



# MINUTES

## Visit SLO CAL Marketing Committee

---

### Visit SLO CAL Marketing Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 9, 2023

8:30 am – 10:30 am

Visit SLO CAL Office – 81 Higuera Street, Suite 220, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

**PRESENT:** Jim Allen, Molly Cano, Stacie Jacob, Gordon Jackson, Lori Keller, Kathleen Naughton, Linda Parker-Sanpei, Lynette Sonne, John Sorgenfrei, Jill Tweedie

**STAFF PRESENT:** Cathy Cartier, Trevor Lynch, Melissa Murray, Eric Parker, Rachelle Ramirez, Lauren Miller, Alyssa Manno, Brooke Weisbecker, Camille Silvera, Theresa Nagai, Mayla Lohnes

**PUBLIC:** Lindsey Hynes, Lacie Johns, Megan Leininger

Call to order at 8:34am

---

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

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – None.

### CONSENT AGENDA

#### 3. Approval of March 14, 2023 Marketing Committee Retreat Minutes

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – None.

**ACTION:** Moved by Jackson/Tweedie to approve the **March 14, 2023** Marketing Committee Retreat Minutes. Abstained by Keller/Jacob/Naughton. Motion denied due to lack of quorum needed to approve. Motion will be brought back to the July 11, 2023 Marketing Committee meeting.

**Motion carried: 7:3:0**

### CMO REPORT

#### 4. Visit SLO CAL CMO Updates

Cartier reminded the committee about the Visit SLO CAL Bash on Friday, May 12th.

Cartier introduced Matt Halverson, the new Marketing Manager at Visit SLO CAL.

Cartier updated the committee on the SLO County Airport Attitudes and Usage research that will be conducted by Heart & Mind Strategies. The research will be locally focused and is projected to kick-off in April with report delivery scheduled for June.

Cartier reviewed the recent Rural Incidental Camping Policy instated by the County Board of Supervisors which allows overnight RV camping. Visit SLO CAL is legally prohibited from marketing and promoting lodging properties that are not part of the TMD and not paying TOT.

Cartier shared with the committee that the 2023 Destination Summit will be held Thursday, October 5, 2023. The event will be located at Embassy Suites in San Luis Obispo and will be a half day including lunch. Cartier prompted the committee for feedback on what speakers and topics they would like to see at the event.

Cartier informed the committee that the SLO CAL Open dates for Morro Bay are changing to December 5-10 due to poor weather conditions in the past. The World Surf League will also move the longboard event. The SLO CAL Open dates for Pismo Beach will remain the same.

Cartier shared the Marketing Committee meeting dates for the upcoming fiscal year. Cartier expressed if the meetings are to be bi-monthly, the committee needs to be in attendance.

Cartier shared a recap of the Visit SLO CAL team scavenger hunt where staff had scavenger hunt locations throughout the destination. Cartier thanked the partners who helped with the event.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – In regard to the Rural Incidental Camping Policy, Sonne asked if Visit SLO CAL can still promote the business without promoting the camping. Sorgenfrei asked if marketing businesses who allow camping would be acceptable considering we have directed marketing efforts towards local businesses who do not pay into TOT. Cartier responded to Sonne and Sorgenfrei that because of the way the law is written, if the business allows camping, they become a lodging property and Visit SLO CAL is prohibited from promoting lodging properties who do not pay TOT. Jacob asked if a landowner needs to have a permit to allow RV Camping and if Visit SLO CAL could create a membership option that would allow those businesses to be in compliance. Cartier responded to say the County will not be tracking as they will not be requiring permits, however, the business also cannot charge for the over-night stay. Sonne reiterated Jacob's notion to create an annual membership in replacement of TOT for businesses who allow camping. Sorgenfrei responded that it would be too complicated to maintain such a membership. Jacob stated that Travel Paso cannot promote certain wineries because they are outside Paso Robles city borders but could promote them if they paid a membership. Sorgenfrei suggested that Visit SLO CAL should be telling partners that if they have free camping they cannot be promoted. Cartier responded to say that is Visit SLO CAL's plan and the organization is currently keeping a list of who is allowing free camping and removing them from its marketing efforts. Cartier followed up to say that Visit SLO CAL will continue trying to work to find a resolution for this issue. Cano asked for clarification that if a business is following the County Ordinance, they cannot charge for a guest's overnight stay. Cartier responded yes and clarified there is only certain spaces that qualify for the overnight camping and the business must have retail on their property as well. Cartier said she will send information to the marketing committee and recommends the committee to get ahead of sharing this news with partners. Keller asked why Visit SLO CAL is not able to only promote the business and exclude promotion of their overnight camping. Cartier responded to say that we cannot direct people to partners website's who offer camping. Sorgenfrei says we should reach out to the SLO County Attorney to clarify.

Regarding the Destination Summit keynote speaker and panel discussion topics, Jacob suggested touching on the topic of what the role of tourism is with community issues. Jackson asked if there will be anything about resident sentiment to which Cartier replied that Visit SLO CAL is considering it. Keller stated that it's helpful to hear a larger economic report for the tourism industry and Sorgenfrei agreed with the recommendation.

Regarding the Marketing Committee meeting dates for FY 24, Jacob and Cano stated they will send representatives of their team in their place if they cannot attend a meeting to which Cathy replied that it is beneficial, but doesn't help meet the quorum for voting on agenda items. Sorgenfrei recommended to emphasize the importance of attendance there should be punitive consequences for missing meetings. Parker-Sanpei asks if Visit SLO CAL can host virtual meetings, and Cartier responded that Visit SLO CAL has a ruling from County Attorney saying virtual meetings would not be permitted.

## **Business Items**

### **5. FY 24 Draft Business & Marketing**

Cartier presented the draft of the FY 24 Business & Marketing (BMP) plan.

