



Minutes

Visit San Luis Obispo County Marketing Committee

Visit San Luis Obispo County Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 14, 2016

8:30am

Embassy Suites

333 Madonna Road, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chuck Davison

PRESENT: Ashlee Akers, Terrie Banish, Molly Cano, Cheryl Cuming, Amanda Diefenderfer, Christen Goldie, Brent Haugen, Gordon Jackson, Lori Keller, Heather Muran, Jennifer Porter, John Sorgenfrei

ABSENT: Jim Allen

STAFF PRESENT: Chuck Davison, Michael Wambolt, Jordan Carson

Call to Order at 8:31am.

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

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Haugen introduced the new Tourism Manager for the City of Morro Bay, Jennifer Little. Haugen also reminded the Committee to be cautious when promoting giveaways or promotional months. He noted that anyone hosting specials or promotions should add a disclaimer to everything to ensure there are no legal issues, especially regarding discrimination.

Cano introduced the new Tourism Intern for the City of San Luis Obispo, Katie Conroy.

Davison offered Brendan Pringle, VSLOC Office Manager, congratulations for his recent nuptials and let the Committee know he will be on his honeymoon for two weeks.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. **Approval of May 10, 2016 Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes**

Committee Discussion.

Public Comment – None.

ACTION: Moved by Muran/Cano to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

**Motion carried: 11:0:1
Keller abstained.**

4. **CEO Report**

Davison announced the resignation of Judith Bean from the VSLOC Marketing Committee. There will likely be no representation from Arroyo Grande/Grover Beach in the coming months on the Committee.

Davison announced the resignation of Becky Singh, VSLOC Marketing Director, and noted that VSLOC is working with a national executive search firm to fill the position. The Director of Marketing position has been elevated to a VP of Marketing position.

Davison noted that Kylee Jepsen, Senior Communications Coordinator & Film Commission Liason, has given three months notice. VSLOC will push the job description out to the Marketing Committee under the new title, Communications Manager.

Davison provided an update on the recently presented Merrill Research Study stating that during the first week of July, VSLOC will likely be releasing a multi-sheet document highlighting various aspects of the study deemed important by VSLOC staff. Along with the VSLOC's research study, the research studies done for local DMO partners in the county will all be made available to BCF.

Davison reported out on his recent Visit California China CEO Mission. During the CAISSA Touristic Beijing Office site visit, in which Visit California was doing an office takeover, Davison mentioned that there was no SLO County representation on the wall clings adorning the office walls. This theme was prevalent throughout other events and visits during the trip. Davison made note that VSLOC should produce a more traditional tri-fold SLO County brochure to be issued to these travel agencies. During the media interviews, Davison observed a clear lack of understanding of what lies between San Francisco and Los Angeles as tour operators look for unique experiences in California. Davison noted that the banners hung at the consumer activation event with Willie Cauley-Stein didn't have any SLO County representation, reminiscent of the VCA office takeover. During the visit to VinExpo, Davison found that there was limited representation from SLO County. Davison added that one of the key takeaways was ensuring photos of blue skies make it into all future China advertising, as well as including "California" in SLOC logos for international messaging.

Committee Discussion – Porter noted that the Paso Wine jobs page is one of the most trafficked area of the website and they can post the VP of Marketing job there as well. Sorgenfrei asked if VCA had a solution for the lack of SLO County representation and Davison proposed we give them 4-5 iconic SLO County photos for future use. Porter noted that while J.Lohr has representation in VinExpo, other producers in the area would likely not participate because they are small production wineries and don't have the distribution in place. More feasible options where SLO County could possibly have representation would be Canada, U.K. and Germany. Sorgenfrei questioned how we make people aware that we have a wine region once in China if the wine alliances and most producers won't be in attendance.

BUSINESS ITEMS

5. Marketing Agency Update

Davison updated the Marketing Committee on BCF's current immersion schedule. BCF has already been in market two times, each spanning a week. Their goal is to stay in a different destination each time they visit and perform intercepts, stakeholder interviews and conduct meetings with VSLOC staff while also gaining a better understanding of each community's offerings.

Committee Discussion – Cuming expressed concern that the agency is not getting enough exposure in the 10 unincorporated areas. Davison noted that they have stayed in the unincorporated areas and they will have additional visits after their initial two month immersion plan, but that they are immersing themselves in 16+ communities in 6-8 visits, and that during that time, they have to visit each DMO's region. Haugen and Diefenderfer were unaware that BCF were holding stakeholder interviews. Each would like to offer additional experiences, but were unaware BCF was in or going to be in their respective communities. Sorgenfrei thought it was great that BCF was taking the time to come to SLO County and immerse themselves and asked if they needed to be shown around while they were in market. Davison

assured the Committee that BCF was going about this from the tourist perspective and did not need to be given a tour. BCF will be in attendance at the July Marketing Committee meeting to give a high level informative presentation about what they've learned from their intercepts thus far.

