



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Executive Committee

Visit SLO CAL Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 11, 2021

3:00pm

Video Conference – URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84841539597>

Meeting ID: 848 4153 9597 Passcode: 517522

1. CALL TO ORDER: Clint Pearce

PRESENT (VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE): Mark Eads, Aaron Graves, Hemant Patel, Clint Pearce, Amar Sohi

ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Chuck Davison, Brendan Pringle

Call to Order at 3:01pm.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of January 14, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Davison noted that January Financials are still being finalized and will be presented in February.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

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

Motion carried: 5:0

CEO REPORT

4. CEO Report

Davison provided an update on open positions, including the CMO, PR & Communications Manager and Finance & HR Manager roles. On January 25, 2021, the Visit SLO CAL Leadership Team held a quarterly check-in with Coraggio to discuss its progress on the Strategic Direction 2023 (SD2023) Operational Plan. While the absence of CMO and PR Manager and the work from home format has delayed some of the larger marketing and culture initiatives, staff continues to move forward

with the prep work to execute them. Davison highlighted some of the notable progress made on SD2023 objectives. Staff has finalized a project scope for the Oceano Dunes Economic Impact Assessment. Next steps include a stakeholder meeting to gain financial buy-in. Davison noted that the Coastal Commission staff report should be published this week, and Visit SLO CAL is collaborating with the South County Chambers of Commerce to submit a letter prior to the upcoming Coastal Commission meeting. At the same time, Visit SLO CAL is working with South County Chambers on a letter to Governor Newsom, asking to postpone the Coastal Commission hearing until the vacant South Central Coast Commissioner position is filled, so that SLO CAL communities have an advocate on the Coastal Commission Board. On February 1, 2021, the Tribune published a biased article featuring a flawed economic impact study from a Cal Poly associate professor, with the misleading headline, "Off-road riding at Oceano Dunes has 'no significant impact' on SLO County economy, study says." After Visit SLO CAL expressed its disappointment to The Tribune, they have suggested they are writing a follow-up editorial piece about the issue. As approved in the re-forecast, Visit SLO CAL is co-leading the effort to work on a Cal Poly economic impact report, in partnership with the university, and with assistance and contribution from the City of SLO, providing oversight for the process. Visit SLO CAL held an initial meeting with President Armstrong on February 4, 2021, and are working to identify what departments at Cal Poly can assist with data collection. A draft project assessment scope for the Economic Impact Study is being developed, and once the scope is agreed to, Visit SLO CAL will begin outreach for proposals. Davison provided an update on local outreach to newly elected officials, and asked the Committee to let staff know if they are interested in participating in any elected official "on-boarding" meetings so that they can be added to the calendar invite. Spartan officials have tentatively rescheduled the Spartan Race for November 20-21, 2021, the weekend before Thanksgiving, which has historically been a soft weekend. Staff has checked this date against local event calendars to ensure it does not conflict with any other events. As previously noted, the event would remain part of their National Series and includes co-ops from five communities.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

BUSINESS ITEMS

5. Highway 1 Closure Response Update

Due to the Rat Creek mudslide, Highway 1 is currently closed in Monterey County, but completely open in SLO CAL. Davison noted the location of the closure, and highlighted Visit SLO CAL's response. The Visit SLO CAL team quickly reactivated Highway 1 Closure information, from its 2016/2017 closure playbook, upon notice of the closure, adding content and navigation resources to SLOCAL.com for businesses and consumers, and mailing laminated one-sheets to lodging investors as well as chambers, visitor centers and CA Welcome Centers with navigation information and detour route maps. At Visit SLO CAL's January Board meeting, the Board approved increasing overall ad spend by \$600k between now and June, totaling over \$1M in direct media spend over the next 4.5 months. This advertising will also help offset the impact of the closure. Caltrans continues their assessment and rebuilding timeline development. Once that work is complete, Visit SLO CAL will begin advocating for the full re-opening. Visit SLO CAL is in direct communication with North County lodging investors, as well as Caltrans, Visit California, Monterey County CVB, and Sen. Laird's office, and other elected officials to assure efforts are aligned, and has also been working with all its agency partners on messaging, as necessary.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