Motion: Moved by Jacobs/Keller to recommend that the Board approve the FY 24 BMP in concept as presented.

**Motion carried: 10:0:0**

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Regarding the marketing focus recommendations in the BMP, Jacob asked why there is a focus on Las Vegas. Cartier said there is a direct flight from Las Vegas into Santa Barbara (SB) and those visitors are driving from SB to SLO, so there is a focus on determining a direct flight need. Jackson asked if there is space for more airlines. Cartier responded to say there is space, but the issue is availability for landing/take off times as most airlines want flights to land/take off around the same time. Cartier also added that the SLO airport has an expansion plan. Cano asked if we should be focused on the Tier 4 geographic region presented in the BMP key markets and Cartier responded to say those destinations are in the conversation but not a focus. Cano recommended Visit SLO CAL add a recommendation in the BMP for Tier 4 focus in marketing efforts; Cartier responded to say she will work through a solution.

Regarding the Website User Experience study, Sorgenfrei suggested having website link referrals directing users to the DMO's. Cartier responded to say the fastest way for a guest to book is where we would direct website users. Cano added that looking at the traffic driving as a whole to both partner and DMO websites to determine success is most important. Jackson said the Pismo Beach CVB board wants to know how much SLOCAL.com website traffic is being driven to Pismo, and it's hard to reach the traffic being driven to individual partners. Cartier said Visit SLO CAL can look at how the organization is reporting now and if there is an option to segment the data by region that could be used for future reports. Sorgenfrei stated that it's always going to be important to think about bottom line for the report, especially how brand awareness helps bottom line. Cano added that should not be looking specifically at traffic to DMO websites, but instead looking at the brand awareness and how it indirectly benefits the properties as a whole. Keller stated that visitors who are aware of the destination will go directly to a business's website to book a stay, not through SLOCAL.com, and it's Visit SLO CAL's job to bring about awareness of the destination not to get bookings directly through DMO's websites.

### **6. FY 24 Proposed Budget**

Cartier presented the proposed FY 24 budget and where funds will be allocated.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – None.

## **7. Marketing Committee Member Application Approval**

Cartier shared the three elected seats up for renewal as well as an open seat on the committee. Ashlee Akers and Joel Peterson reapplied to serve on the Marketing Committee for another term. Audrey Arellano did not reapply for another term. Cartier also presented the applications from new applicants which are listed below:

Annie Bowsky, SLOCOG Communications Coordinator

Chanda Brown, CASS Winery & Vineyards, Chief Marketing & Business Development Officer

Sara Elena Loaiza, Casa San Miguelito, Chief Hospitality Officer

Ashley Lavacot, Sans Liege Wines and Tin City Cider, Events, Marketing & Cider Club Manager

Lydia Bates, Hotel San Luis Obispo, Director of Sales & Marketing

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion –The committee agreed to renew Peterson and Akers for another term. After Cartier presented the applications from new applicants, Naughton asked if there was recommendation for any applicants from the committee. Cartier responded that Peterson sent in a recommendation for Chanda Brown and Cheryl Cumming recommended Sara Elena Loaiza. Cartier shared her sentiment that SLOCOG would be a better partner for our advocacy department. Sorgenfrei pointed out that Lydia Bates has experience with one of the largest DMO's in the country. Jacob recommended Chanda Brown and stated that Travel Paso would continue partnering with Chanda either way. Cano recommended Lydia Bates as she sits on the SLO TBID board and is involved with the SLO International Film Festival. Cartier stated that both Lydia Bates and Chanda Brown bring a strong hospitality perspective. Sorgenfrei asked if the committee could make a recommendation to expand the committee to another seat to which Cartier replied yes but to keep in mind how the increase would affect quorum requirements. Sorgenfrei agreed with Cartier to keep the committee at its current number of members.

## **8. Co-Op Opportunities**

## **9. Hero Shoot**

Cartier recapped the countywide Hero Shoot completed by Pensara in April.

Highlights from the updated objectives include increasing usage of the SLO CAL nomenclature, developing a sustainable tourism strategy and building local understanding of the positive impact tourism has on the community.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – Keller asked if the Marketing Committee will be able to use the assets to which Cartier responded yes.

## **10. EDI Training**

Cartier reminded the Marketing Committee that there will be a mandatory EDI training on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at Embassy Suites as part of Visit SLO CAL's Strategic Direction 2023. The EDI training will be led by Kisha Dixon, the Keynote Speaker at the 2023 CalTravel Summit.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion – None.

## **11. California Tourism Month/National Travel & Tourism Week**

Parker shared the Press Release for the SLO CAL Mural Trail which launched at the beginning of May 2023 coinciding with California Tourism Month. Parker also shared the *Tourism Economic Impact Marks Record Year in SLO CAL* press release for highest spending ever for travel & tourism in SLO County.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion- None.

## **12. Marketing, ESC 2050 & Travel Trade Update**

Parker highlighted the Earned Media from January 2023 to date. Parker asked the Marketing Committee what dream coverage PR should be reaching for in FY24?

Lynch presented Owned Media updates including the SLO CAL Mural Trail, organic traffic to the SLOCAL.com website, KPI performance, top performing social media posts and top performing blog posts. Lynch also presented Paid Media updates including campaign summary and campaign-to-date metrics.

Murray presented on ESC 2050 including SLO CAL Welcome, Events & Festivals Strategy and Countywide Trails System.

Cartier provided an update on GoWest Summit and shared the schedule for IPW.

Public Comment – None.

Committee Discussion- In response to Parker's prompt for PR goals for FY 24, Parker-Sanpei recommended wellness and Sorgenfrei recommended best beaches.

**ADJOURN: 10:37 AM**