Public Comment – None.

6. Strategic Plan Update

Davison presented the three-year Strategic Plan developed in partnership with Coraggio Group. Coraggio and VSLOC conducted six, in-depth planning meetings over six weeks to form this three-year strategic plan. Next steps, after approval by the Board, are developing an Operational Implementation Plan with a three-bucket component: items that we start today, items already in the works such as the Marketing Plan and countywide conference feasibility study, and long term items that we begin in small steps today.

Committee Discussion - Sorgenfrei asked if the agency will be handling the implantation of Brand Clarity. Davison assured the Committee that they are and noted that BCF attended meetings with Coraggio. Cuming asked if the Countywide Icon would be revisited. Davison noted that it most likely won't be revisited right now and it hasn't been used as robustly as everyone had hoped, but that perhaps it would be in the future. Davison also noted that the VSLOC brand will be changing and likely not be inclusive of the words "Visit" and "County" which may make it easier for a local community to include the new Visit SLO County brand. Sorgenfrei agreed that the brand should be the first priority.

Public Comment – None.

7. Sponsorship

Davison opened the floor for discussion about current duplication of sponsorship efforts between communities, application process and criteria, and recommendations on ways to improve it for FY2016-17.

Committee Discussion – Diefenderfer recommended that VSLOC move forward with a bi-annual sponsorship application process. Diefenderfer noted that Travel Paso has a subcommittee that goes through the process, makes recommendations and sends those to their Board. Sorgenfrei noted that it is better to see one large sponsor for an event rather than many smaller. Having many small sponsors created issues with advertising and ensuring everyone has exposure. Sorgenfrei said it would be better to choose one or two larger opportunities, like the American Airlines Co-Op.

Keller suggested VSLOC set aside money to promote specific events and fund marketing about the events themselves instead of individually. Porter noted that one event per year will save a lot of time.

Cano provided insight into the City of SLO's process, noting it can be difficult with individual communities because if you say no, then it seems as though the City isn't supportive. Cano wanted to make note of what events individual communities are attending to ensure there isn't duplication and competition. SLO pulled out of the San Diego Bay Wine and Food Festival after hearing VSLOC and the SAVOR Brand were attending. Davison noted that the VSLOC San Diego Bay Wine and Food discussion began in July 2015 after Fast Forward was contracted to run SAVOR and that he attended last year's San Diego event to determine build-out and opportunities at the event. Porter noted that PasoWine would like to go on the road with SAVOR or convince a winery partner to participate in the booth.

Haugen noted that Morro Bay is also on one sponsorship cycle. If there is any money left over, then they open the process back up. This year, Morro Bay attached dollar amounts to event criteria.

Both Morro Bay and Atascadero have developed new sponsorship applications and will send to VSLOC staff. Davison noted that VSLOC gathered all the individual communities' applications for input before ultimately creating their own similar application and that VSLOC will need to develop more specific requirements if it continues to fund local events. Davison suggested that it might be more valuable for VSLOC to spend the sponsorship dollars by taking SAVOR on the Road to reach a 100% tourist audience.

Davison noted that local events in question need to span two communities, otherwise it should be up to the individual community to sponsor since it is not a county event. It was decided that this topic would be discussed again at the next meeting to obtain additional feedback.

Public Comment – None.

8. AMGEN Tour of California Recap

The Stage 4 start of AMGEN Tour of California happened in Morro Bay on May 18. Davison requested feedback from the Committee.

Committee Discussion – Haugen noted that the logistics team was outstanding and the marketing team brought things together as the event grew closer. Morro Bay experienced problems on the PR Side and with AEG for accommodations. Haugen noted that 83 rooms were booked from spectators. Part of the rooms that Morro Bay helped sponsor went unused and they never received a rooming list.

Cuming asked if VSLOC will pursue a relationship for the 2017 race. Davison noted that VSLOC is waiting on key analytics from AEG as far as perceived versus actual coverage. For a future race, VSLOC is pushing for a start and finish in the County. Cuming asked if there was a process for an unincorporated community to submit to be a start or finish in upcoming races. Davison noted that AEG makes that decision based on logistics, but asked that if a community is interested, please let VSLOC know.

Haugen suggested that a booklet should be made for future partners that explains what it means to participate as a start or finish. It would be useful to come together as previous host cities to create a document that would make it easier for communities to decide. Davison asked the communities for their notes regarding this.

Public Comment – None.

PRESENTATION

9. DMO Spotlight – City of Atascadero

This presentation was tabled until the July Marketing Committee Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:36am.