



MINUTES

Visit SLO CAL Executive Committee

Visit SLO CAL Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 11, 2021

8:30am

Video Conference – URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81324937873>

Meeting ID: 813 2493 7873

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 8:36am.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of February 11, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

4. Approval of January 2021 Visit SLO CAL Financials

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

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

Motion carried: 4:0
Sohi arrived after the vote.

CEO REPORT

5. CEO Report

On February 18-19, 2021, the Visit SLO CAL team attended Visit California’s virtual Outlook Forum, and a link to the pre-recorded sessions and key takeaways were sent in This Week in SLO CAL. Davison noted some of the key takeaways. Caltrans began emergency repair work on Highway 1 at the Rat Creek slide on March 1, 2021, and under their current

timeline, the road is expected to open early summer. Visit SLO CAL is in continuous communication with Caltrans and our North Coast lodging investors and is amplifying efforts for the North Coast in its campaigns. Davison provided an update on the Cal Poly Economic Impact Report, noting that the project scope has been finalized, in collaboration with Cal Poly and the City of SLO, and that once an MOU between Cal Poly, City of SLO and Visit SLO CAL is finalized, Visit SLO CAL will begin soliciting proposals from agencies. Davison provided an update on the Oceano Dunes Economic Impact Report, noting that the project scope has been finalized, and that Visit SLO CAL and the South County Chambers of Commerce are working together to gain buy-in from the Cities of Grover Beach, Arroyo Grande and Pismo Beach, as well as the County, and will subsequently begin outreach to potential agencies to obtain proposals. In advance of the March 18, 2021 Coastal Commission hearing, Visit SLO CAL worked with South County Chambers of Commerce and REACH on a co-op letter to the Governor's Office and Coastal Commission asking for a stay on the decision until a Commissioner from the South Central Coast District has been appointed. On February 24, 2021, the Tribune Editorial Board printed an article concluding that more analysis was needed to understand the full impact of the Oceano Dunes to our community. Davison reported out on Visit SLO CAL's outreach with newly elected local officials (Supervisor Ortiz-Legg, Councilmember Laurel Barton, Councilmember Mark Dariz, Councilmember Jan Marx and Councilmember Scott Newton), and noted that a meeting is scheduled with Senator John Laird (D-17), which will focus on the Highway 1 reopening and upcoming state legislation impacting the tourism industry, including SB 285. Davison provided an update on the Bob Jones Bike Trail and VSC's efforts to support California Transportation Commission (CTC) grant funding of a project that would connect the City of San Luis Obispo via Ontario Road to the Avila Beach entrance, in line with the Experience SLO CAL 2050 recommendation for a Countywide Trails System. With the CTC grant and approval from the Board of Supervisors, the Bob Jones Bike Trail project can move forward. Davison provided a staffing update, noting Visit SLO CAL is continuing to source applications for the PR & Communications Manager and Finance & HR Manager positions, and that the CMO role has been transitioned into a contractor/consultant position for the balance of the fiscal year. Davison noted that Cathy Tull, former CMO for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, signed an agreement to serve as Visit SLO CAL's Chief Marketing Consultant from March 1-June 30, 2021. He outlined her schedule, noted she will continue to work in-market two weeks each month and discussed with the Committee her departure from Las Vegas.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

