



# MINUTES

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## Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors

### Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 17, 2019

8:30am

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

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER: Clint Pearce

**PRESENT:** Alma Ayon, Kathy Bonelli, Mark Eads, Aaron Graves, Jim Hamilton, Jay Jamison, Sam Miller, Hemant Patel, Nipool Patel, Clint Pearce, Amar Sohi

**ABSENT:** Jed Bickel

**STAFF PRESENT:** Chuck Davison, Brooke Burnham, Michael Wambolt, Derek Kirk, Brendan Pringle, Alessandra Casey

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**Call to Order at 8:38 am.**

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

None.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

Davison noted that Item 12 (Destination Management Strategy Recommendations) will be moved to the end of the Agenda.

#### CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of May 15, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes
4. Approval of May Financials
5. Approval of Visit SLO CAL's Travel & Expense Policy
6. Acceptance of John Arnold's Resignation from the Board of Directors

Davison outlined the key changes to Visit SLO CAL's Travel & Expense Policy. He also noted that John Arnold, who held the Paso Robles seat, formally resigned, effective immediately, on June 18, 2019.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion. Bonelli noted that Victor Popp was appointed to the Paso Robles lodging seat on the Visit SLO CAL Board on Tuesday night (July 16, 2019).

**ACTION:** Moved by Sohi/Hamilton to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

**Motion carried: 11:0**

#### CEO REPORT

## 7. CEO Report

Davison reviewed U.S. Travel's Travel Trends Index for May 2019 vs. May 2018, and provided a TOT update through May 2019. He also reported out on Visit SLO CAL's bi-annual Advisory Committee Meeting (June 13, 2019), and recognized all the Board members who attended in support of Visit SLO CAL's efforts. He provided the highlights of Visit SLO CAL's multi-day IPW sponsorship co-op (June 2-5, 2019), an activation that was seen by more than 6200 attendees, including more than 1300 international buyers. Davison noted that County is currently working through the process of filling the appointed Unincorporated Area lodging seat and will provide us with an update on when this seat will be an item on the Board of Supervisor's agenda. Interested parties are asked to send an application to Nikki Schmidt at [nschmidt@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:nschmidt@co.slo.ca.us). Davison reported out CalTravel's Board Meeting and Tourism Advocacy Day at the State Capitol (June 19, 2019). On June 26, 2019, Visit SLO CAL and the SLO County Regional Airport announced new direct air service from Las Vegas; the flight launches October 17 and will run four days per week (Thursday, Friday, Sunday, Monday). Davison noted that in the next several weeks, Visit SLO CAL will make its next new air service announcement, and that new markets will require additional funding to be approved by the Board at a later date. He added that air service consultant Volaire was looking to bring their next annual conference to San Luis Obispo County in April 2020. He noted that the Sixel Conference, hosted in San Luis Obispo County five years ago, familiarized air service product managers with the destination and became a springboard for much of the air service development conversations that Visit SLO CAL and the Airport are having today. He also reported out on his upcoming travel schedule.

Public Comment – Danna Stroud, Travel Paso, thanked the Board for their support of the IPW sponsorship activation and for their leadership in making this decision. She noted that it was a unique and game-changing event for IPW and US Travel, and that to have Visit SLO CAL and our DMO partners part of this was very significant. She reported that a great deal of business was done in the Plaza during this activation and that it was an effective way to continue conversations with clients.

Board Discussion.

## BUSINESS ITEMS

### 8. Executive Committee Seat

As noted during the Consent Agenda, John Arnold resigned on June 18, 2019, leaving a vacancy on the Executive Committee. Davison outlined the time commitment that the Committee requires, and noted that under this business item, the floor will open to Committee nominations for the open seat. Once the seat is filled, he will request nominations for the appointment of Vice Chair. On July 3, 2019, the Committee recommended that the Board appoint Mark Eads as Vice Chair.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion. Graves nominated Hemant Patel, noting that he would be a great asset to the Executive Committee.

**ACTION:** Moved by Graves/N. Patel to appoint Hemant Patel to the open seat on the Executive Committee.

**Motion carried: 10:0:1**  
**H. Patel abstained.**

**ACTION:** Moved by N. Patel/Jamison to appoint Mark Eads as Vice Chair of the Executive Committee, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

**Motion carried: 10:0:1**  
**Eads abstained.**

### 9. Community Engagement Plan

Davison outlined the Objectives, Strategies and high-level components of Visit SLO CAL's draft Community Engagement Plan, and requested feedback from the Board. He noted that based on the feedback received from the Executive

Committee, not every piece of the strategy will take the same priority, nor will each piece be done all at once. He said that the initial focus will be on activations that impact investors directly, first and foremost. The Executive Committee recommended the approval of the Community Engagement Plan at their July 3, 2019 meeting.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

**ACTION:** Moved by N. Patel/Eads to approve the Community Engagement Plan, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

**Motion carried: 11:0**

## **10. Surfers of Tomorrow Sponsorship**

Davison outlined a title sponsorship opportunity with the World Surf League’s Surfers of Tomorrow of two competitions—the Pismo Beach Open, an existing event that will occur in January, and the establishment of a second event in Morro Bay, that would occur in February. The events would be branded as the “SLO CAL Open at Pismo Beach” and the “SLO CAL Open at Morro Rock,” respectively. He also noted that the goal would be to eventually add a third event in the county in a community such as Cayucos or Oceano. Davison provided background on the event, and outlined the sponsorship value and key proposed components of the activation. He added that it is an opportunity to capitalize on a space that Visit California is currently using to propel content. The activation would include up to a \$40k cash sponsorship and an in-kind promotion of up to \$20k in one-time branding and promotion investment. Davison outlined how this type of a title event tied to the DMS recommendations regarding signature events for the county. Davison requested a motion to recommend Board approval for the CEO to enter into contract negotiations, as recommended by the Executive Committee at their July 3, 2019 meeting.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

