



# MINUTES

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## Visit SLO CAL Executive Committee

### Visit SLO CAL Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday, October 14, 2019

11:30am

Visit SLO CAL Conference Room  
1334 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

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

**PRESENT:** Aaron Graves, Hemant Patel, Clint Pearce

**ABSENT:** Mark Eads, Jay Jamison

**STAFF PRESENT:** Chuck Davison, Brendan Pringle

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**Call to Order at 11:34 am.**

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

None.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Davison reminded the Committee members to take Visit SLO CAL's FY2018/19 Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey, using the Board-specific link. He also encouraged them to share the separate survey link in the email with fellow investors and partners.

Davison noted that the Industry Educational Symposium is happening on October 23, 2019, and highlighted the speaker line-up.

Visit SLO CAL has been contemplating moving the Beginning of Year Bash up to January 7, 2020 as a celebration in the event the Tourism Marketing District renewal is approved. Visit SLO CAL will float that date after the hearing date has been confirmed.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA**

3. **Approval of August 13, 2019 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**
4. **Approval of Resolution to Update Bank Account Signature Cards**
5. **Approval of Resolution to Renew Line of Credit**

Davison noted that, due to the timing of the meeting, September financials will not be available until November. He also noted that Visit SLO CAL is in the process of updating the checking account signature cards to include the current roster of Executive Committee members and President & CEO, and that upon approval of the Consent Agenda, Visit SLO CAL's line of credit with Bank of the Sierra would be renewed at \$250k, with the Executive Committee as signers. He reminded the Committee that this line of credit has not been drawn from in three plus years and remains in place in the event that the organization needs access to emergency funding.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

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

**Motion carried: 3:0**

## **CEO REPORT**

### **6. CEO Report**

Davison reviewed U.S. Travel's Travel Trends Index for August 2019 vs. August 2018. He reported out on the September Board Meeting action items. Davison also reported out on local meetings and his upcoming travel schedule. Based on the motion at the last Board Meeting, Visit SLO CAL has added language to the Advocacy Plan, noting that the organization would conduct proactive outreach with partners and would check in with members of the Executive Committee prior to taking a position on an issue. On September 13, 2019, Visit SLO CAL was issued its certificate of registration on the Supplemental Register for its SLO CAL Crafted® phrase and design service mark. Although conceived more two years ago, the advancement of SLO CAL Crafted® is also one of the recommendations in the Destination Management Strategy. Davison reported out on key takeaways from the Visit California Fall Board Meeting on October 10-11, 2019, and shared some of the research data that was provided during the meeting. He noted that Visit SLO CAL has a reserved table at the Central Coast Economic Forecast, happening November 8, 2019, and offered seats to the Committee. Currently, the date of the December Executive Committee meeting (Thursday, December 12, 2019) conflicts with the Destinations International Board Meeting. Davison asked if the Committee would prefer to cancel or reschedule this meeting. He also reported out on local meetings and his upcoming travel schedule.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion. The Committee agreed to reschedule the December meeting for December 16, 2019.

## **BUSINESS ITEMS**

### **7. Visit California – California Welcome Center**

On September 29, Pismo Beach Premium Outlets (Simon Property Group) filed notice with State of California announcing they will be closing the California Welcome Center (CWC) due to lack of financial funding, leaving the future of this highly-trafficked CWC at stake. CWC is a countywide asset, and its uncertain if the CWC can be relocated somewhere else in Pismo Beach and meet the CWC requirements. Visit SLO CAL has been in discussions with Visit California about securing the CWC in SLO CAL, and staff is seeking direction to continue those discussions and explore a potential Visit SLO CAL sponsorship, with conditions, to secure CWC's future in the destination in Pismo Beach or elsewhere along the Highway 101. Davison noted that Visit SLO CAL would not run a CWC, but would be interested in funding a center to keep it in SLO CAL. He also noted that, based on the timing of the issue and the need for immediate attention, the Executive Committee would need to provide direction prior to the next Board meeting.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

**ACTION:** Moved by Graves/Patel to allow the President & CEO to negotiate on behalf of Visit SLO CAL to keep the California Welcome Center in SLO CAL including sponsorship funding, with conditions, up to \$90,000 annually.

