



Minutes

Visit San Luis Obispo County Board of Directors

Visit San Luis Obispo County Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 20, 2016

8:30am

Allegretto Vineyard Resort
2700 Buena Vista Dr., Paso Robles, CA 93446

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

PRESENT: John Arnold, Kathy Bonelli, James Davison, Mark Eads, Lois Fox, Jay Jamison, Noreen Martin, Sam Miller, JP Patel, Nipool Patel, Clint Pearce, Val Seymour, Roger Wightman

ABSENT: Jim Hamilton, Rachel Patranella

STAFF PRESENT: Chuck Davison, Becky Singh, Michael Wambolt, Brendan Pringle

Call to Order at 8:32am.

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

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Visit California's Dream Eater is filming in SLO County this week. He is visiting Madonna Inn, Sidecar and Splash Café. Visit San Luis Obispo County campaigned to bring him to the County. The Board watched a short clip of the Dream Eater series on Youtube.

TOT figures increased 9.09% year over year for November. The upward trend is expected to continue in December.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. **Approval of December 16, 2015 Board Meeting Minutes**

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

ACTION: Moved by Pearce/J. Davison to approve the December 2015 Board Meeting Minutes as presented.

Motion carried: 13:0

BUSINESS ITEMS

4. Approval of December VSLOC Financials & Re-Forecasted FY2015-16 Budget

The Re-Forecasted FY2015-16 budget reflects a surplus of \$350,000 in unspent dollars that were reallocated. The proposed reallocations include \$136,000 to be paid immediately to the line-of-credit (which is currently at \$236,000), \$35,000 for strategic planning (which will be reviewed at the February meeting), and \$175,000 toward additional media spends in February, March and April.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

ACTION: Moved by Arnold/Martin to approve the December VSLOC Financials and FY2015-16 Re-Forecasted Budget.

Motion carried: 13:0

5. B&B Seat Update

Lois Fox notified VSLOC staff a week ago that she sold her B&B, Belvino Viaggio. VSLOC confirmed with Civitas Advisors that Board members must be associated with a property paying into the assessment (aside from the County representative), and the bylaws also do not allow for non-voting members. C. Davison requested the Board's recommendations to fill the seat. Fox may be able to offer assistance in the outreach effort to fill her seat. At the February meeting, the Board will consider candidates for approval.

Board Discussion. Fox expressed her intent to help VSLOC find a replacement for her seat on the Board.

Public Comment – None.

6. SAVOR the Central Coast Update

C. Davison reminded the Board of the options for the future of SAVOR discussed at the December 16, 2015 Board Meeting, where the Board moved to place the event on hold for further research and recommendations by the Marketing Committee moving into the future, and to ask them to bring back recommendations to the Board.

Amy Olmsted at Sunset notified VSLOC that major sponsors like Volvo are not willing to commit this early. Sunset does not feel it is in a position to commit to a big event for 2016 and play a large role in the event without a major sponsor on board, due to all of their recent restructuring. Olmsted noted that they may be willing to assist with smaller events throughout the year and give VSLOC some editorial assistance. Sunset has also hired F2V to run Celebration Weekend in Sonoma, and Sunset is working on redesigning this event in Sonoma.

The Marketing Committee recommended taking SAVOR on the road as more of a campaign than an event, and using it for branding at food and wine events. VSLOC already has some of these events in the budget. The Marketing Committee seemed open to selling the event, but expressed caution in selling to the right person based on changes and brand awareness. They are not interested in taking on individual events in their own markets and didn't see the value in using the SAVOR name on existing events.

Rob Rossi of Santa Margarita Ranch has expressed that he would like to explore options for facilitating a SAVOR event at the Ranch in Spring 2017. Rossi would need to provide a proposal for consideration.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – Destini Cavalletto with SMR noted that SMR is still interested in the event at the Ranch.

7. Booking Engine Update

Last week, the Executive Committee recommended revisiting the Booking.com/OTA discussion. C. Davison reminded the Board that this solution would be a free solution for VSLOC (including mobile functionality), it offers detailed reporting, and it has a revenue share model where 40% of commission revenue is returned to the VSLOC. Their current partners include NYC & Company, Greater Miami, SF Travel, and Monterey. C. Davison also highlighted the various benefits of Booking.com, and noted that Booking.com has already launched a major initiative to sign up vacation rentals and B&Bs.

