

**Motion carried: 11:0:2
Eads and Martin abstained.**

CEO REPORT

12. CEO Report

Santa Margarita Ranch is storing SAVOR hard goods. These items were SAVOR expenses and are not listed as assets on VSLOC financials. Options include renting multiple storage units for the items, contacting event companies about their interest in purchasing, liquidating via Craig's List, and giving away the items.

Presentations from the Winter Industry Educational Symposium were recorded and are available online via the Members Area of the VSLOC website.

For the first time, the VSLOC website received 50,000 monthly visitors in January.

C. Davison highlighted out-of-market sales, PR/media and marketing efforts. He noted that due to scheduling conflicts, he will not be able to attend the May Board meeting, and asked the Board to consider cancelling this meeting.

VSLOC's office move (next door to the current space) is projected for mid-March. The office address will remain the same.

The next meeting will take place March 16, 2016 at 8:30am at the Hilton Garden Inn in Pismo Beach.

Board Discussion. The Board recommended reaching out to event companies to sell the SAVOR hardgoods, and liquidate the rest.

Public Comment – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:44am.