**Motion carried: 3:0**

## 8. Spartan Race Sponsorship

Davison outlined a sponsorship opportunity with The Spartan Race to bring their BEAST competition to Santa Margarita Ranch in March 2020. He noted that based on previous first year events, The Spartan Race expects 8000 competitors in the first year, and that the sponsorship opportunity would align with both the Active Adventurer persona and the Destination Management Strategy recommendation of bringing Signature Events to SLO CAL. In Monterey County's event, more than 3000 attendees come from 200+ miles away. Since the event would occur at Santa Margarita Ranch, lodging for the event would be needed in multiple surrounding communities meeting the directive of the event impacting multiple communities. Davison outlined the key metrics and noted that the activation would include up to \$60k in cash and in-kind sponsorship. Since AMGEN has confirmed that the Tour of California will not be in SLO CAL in 2020, budgeted funds would be deferred to this opportunity. The Spartan Race is looking for a three-year commitment, but this would be contingent on the renewal of the Tourism Marketing District and if The Spartan Race delivers on contracts and established expectations.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

**ACTION:** Moved by Graves/Patel to allow the President & CEO to enter into contract negotiations with The Spartan Race, establishing a sponsorship of \$60k in total cash and in-kind sponsorship, for an event at Santa Margarita Ranch and replacing AMGEN Tour of California in 2020.

**Motion carried: 3:0**

## 9. TMD Renewal Update

Davison provided an update on the TMD renewal process, noting that since the County released the petition on August 1, 2019, Visit SLO CAL has collected petitions representing more than 600 lodging properties. Countywide petitions received in support total 73.18% (a super-majority), which doesn't include a number of petitions that are yet to be counted. Visit SLO CAL has audited the County's petition tracker to ensure that all submitted petitions were tracked. He provided an overview of collected petitions and percentage represented by each jurisdiction. He provided an update on meetings, noting that Pismo Beach City Council will hold the last remaining city council hearing in the process. All other jurisdictions have unanimously approved resolutions for the renewal. He reviewed the upcoming (tentative) schedule of Board of Supervisors hearings. He encouraged all Pismo Beach Board members to write a support letter to the City Council and to attend Tuesday's meeting, as well as to calendar the second and third Board of Supervisors hearings (on November 19, 2019 and January 7, 2020, respectively). He also requested feedback from the Committee on how Visit SLO CAL should approach working with organizations around the county that did not support the renewal of the Tourism Marketing District or recommended against the continuation of the district. He noted that a similar request for feedback would be included in the November Board agenda.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

## 10. Marketing Update

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

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

## 11. Staffing Update

Davison requested feedback from the Committee on the inclusion of three new positions in the Budget Re-Forecast, which is scheduled to be presented for approval to the Board on January 15, 2020 (post-final Board of Supervisor TMD Renewal hearing on January 7): an Executive Assistant, a Sales Support role (level to be determined), and a Graphic Designer. He also announced that Brooke Burnham, VP of Marketing, will be transitioning off the team, effective December 20, 2019. He noted that he has been in contact with Searchwide as a national recruitment agency to identify replacement candidates. Searchwide has recommended that, based on the TMD's budget of \$7M+ post renewal, the role should be elevated to a Chief Marketing Officer (CMO), and that the salary range be increased accordingly.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

**ACTION:** Moved by Graves/Patel to allow the President and CEO to contract Searchwide as the recruiter for the CMO position at suggested increased salary, posting the position as soon as possible.

**Motion carried: 3:0**

**ACTION:** Moved by Graves/Patel to recommend Board approval of the addition of three new positions – Sales Support, Executive Assistant and Graphic Designer – to the 2019/2020 Budget Re-Forecast.

**Motion carried: 3:0**

## ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 1:22 pm.