



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors

Visit SLO CAL Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, March 18, 2020

8:30am

Oxford Suites

800 4th St, Paso Robles, CA 93446

(Video conferencing option also provided to the Board)

1. CALL TO ORDER: Clint Pearce

PRESENT: Kathy Bonelli, Mark Eads, Aaron Graves, Jay Jamison, Toni LeGras, Hemant Patel, Nipool Patel, Victor Popp

PRESENT (VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE): Jed Bickel, Sam Miller, Clint Pearce, Amar Sohi

ABSENT: Alma Ayon, Jim Hamilton

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

Call to Order at 8:35 am.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Davison provided instructions for Board members utilizing video conference to participate in the meeting. On behalf of the organization and the Board, he also offered condolences to Bonelli on the loss of her husband, Craig.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of February 19, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes

4. Approval of January Visit SLO CAL Financials

5. Approval of February Visit SLO CAL Financials

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

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

Motion carried: 11:0
Bonelli arrived after the vote.

CEO REPORT

6. CEO Report

Davison noted that the Board received a copy of Visit SLO CAL's first Board Summary as part of its Data Analytics and Insights Dashboard through Tourism Economics – an effort to collect all key insights in one platform. Once the dashboard is finalized, Visit SLO CAL will be able to provide custom reports to each DMO so that they can see how their metrics compare with other communities and the county as a whole. He reported out that, at their March 9, 2020 meeting, the Executive Committee endorsed advocacy of the Countywide Regional Compact, an aspirational document about what SLO CAL's communities aim to do to address the region's critical housing and related infrastructure challenges together. He noted that Visit SLO CAL is lending its name in support as county staff work with all of the cities and the Board of Supervisors to adopt this compact. He provided an update on the rescheduling of the Strategic Direction 2023 Work Sessions (1 & 2). He updated the Board that the Executive Committee approved finalizing the CEO contract, and the contract has been executed. Davison thanked the Board for their support. He reviewed U.S. Travel's Travel Trends Index for January 2020 vs. January 2019. He recapped the latest updates on the impact of COVID-19 on the industry, and described Visit SLO CAL's response to the pandemic thus far, with current Phase 1 budget reductions of more than \$572,000 in this fiscal year, including three position openings placed on hold. A cashflow projection is being developed which will inform Phase 2 and Phase 3 budget cuts for Board review at a proposed special meeting in the next few weeks. All spending has been paused except for items essential to business today. He also reminded the Board of its current reserve funds (\$963k) and that it has an untapped \$250k line of credit. Davison reported out on his United HQ meeting on March 12, 2020, and noted that United has cut one flight, and is expected to cut additional flights this week. Alaska is expected to pause Portland's June launch, and Contour will suspend service to Las Vegas for 120+ days effective March 25, 2020. Davison recapped the results of the COVID-19 Hospitality Business Impact Survey that Visit SLO CAL sent to all investors and partners, as well as what staff has heard from investors in lodging property call arounds, which are currently taking place twice weekly. He also shared highlights from Tourism Economics' report on the "Economic Impact of the Coronavirus Due to Travel Losses."

Public Comment. Danna Stroud, Travel Paso, noted that she was excited to hear that Visit SLO CAL is working with Tourism Economics on the Data Analytics and Insights Dashboard, and that this is the type of research that DMOs in the county will benefit from. In a response to LeGras' question about communities breaking out TOT by lodging type (like the City of Morro Bay), Stroud also noted that Paso Robles reports out TOT by lodging type, but not on a day-by-day basis like the City of Morro Bay.

Board Discussion. Bickel and Sohi questioned the ADR results from the survey, which suggested the industry was seeing an increase in ADR. Staff agreed to revise the question in the next survey to gain more clarity.

BUSINESS ITEMS

7. Board Member Guidelines

Prior to launching the Board seat application process, Visit SLO CAL used this time as an opportunity to update its Board Member Guidelines and outline responsibilities, a new code of conduct and expectations on how Board members should interact with Visit SLO CAL staff and each other. Davison reviewed the major changes, and noted that the document would be signed by all current Board members at the next meeting, if approved, and would be reviewed and signed by all Board applicants. Davison outlined the appointed seats up for re-appointment at the end of the FY (Hemant Patel, Morro Bay seat; Nipool Patel, San Luis Obispo seat; Amar Sohi, Atascadero seat; Jim Hamilton, County-appointed seat), and outlined the elected seats up for election at the end of the fiscal year (Aaron Graves, at-large seat; and four new at-large seats, as defined in the Bylaws). The application process will open on March 18, 2020 and close on April 10, 2020. The Executive Committee will hold an ad hoc board nominating committee meeting to discuss applications for elected seats and to recommend a slate to the Board. All applications will be in the May Board agenda packet and elected Board members will take their seat at the July meeting.

Public Comment – None.

Board Discussion.

ACTION: Moved by Eads/Graves to approve the updated Board Member Guidelines as presented, as recommended by the Executive Committee.

Motion carried: 12:0

8. Experience SLO CAL 2050 Prioritization

Visit SLO CAL staff and Resonance Consultancy hosted four sub-regional workshops to learn from partners the recommendations they see as critical for their communities and those they would like to engage in. Different than the unified approach heard from the DMS Visioning Workshops hosted in 2018, staff heard very different priorities from each of the communities and sub-regions. Staff and Resonance Consultancy worked to create a draft prioritization of recommendations for the Board's review. Kirk noted the top priorities requested in each subregion, as well as the number of votes received from partners on each recommendation, and he reviewed the process for how priorities were selected. He outlined the recommendations that fall under Visit SLO CAL's existing scope of work; recommendations that Visit SLO CAL would advocate for; and recommendations Visit SLO CAL would prioritize for FY2020-21 funding. He provided detail on each FY2020/21 recommendation that would require funding and provided the action items for each. Kirk noted that while the Chief Investment Officer (CIO) recommendation was only prioritized by one sub-region, many of the recommendations that the CIO would own gained wide support across the county, which is why it was included in the proposed prioritization. Davison noted that much of the funding for DMS recommendations would likely be delayed to January 2021 as a result of decreased funding due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Kirk outlined next steps and requested feedback from the Committee. Kirk noted that Visit SLO CAL is looking to set up a conversation with the Advisory Committee after the March Board Meeting to gain buy-in on the prioritization. Davison added that there is leeway for priorities to be changed based on Advisory Committee feedback, that the Board will take the Advisory Committee's feedback into consideration, and that the Board will ultimately make their decision based on what they believe is best for the organization and the industry.

Public Comment. Stroud noted that she was excited to see where Visit SLO CAL was in this process, and acknowledged the work that has gone into it. She added that having priorities established is important and timely, and that while she understands there are lanes, Travel Paso will intersect as needed.

Board Discussion. The Board agreed with the prioritization of the recommendations as presented.

9. FY2020/21 Budget Discussion

Davison acknowledged the unprecedented factors that staff is considering as they work towards the FY2020/21 budget, noting that Visit SLO CAL is projecting flat or down for July-December with increases in programming likely not occurring until Q3 and Q4 of the new fiscal year. Visit SLO CAL will consider adding a June Board of Directors meeting for approval of the budget, and Davison noted that the budget will need to remain nimble. He reviewed some of the high-level items that staff is proposing (based on when funds are available), including international representation, readiness and education; marketing and public relations; research; and Experience SLO CAL 2050 recommendations.

Public Comment.

Board Discussion.

10. Marketing Update

This item was pulled from the agenda in the interest of time.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 10:45 am.