**ACTION:** Moved by Graves/N. Patel to allow the President & CEO to enter into contract negotiations with World Surf League’s Surfers of Tomorrow, establishing a sponsorship of up to \$40k cash and up to \$20k in-kind sponsorship for the SLO CAL Open contest, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

**Motion carried: 11:0**

## **11. Oceano Dunes Advocacy**

Kirk noted that the California Coastal Commission (CCC) and California State Parks (CSP) are struggling for control of the future of the Oceano Dunes State Park. CCC staff believe that after many attempts to find sensible solutions, it is time to begin the full closure of the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (ODSVRA). Kirk noted that, at the present time, the City of Pismo Beach and the City of Arroyo Grande are not taking a formal position on the issue. The City of Grover Beach wrote a letter to the CCC asking them to spend time working with local jurisdictions to develop a plan moving forward. Supervisors Compton, Arnold and Peschong, as well as Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham, all wrote letters to the CCC opposing the staff recommendation. State Senator Monning’s office is also tracking the issue closely. Kirk outlined the CCC staff’s proposal, and noted that at their July 11, 2019 meeting, the CCC ultimately gave the CSP one year to finalize their Public Works Plan, incorporate the CCC staff’s recommendations and bring it back to the Commission for final approval. Due to the short time window before the CCC meeting, the Executive Committee approved staff advocating on behalf of the tourism community supporting the Oceano Dunes and the need for it to remain open as a critical economic driver for the destination. This included drafting a coalition letter of support and speaking during public comment at the CCC meeting. Visit SLO CAL partnered with Cal Poly, Hourglass Project, EVC, South County Chambers, Santa Maria Valley Chambers and Pismo Beach Chamber on the coalition letter, which asked the CCC to “push pause” on the staff recommendations and work with the local community to develop a sustainable and economically-viable solution to move

forward. Davison noted that Visit SLO CAL's position would be to try to negotiate a middle ground for everyone on this issue. He requested a motion to confirm the Executive Committee's approval of this advocacy effort.

Public Comment – Danna Stroud, Travel Paso, noted that Travel Paso would like the opportunity to engage further in this process and that the timing simply didn't permit them to get formal approval from the Board. She noted that Visit SLO CAL's collective voice on this issue is very important, and that she appreciates the organization being out there taking the lead.

Board Discussion.

**ACTION:** Moved by Sohi/Hamilton to confirm the Executive Committee's decision to allow Visit SLO CAL to advocate on behalf of the tourism community supporting the Oceano Dunes and the need for it to remain open as a critical economic driver for the destination.

**Motion carried: 11:0**

### **13. TMD Renewal Update**

In a July 15, 2019 email to city managers, the County indicated that the release of petitions would occur the week of July 29, 2019 with a return date of September 27, 2019. Visit SLO CAL is currently working to secure both local TBID and City Council meeting dates beginning in August, and is building the presentation decks for community lodging meetings and the city council meetings in advance of the petition release. He reviewed the next steps in the renewal process, and noted that as Visit SLO CAL prepares to launch this process, it will need the support of the Board. At the May meeting, the Board stated that they were willing to assist with this process. At their July 3, 2019 meeting, the Executive Committee outlined that all Board members should be willing to commit to the following to assure the passage of the TMD: 1) Making phone calls to lodging partners in their communities asking for support; 2) Hosting community lodging meetings; 3) Attending meetings with lodging partners to obtain signatures; and 4) Collecting lodging petition signatures. Davison requested feedback on ways the Board can get involved in the petition process. He noted that Visit SLO CAL is not seeking any motion, but wanted to keep the Board updated and define the lift involved in this process.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

### **14. Morgan Stanley CD Account Update**

Davison outlined the background and the purpose of Visit SLO CAL's laddered CDs, managed by Morgan Stanley. Visit SLO CAL's account, at the direction of the Board, opened with a beginning total value of \$500k and reserve funds have been swept from Visit SLO CAL's operating account to a Morgan Stanley accounts on a bi-monthly basis, following the approval of financials by the Board. The two accounts are now valued at \$770,095.59 and total interest accrued over the last 18 months has totaled \$25,349.98.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

### **12. Destination Management Strategy Recommendations**

Davison provided a progress update on the Destination Management Strategy (DMS), noting that the Steering Committee provided feedback and recommended approval of the Full Draft Report on June 12, 2019, and that the Executive Committee recommended Board approval of the Destination Management Strategy Final Report at their June 21, 2019 meeting. Once it receives approval from the Board, Visit SLO CAL will begin working with Resonance to develop the Work Plan, kicking the process off with a meeting with Resonance next week prior to the start of the Destinations International Annual Convention in St. Louis. Depending on timing, the high-level Work Plan will likely go before the Board for feedback, approval and prioritization recommendations during the September meeting.

Richard Cutting-Miller, Resonance Consultancy, presented the Final Report. Davison reiterated the desired timeline for the Work Plan.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

**ACTION:** Moved by N. Patel/Graves to approve the Destination Management Strategy Final Report as presented.

**Motion carried: 11:0**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**ACTION:** Moved by Pearce/Graves to adjourn at 10:40 am.