BUSINESS ITEMS

6. COVID-19 Impact & Response Update

Davison provided an update on local COVID-19 response efforts. San Luis Obispo County is still in Phase 1b of distribution efforts, but has opened vaccine registration to four additional sectors: education, childcare, emergency services and food and agriculture. Over 81,600 vaccines have been distributed locally. He provided an update on state COVID-19 response efforts, noting that the state announced last week that beginning April 1, theme parks and sporting events can open to limited attendance, which is expected to lead to expanded event and meeting options. As of March 9, 2021, over 10.6 million vaccines have been administered throughout the state. Governor Newsom announced a commitment to allocate 40 percent of vaccine doses for the hardest-hit communities and establish a vaccine equity metric to assist with vaccinating more vulnerable populations and essential workers. Davison provided an update on the California Tourism Recovery Act (SB 285), which would provide \$45M to Visit California for a strategic media and jobs recovery campaign. The bill is currently before the Senate Appropriations Committee, and received unanimous support from the Labor Committee, with all of the Labor Committee members signing on as co-authors. It could be passed as early as end of March or early April. At a national level, Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Davison outlined how the bill will provide federal assistance and support to aid the travel and tourism industry's recovery. He also noted that while it is a step forward, U.S. Travel is still calling on Congress to extend the March 31, 2021 application deadline for the PPP and provide a third draw loan for the hardest hit industries, as well as pass the Hospitality and Commerce Job Recovery Act. Visit SLO CAL will be participating in U.S. Travel's Destination Capitol Hill on March 17, 2021, and is scheduled to meet with Rep. Salud Carbajal and the region's two Senators to advocate on behalf of the local tourism industry and partners. Davison noted U.S. Travel's findings on American travelers' optimism, readiness to travel and perception of safety, in light of the COVID-19 vaccine. He also showcased some of the insights available on U.S. Travel's Travel Recovery Insights Dashboard, noting that Visit SLO CAL is working with Tourism Economics to have a direct link to this report through its Tableau dashboard portal. Davison provided

an update on air service, noting that Seattle will increase to two flights daily beginning March 18, 2021. Direct service from San Diego is scheduled to relaunch June 17, 2021 (one daily flight), and service from Portland is scheduled to launch the same day (one daily flight). Visit SLO CAL continues to focus its media plan efforts on drive markets this fiscal year, and the SLO County Regional Airport will cover airport advertising in new markets through June. However, Visit SLO CAL will work to develop a Portland activation to support the flight, and hold paid media for the market until FY 22, likely starting September or later. Davison reviewed the most recent STR report. He also provided an update on Visit SLO CAL's COVID-19 relief options, noting that Visit SLO CAL should receive its forgivable PPP loan in the next two weeks.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion.

7. Travel Trade & Marketing Update

Davison provided an update on the on-boarding of Mering, Visit SLO CAL's Agency-of-Record. On March 8, Visit SLO CAL met with the core team at Mering at their Sacramento office as part of an immersion session to get them up to speed on SLO CAL brand, providing background information and development, and historical marketing intel. They also discussed current initiatives and kicked off the planning of the FY 22 Business & Marketing Plan. Davison noted that it was refreshing to hear that the agency was looking toward the advancement of the SLO CAL brand and not planning for major changes. The Marketing Committee Planning Retreat has been scheduled for Monday, April 12, 2021 – Wednesday, April 14, 2021 with the full day retreat in-person on Tuesday, April 13, 2021. He noted that the Retreat will inform the development of the FY 22 plan which will include strategy, brand evolution and media, and will be before the Board for approval at a special Board meeting in June. He provided an update on Mering's research efforts, and thanked the Committee members participating in the stakeholder research that Mering is conducting. Davison provided an update on recent and upcoming travel trade efforts, and reviewed the paid, owned, and earned media highlights, from February 2021. He also reviewed recent and upcoming partnership efforts.

Public Comment – None

Committee Discussion.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CLOSED SESSION ITEM

8. Employee Dismissal

CLOSED SESSION REPORT

No action was taken by the Committee during Closed Session.

BUSINESS ITEMS

9. CEO Annual Review

Davison reviewed the criteria set forth for the President & CEO's bonus compensation: 12.5 percent bonus is tied to Visit SLO CAL's operation and 12.5 percent bonus is tied to the delivery of Strategic Direction 2020 (March 2020 – June 2020) and Strategic Direction 2023 (July 2020 – February 2021) imperatives. He added that a detailed documentation of results was provided to the Committee in advance of the meeting. Davison exited the room while the Committee discussed the Annual Review.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion. In their review, the Committee recognized how Davison put the county tourism industry and the organization before himself in the organization's response to the pandemic, and was not afraid to stand up for the tourism community at every opportunity.

ACTION: Moved by Graves/Eads to recommend that the Board approve the CEO Annual Bonus at 100%.

Davison noted upcoming agenda items.

ADJOURNMENT

Adjourned at 10:36am.