



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

8:30am

Vespera on Ocean

147 Stimson Ave, Pismo Beach, CA 93449

1. CALL TO ORDER: Clint Pearce

PRESENT: Jed Bickel, Mark Eads, Jim Hamilton, Jay Jamison, Toni LeGras, Hemant Patel, Nipool Patel, Clint Pearce, Victor Popp, Amar Sohi

ABSENT: Alma Ayon, Kathy Bonelli, Aaron Graves, Sam Miller

STAFF PRESENT: Chuck Davison, Lisa Verbeck, Derek Kirk, Brendan Pringle, Michael Wambolt

Call to Order at 8:33 am.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Davison introduced Lisa Verbeck, Visit SLO CAL's new CMO. He noted that her first day was Monday, January 13, 2020, and that she previously served as the Director of Marketing, The Americas, for Tourism Australia.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of November 20, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes
4. Approval of November Visit SLO CAL Financials
5. Approval of December Visit SLO CAL Financials

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

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

Motion carried: 10:0

CEO REPORT

6. CEO Report

The Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the renewal of the Tourism Marketing District on Tuesday, January 14, 2020. Davison thanked Pearce and Eads for attending the hearing. He noted that the final tally for government approval of the district was 37-0, and that protests against the district equaled 2.48 percent. He thanked the Board of Directors for all of their support during this process, and played footage of the Board of Supervisors approving the renewal. He also thanked the Board for attending the Beginning of Year Bash. Davison reviewed U.S. Travel's Travel Trends Index for November 2019 vs. November 2018, as well as the TOT update through November 2019. He provided an update on new hires and current open positions. He also provided an update on the San Diego flight launch event on January 7, 2020, noting that the event was well-attended by local media, strategic partners and stakeholders. Additionally, Visit SLO CAL partnered with Travel Paso and the CBID on a media FAM in conjunction with this launch. Last month, on December 4, 2019, Davison met with Kevin Bumen of the SLO County Regional Airport to outline air service development strategy for 2020, which will include three HQ meetings and two conferences. He also reported out on local meetings and outlined his upcoming travel schedule. He provided an update on the current CEO contract, noting that it's set to expire on April 30, 2020.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

BUSINESS ITEMS

7. FY2019/20 Budget Re-Forecast

Davison provided an overview of Visit SLO CAL's proposed re-forecasted budget for FY2019/20, which reflects programs that were postponed or cut based on capacity, new positions approved by the Board and the allocation of surplus revenue. Revenue changes reflect the adjustment for actual income received from each community through November (-\$17,813), the trued up re-forecasted revenue for December-June, based on the estimated TMD revenue from properties that opened after the FY2019/20 budget was approved (\$114,422), and the allocation of reserve funds (\$431,136), as approved by the Board. The allocation of reserve funds includes \$400k allocated to support the San Diego and Portland flight launches and \$31,136 allocated for the immediate hiring of a sales manager role (post re-forecast approval). Davison noted that Visit SLO CAL does not expect to pull a full \$431k from reserves, and that the organization wouldn't pull from reserves until it closes year-end financials.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by **N. Patel/LeGras** to approve Visit SLO CAL's FY2019/20 Budget Re-Forecast as presented, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion carried: 10:0

8. Board Member Nominating Committee

The Bylaws notes that the Board must create an ad hoc nominating committee as needed when considering the nominations of elected seats. Executive Committee members can serve on the ad hoc nominating committee, which isn't subject to the Brown Act. Staff would like to recommend having the Executive Committee members serve on the nominating committee, which would provide a slate to the Board for the next election of Board seats.

Public Comment.

Board Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by **Sohi/Bickel** to appoint Clint Pearce, Mark Eads, Aaron Graves, Hemant Patel and Jay Jamison to an ad hoc board member nominating committee, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

9. Coraggio Group Engagement

Davison noted that staff has been working with Coraggio Group on draft recommendations for the composition of the Strategic Planning Team (SPT). He outlined the recommendations, noting that they provide a mix of lodging partners by lodging type, diversity and geographic representation, and also include both leadership and frontline staff from the Visit SLO CAL team. Staff reviewed these recommendations with the Executive Committee at their January 13, 2020 meeting, and have reached out to the Board members listed to confirm interest and their ability to participate. Davison also outlined the calendar for each component of the strategic planning process.

Public Comment.

Board Discussion. Sohi confirmed his interest in serving on the SPT.

