



JOINT MEETING JPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & VISIT GREATER PALM SPRINGS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:37 a.m. by Gary Gardner, JPA Chair, at The Empire Polo Club, in Indio, CA.

Roll Call

The roll call is recorded on the following page.

MARCH 29, 2024

Location: The Empire Polo Club
Room: Rose Garden - Pavilion
81800 Avenue 51,
Indio, CA 92201
March 29, 2024
8:30am – 10:00am

JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Gary Gardner, Chair
City of Desert Hot Springs

Waymond Fermon, Vice Chair
City of Indio

Rita Lamb
City of Cathedral City

Greg Sanders
City of Indian Wells

Linda Evans
City of La Quinta

Jan Harnik
City of Palm Desert

Jeffrey Bernstein
City of Palm Springs

Steve Downs
City of Rancho Mirage

V. Manuel Perez
County of Riverside

VGPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rolf Hoehn, Chair
Indian Wells Tennis Garden

Peggy Trott, Vice Chair
Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs

Tom Scaramellino, Secretary
Westin Rancho Mirage Golf
Resort & Spa

Aftab Dada, Treasurer
Hilton Palm Springs Resort

Kate Anderson
Agua Caliente Band of
Cahuilla Indians

Lorraine Becker
Cabot's Pueblo Museum

Sejal Bhakta
Hampton Inn & Suites

John Bolton
Oak View Group

Celeste Brackley
The Line & Saguaro Hotels

Gary Cardiff
Cardiff Limousine &
Transportation

Kenny Cassidy
Acme House Company

Jay Chesterton
Fantasy Springs Resort Casino

Dermot Connolly
La Quinta Resort and Club

Tim Ellis (Emeritus)
Ellis Hospitality Services

Eddy Estrada
Smarter Property Management

David Fellman
VRON of Palm Springs

		PRESENT	NOT/YTD
CITY OF DESERT HOT SPRINGS	Gary Gardner, Council Member, Chair	X	
	Roger Nunez, Council Member		
CITY OF INDIO	Waymond Fermon, Council Member, Vice Chair	X	
	Elaine Holmes, Council Member		
CITY OF CATHEDRAL CITY	Mark Carnevale, Mayor		E
	Nancy Ross, Mayor Pro Tem		E
CITY OF INDIAN WELLS	Greg Sanders, Mayor	X	
	Ty Peabody, Council Member		
CITY OF LA QUINTA	Linda Evans, Mayor	X	
	Steve Sanchez, Council Member		
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS	Jeffrey Bernstein, Mayor	X	
	Ron deHarte, Mayor Pro Tem		
CITY OF PALM DESERT	Jan Harnik, Mayor Pro Tem	X	
	Karina Quintanilla, Mayor		
CITY OF RANCHO MIRAGE	Steve Downs, Mayor	X	
	Meg Marker, Council Member		
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE	V. Manuel Perez, Supervisor, 4th District		E
	Joaquin Tijerina, Economic Development Manager	X	
VISIT GPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS ROLL CALL		PRESENT	EXCUSED
	Rolf Hoehn, Chair - Indian Wells Tennis Garden	X	
	Peggy Trott, Vice Chair - Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs		E
	Tom Scaramellino, Secretary - Westin Rancho Mirage Golf Resort	X	
	Aftab Dada, Treasurer - Hilton Palm Springs Resort		E

VGPS Board of Directors
(continued)

Shannon Gilbert
The Ritz-Carlton, Rancho Mirage

Mark Girton
Goldenvoice & Empire Polo

Rob Hampton
Palm Springs Convention
Center

Jerry Keller
LULU California Bistro

Patrick Klein
The Shops on El Paseo

Kelly McLean
MJM Holdings, Inc.,
McLean Company and Poppy

Nusrat Mirza
JW Marriott Desert Springs

Allen Monroe
The Living Desert

Lee Morcus (Emeritus)
Kaiser Restaurant Group

Michael Murray
Hotel Paseo

Liz Ostoich
FARM and Tac/Quila Palm
Springs

Brad Poncher
Homewood Suites by Hilton, La
Quinta

Greg Purdy
Palm Springs Aerial Tramway

Tim Pyne
Renaissance Esmeralda Resort
& Spa

Saverio Scheri
Agua Caliente Casinos

Bob Schneider
Desert Consulting

Ankit Sekhri
Two Bunch Palms

Barb Smith
Eventis Destination Services

Boris Stark
Palm Desert Vacation
Properties

Joseph Tormey CSU
San Bernardino Palm
Desert Campus

Doug Watson
Strategy | Innovation | Co.

