



MINUTES

Visit San Luis Obispo County Board of Directors

Visit San Luis Obispo County Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 16, 2016

8:30am

Holiday Inn Express, Atascadero
9010 W. Front Rd, Atascadero, CA 93422

1. CALL TO ORDER: Jay Jamison

PRESENT: John Arnold, Kathleen Bonelli, Mark Eads, Aaron Graves, Jim Hamilton, Jay Jamison, Nipool Patel, Clint Pearce

ABSENT: Rachel Lima, Noreen Martin, Sam Miller, JP Patel, Val Seymour, Roger Wightman

STAFF PRESENT: Chuck Davison, Michael Wambolt, Brendan Pringle, Helen Pratt

Call to Order at 8:50 am.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

**3. Approval of October 19, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes
Approval of October VSLOC Financials
Document Retention Policy**

Board Discussion – None.

Public Comment – None.

ACTION: Moved by N. Patel/Graves to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Motion carried: 8:0

CEO REPORT

4. CEO Report

James Davison, who holds the appointed County Unincorporated Area seat on our Board, had to resign after Pacifica Hotels relocated him from Cambria to Pismo Beach. The County has posted the vacancy and will keep VSLOC informed as they determine the next steps for the appointed seat.

Davison provided a staffing update, noting that VSLOC has the same number of staff today as before the TMD passed, though the team has taken on significantly more initiatives.

Global Ready China Training will be held on December 7, 2016, from 8:30-11:30am, at the Courtyard by Marriott in SLO. Davison noted that this will be the only one held on the Central Coast this year. Visit California (VCA) is gearing the training toward properties of all sizes (large and small).

In light of California Proposition 64's passage, Davison has asked Cal Travel to outline best practices. This information will be funneled down to VSLOC constituents as it becomes available.

VSLOC Operations Manager, Brendan Pringle, attended the 28th Annual Southern California Visitor Industry Outlook Conference and provided key takeaways. The CBRE forecast was emailed to lodging constituents.

Davison provided an overview of his upcoming travel.

Board Discussion – None.

Public Comment – None.

BUSINESS ITEMS

5. Operational Plan Update

Davison gave a brief overview of the Operational Plan, and discussed the prioritization of initiatives and potential budget impacts. He also noted that a budget reforecast would be presented to the Board in January, and new budget items would be discussed in May.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

ACTION: Moved by Graves/N. Patel to approve the VSLOC Operational Plan priorities as presented.

Motion carried: 8:0

6. Conference Center Feasibility Study

Davison recapitulated the Board's decision to pursue a conference center feasibility study prior to development of the strategic plan, and then again approved it as part of the strategic plan. Staff has recommended this as a top priority in the Operational Plan.

Davison noted that VSLOC is looking to understand demand for a conference facility that seats more than 1,000 people to bring in new business. Wambolt commented that he has been seeing demand for a conference center that can accommodate these numbers. Davison summarized the four conference center feasibility study proposals that VSLOC received.

Board Discussion – Arnold noted that in the Executive Committee meeting, JP Patel made it clear he was against this study, as he does not believe marketing dollars should be spent on this.

Public Comment – None.

ACTION: Moved by Graves/N. Patel to allow the President & CEO to enter into contract negotiations with B&D for a conference feasibility study.

7. Marketing Agency Update

a. Branding

Davison gave an overview of the brand concept testing and results. The testing included 700 participants, half of which reside in the continental United States outside of California. The SLO CAL brand with the creative tested in the 70th percentile across all fronts.

The Marketing Committee had voted 8:2 in favor of SLO CAL. Pismo Beach CVB and Morro Bay Tourism Bureau voted against SLO CAL as they believed the brand could be improved, but noted that they did not want to delay the shoulder season campaign.

VSLOC's attorney reached out to the owner of the SLOCAL.com URL, merchandising trademark and merchandise to purchase these items. The owner is asking for \$20,000. Considering the long-term strategy of the brand, Davison encouraged the Board to approve this spend, but noted that VSLOC's attorney would attempt to negotiate.

Davison walked the Board through media recommendations for January through May of 2017, and noted that VSLOC is requesting an additional \$100K in funding specific to Seattle for this market launch.

The Executive Committee recommended approving the brand as presented, allocating an extra \$100K for marketing in Seattle, and allocating up to \$20K to secure the SLOCAL.com URL, trademark, and merchandise.

Davison noted that once the Marketing Plan is finalized, printed copies will be delivered to Board members.

Board Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

ACTION: Moved by Arnold/Pearce to approve SLO CAL as the new brand to replace VSLOC, allocate an extra \$100,000 from VSLOC's contingency budget for the Seattle market launch and allocate up to \$20,000 to allow legal to secure the SLOCAL.com URL, merchandising trademark and merchandise.

Motion carried: 8:0

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:04am.

REMINDERS

The next Advisory Committee meeting will be held on December 8, 2016, from 3:00-5:00pm, at the Embassy Suites in SLO. Davison requested all Board members attend.