10. DMS Implementation & Next Steps

Kirk reminded the Board that they approved the final Destination Management Strategy (DMS) document and the Work Plan in concept, and that at the November 2019 Board of Directors meeting, members asked staff to review additional naming options for the publication of the strategy. Staff is now working to develop a plan to engage community leaders and partners in implementation. Kirk noted that the DMS name originally proposed to the Board was “Experience SLO CAL 2050” (with “A Destination Management Strategy” as the subtext), and that staff has added “Destination SLO CAL 2050” (with the same subtext) as an additional option. Once the name is finalized, the DMS will be published on SLOCAL.com. Visit SLO CAL will host four community leader meetings to understand which recommendations partners see themselves engaging in, and will ask the city managers to help develop the invitation list. The DMS recommendations will come back to the Board in March for prioritization, in advance of FY20/21 budget development. Visit SLO CAL will then host a countywide forum, which will officially launch the DMS implementation and invite community participation in the implementation of the strategy. After the forum, staff will ask the Board to appoint a DMS Committee to review the progress of implementation biannually and report back to the Board of Directors. As a proven partner in the creation of the DMS, Visit SLO CAL has asked Resonance for a proposal to facilitate the four community leader briefings (Q1-2020) and countywide forum (Q2-2020). Kirk noted that having Resonance facilitate the meetings would reinforce that the plan is not entirely owned by Visit SLO CAL, but rather by the broader community. The cost for the engagement with Resonance would total \$18k plus expenses.

Public Comment.

Board Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by N. Patel/H. Patel to approve the renaming of the Destination Management Strategy to “Experience SLO CAL 2050 – A Destination Management Strategy.”

Motion carried: 9:0:1
Bickel opposed.

ACTION: Moved by Popp/Hamilton to allow the President & CEO to finalize an agreement with Resonance Consultancy to facilitate four community leader briefings and a countywide forum, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion carried: 10:0

11. Visit California - California Welcome Center Proposals & Next Steps

Kirk provided an update on the Visit California – California Welcome Center (CWC). He noted that an RFP was sent to all local DMO/destination partners on November 20, 2019, with a due date of December 6, 2019. Three communities

submitted proposals, and the proposals received are a broad representation of the county (North County, South County and North Coast). The three interested parties gave an in-person pitch to Visit SLO CAL staff. Kirk noted that staff will not make a recommendation to the Board, to avoid creating additional frustration with local partners who are not chosen and will instead allow the Board to form their own conclusions. The Executive Committee also opted against making a recommendation during their January 13, 2020 meeting. Kirk highlighted the key details from each proposal and presentation, and outlined key next steps. He noted that the Visit SLO CAL Board will be asked to select one of the proposals to fund at their January 15, 2020 meeting, and that \$37,500 of the sponsorship is included in the Budget Re-Forecast for the remainder of FY2019/20, which allows for the sponsorship to begin in February. After the Board selects a partner, Visit SLO CAL staff will introduce the selected partner to Visit California (VCA) for contract negotiations, as the managing entity will hold the contract with VCA. Kirk expressed his appreciation to all three of the communities that pitched and noted that all demonstrated a desire to be collaborative and show off the county as a whole.

Public Comment. Gordon Jackson, Executive Director, City of Pismo Beach, described some of the history behind the California Welcome Center in Pismo Beach, noting that the CVB has partnered with Simon Properties on the Outlets for 14 years, investing \$280k total in the process. He said that the reason the CVB picked that location in the first place is that it has bathrooms, a large amount of parking, it's right off Highway 1 and 101 and is near shopping and restaurants. Jennifer Little, Tourism Manager, City of Morro Bay, gave a brief overview of the City of Morro Bay's plan for the space, and noted that the location is near the water and the Rock, provides ADA accessibility, and that the location aligns with the DMS recommendation of developing the Morro Bay Waterfront. She also reiterated the funding structure from the proposal.

Board Discussion. N. Patel recommended keeping the CWC in its current location based on the traffic that runs through that area. Jamison noted that the abundance of parking has always been the attraction for the Pismo Beach location and is critical especially for the RV industry. H. Patel recommended the Morro Bay location, based on the location and its proximity to visitors. Sohi requested that whoever hosts the CWC should encourage exploration of the county. Pearce recused himself from voting based on his ties to the location where Atascadero is pitching. Popp noted that it made the most sense to keep the CWC at its existing location.

ACTION: Moved by Eads/Bickel to approve the selection of the South County Chambers of Commerce to receive dedicated sponsorship funding for the California Welcome Center.

Motion carried: 7:2:1
LeGras and H. Patel opposed. Pearce abstained.

12. Marketing Update

Davison provided an update on travel trade efforts, partnership and events updates, and key marketing initiatives, and he reported out on paid, earned and owned media results.

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Moved by N.Patel/Popp to adjourn at 10:31 am