Lodging properties can opt out of using Booking.com on the VSLOC website. Lodging properties pay 15% or 18% commission for a premier partnership with Booking.com. Regardless of participation, all lodging partner listings will show up on the VSLOC website. If a better alternative presented itself over the next six months, VSLOC can look to pursue that.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

ACTION: Moved by J. Patel/N. Patel to allow the CEO of VSLOC to move forward in negotiating terms on behalf of VSLOC in order to start services with Booking.com.

Motion carried: 10:3
Seymour, Martin, and Bonelli opposed.

8. Research Agency Selection

After hearing Oral Presentations from Merrill Research and King Brown, Inc. on January 19, 2016, the Marketing Committee recommended awarding the Research Project contract to Merrill Research at a cost of \$75,000 total for two projects. They came highly recommended by Jennifer Porter of the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance, who used them for a recent study. The cost for individual communities to opt in and add 6 additional questions is \$2500.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

ACTION: Moved by Martin/N. Patel to award the VSLOC Research Project to and allow the CEO to enter into negotiations and finalize contract for services with Merrill Research.

Motion carried: 13:0

9. Marketing Agency RFP

Catalyst Marketing Company's agreement with VSLOC ends June 30, 2016. C. Davison discussed the timeline for the FY2016-18 Marketing Agency RFP process, and requested a motion to approve VSLOC's FY2016-18 Marketing Agency RFP. Once approved, the RFP would be released later today.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

ACTION: Moved by Arnold/Eads to approve VSLOC's FY2016-18 Marketing Agency RFP.

Motion carried: 13:0

10. SLOIFF Sponsorship

San Luis Obispo International Film Festival has submitted a request for sponsorship that includes \$10,000 cash and \$5,000 in-kind, as presented in the agenda packet. SLOIFF has events planned throughout the county, and the sponsorship would include a FAM tour for film scouts that would be countywide. VSLOC is the film commission for the County. Thus far this fiscal year, VSLOC has given \$30,000 in sponsorship funds to the AMGEN Tour of California and \$20,000 to the Cow Parade. The Marketing Committee recommended approval of the sponsorship request.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – Wendy Eidson, Executive Director of the SLOIFF, thanked VSLOC for its past support, and reiterated that one of the major goals of the SLOIFF is to increase tourism and put heads in beds. She noted that one of the goals of the sponsorship proposal is to show filmmakers what the County has to offer. SLOIFF is partnering with Paso Wine for Zin Weekend, and will be continuing its partnership with Pismo Beach and the Avila Community Foundation. SLOIFF is also trying to bring more media to the County. Eidson also noted that prior to support from the SLOIBID, only 6% of visitors came from outside the County; now, the number is around 30%.

ACTION: Moved by J. Davison/Wightman to approve VSLOC's sponsorship of the SLO International Film Festival as stated.

Motion carried: 13:0

11. Fall Campaign Update

Davison showed the Board examples of banner creative running on sites like BBOOnline.com, RVParking.com, and VacationRentals.com. Davison also showed the December Reporting Metrics to the Board.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

12. CEO Report

On January 12, 2016, the Morro Bay City Council voted unanimously to take over the management of the Morro Bay Tourism Business Improvement District. C. Davison noted he is setting up a meeting with David Buckingham, Morro Bay's City Manager, to discuss the next steps for collaboration. Morro Bay is a partner in the AMGEN Tour of California and IPW.

On January 25, 2016, Pam Roberts will start as VSLOC's Travel Trade Sales Coordinator.

VSLOC's Beginning of Year Bash will be happening January 21, 2016, from 5-7pm at Café Roma. Please RSVP to Brendan Pringle.

VSLOC is hosting its second Industry Educational Symposium at the Embassy Suites in San Luis Obispo on February 3, from 8:30am-11:30am. This symposium will include presentations from Yelp, Booking.com, and the Executive Director of the California Film Commission.

The next Board Meeting is Wednesday, February 17, 2016.

Board Discussion. N. Patel asked about a new California law that requires a carbon monoxide detector in every room. He said he was notified of this legislation by the California Lodging Industry Association. C. Davison noted that the VSLOC team would do further research on the legislation.

Public Comment – Kristin Huebner, Pismo Beach CVB, stated that Gordon Jackson is the President of CLIA and might have further insight.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:22am.