6. COVID-19 Impact & Response Update

Davison provided an update on local COVID-19 response efforts. San Luis Obispo County received \$7.7M in FEMA funds to provide COVID-19 vaccines for distribution centers. The county is still in Phase 1b of distribution efforts, but have vaccinated over 15,000 people who are 75 and older and/or health care workers; other local agencies have vaccinated about 10,000 more. On February 10, 2021, the County opened vaccines to people 65 and older. Thus far, about 20 percent of those who have completed the vaccine series have received their second dose. He provided an update on state COVID-19 response efforts, noting that the state has received 5.8 million doses, and has administered an average of 155,087 shots

each day. Thus far, 7.2 percent of Californians have received at least one dose. At a national level, President Biden has issued several executive orders that have a severe impact on the travel industry. U.S. Travel collaborated with Airlines for America on a coalition letter to raise feasibility and cost concerns with the White House regarding a potential domestic testing requirement prior to air travel, which could be problematic on several levels, and the organization has also pushed for greater clarity from the administration on mandatory self-quarantine and self-isolation requirements for inbound travel. Davison noted that national air travel recovered some of its losses through the rest of 2020, but remains at less than half of 2019 levels, and that since the beginning of March and through the end of 2020, the pandemic has resulted in \$492 billion in cumulative losses for the U.S. travel economy, equating to a daily loss of approximately \$1.6 billion for the past 10 months. The continual depressed level of travel spending has caused a loss of \$64 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue since March 1. Davison also reviewed international traveler sentiment research and domestic travel research on the impact of the vaccine and COVID-19 on travel plans in the coming months. Davison provided an update on air service for the month of March and reviewed the most recent STR report. Davison also provided an update on Visit SLO CAL's COVID-19 relief options. He reviewed the Cash Flow Projection through June, with updated room revenue results from January and expenses reflecting the re-forecasted budget.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

7. Marketing Agency Update

Davison provided an update on the on-boarding of Visit SLO CAL's agency-of-record, Mering. Visit SLO CAL signed its contract with Mering, effective February 1, 2021, and is currently working to package its photo, video and advertising assets to send to Mering. Mering is currently reviewing the research that's been conducted up to this point, as well as understanding the scope of Visit SLO CAL's current contact database. They are developing the stakeholder engagement questions, along with the visitor engagement questions and source for methods of outreach. They will be reviewing all creative against the current campaign and will help develop the annual Marketing Committee Retreat to inform the Business & Marketing Plan.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

8. Travel Trade & Marketing Update

Davison provided an update on recent and upcoming travel trade efforts. He noted that the Marketing Committee retreat will be postponed to April to provide more time for Mering to on-board in advance of the meeting, and that Visit SLO CAL is working with Coraggio Group and Mering on the format; Coraggio Group will be facilitating the meeting. He outlined the purpose of the retreat, and added that based on the current state, Visit SLO CAL will likely look to have a special Board meeting in June, as was done in 2020, to approve the FY 2021/22 Budget and the Business & Marketing Plan, allowing for as much planning time in the pandemic as possible. Other business items that would typically be on the May agenda will remain on the May agenda. Davison provided an update on the paid media campaign, noting that Visit SLO CAL worked with Miles Partnership to reallocate the \$600k in surplus funds to the FY 2020/21 Media Plan. He reviewed the media plan, and noted that the spring campaign launched February 8, 2021. All media is being placed within the state with the goal of activating those who can drive to SLO CAL. He reviewed the paid, owned, and earned media highlights from January 2021, and recapped some of the key results from Restaurant Month.

Public Comment – None

Committee Discussion. Pearce and Eads recognized the impact of Restaurant Month and thanked Visit SLO CAL for its efforts.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CLOSED SESSION ITEM

9. Employee Dismissal

CLOSED SESSION REPORT

ACTION: Moved by Graves/Eads to allow the President & CEO to continue retaining Kathy Eppright for local oversight of a claim involving the termination of an employee.

Motion carried: 5:0

Davison noted upcoming agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 4:21pm.