	PRESENT	EXCUSED
Kate Anderson, Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians		E
Lorraine Becker, Cabot's Pueblo Museum	X	
Sejal Bhakta, Hampton Inn & Suites, Palm Desert and Indio	X	
John Bolton, Oak View Group	X	
Celeste Brackley, The Line & Saguaro Hotels	X	
Gary Cardiff, Cardiff Limousine & Transportation	X	
Kenny Cassady, Acme House Company	X	
Jay Chesterton, Fantasy Springs Resort Casino	X	
Dermot Connolly, La Quinta Resort & Club	X	
Tim Ellis (Emeritus), Ellis Hospitality Services	X	
Eddy Estrada, Smarter Property Management		E
David Feltman, VRON Palm Springs	X	
Shannon Gilbert, The Ritz-Carlton, Rancho Mirage	X	
Mark Girton, Goldenvoice & Empire Polo		E
Rob Hampton, Palm Springs Convention Center	X	
Jerry Keller, LULU California Bistro	X	
Patrick Klein, The Shops on El Paseo		E
Kelly McLean, Poppy		E
Nusrat Mirza, JW Marriott Desert Springs Resort & Spa	X	
Allen Monroe, The Living Desert		E
Lee Morcus (Emeritus), Kaiser Restaurant Group	X	
Michael Murray, Hotel Paseo		E
Liz Ostoich, FARM and Tac/Quila Palm Springs	X	
Brad Poncher, Homewood Suites by Hilton La Quinta	X	
Greg Purdy, Palm Springs Aerial Tramway		E
Tim Pyne, Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa	X	
Saverio Scheri, Agua Caliente Casinos		E
Bob Schneider, Desert Consulting	X	
Ankit Sekhri, Two Bunch Palms		E

Barb Smith, Eventis Destination Services	X
Boris Stark, Palm Desert Vacation Properties	X
Joe Tormey, CSU San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus	X
Doug Watson, Strategy Innovation Co.	X

A quorum was reached. 25 BOD and 8 JPA.

STAFF/ATTORNEY

Scott White, President and CEO
 Bill Judson, VP, Finance and Administration
 Colleen Pace, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer
 Davis Meyer, Senior Director of Community Affairs
 Julie Sinclair, Director of Brand Communications
 Lauren Bruggemans, Dir. of Sustainability & Community Engagement
 Anthony Ruiz, Website Specialist
 Samuel Thompson, Director of Indian Wells Tourism
 Sean Smith, Director of Economic Development

Gary Orfield, Director of Tourism Development
 Stefanie Kilcoyne, Director of Operations
 Carolina Viazcan, VP of Sales
 Sarah Goslin, Executive Assistant & Board Administrator
 Kimber Foster, Director of Palm Springs Tourism
 Andy Cloutier, Director of Human Resources
 Lena Wade, Legal Counsel
 Todd Burke, VP of Communications
 Joyce Kiehl, Director of Communications
 Krystal Kusmieruk, Senior Marketing Manager
 Bob Wilson, Brand Communications Specialist
 Jackie Vega, Senior Community Events Manager
 Doedi Ford, Front Desk/Visitor Assistance

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

JPA Chair, Gary Gardner, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONFIRMATION OF AGENDA

JPA Chair, Gary Gardner, asked whether there were any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, the agenda was confirmed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

This Public Comment period is for items that appear within the Consent Calendar or matters that are not listed on the agenda.

JPA Chair Gardner called for public comments. There were no public comments on record.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Scott White thanked staff member Doedi Ford for her 22.5 years of service with Visit Greater Palm Springs and wished her a wonderful retirement.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (All Vote)

JPA – VGPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS JOINT MEETING MINUTES DATED FEBRUARY 2, 2024 (all vote)

The JPA Executive Committee and VGPS Board of Directors Joint Meeting Minutes dated February 2, 2024, were presented for approval. JPA Chair Gardner asked for a motion. Mayor Linda Evans with City of La Quinta made a motion to approve, Councilmember Waymond Fermon with the City of Indio seconded. No abstentions. The City of Cathedral City was not present to vote. There was no further discussion, and the minutes were approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

CONSENT CALENDAR (only JPA Executive Committee votes)

- **WARRANTS AND DEMANDS DATED JANUARY 2024**
- **WARRANTS AND DEMANDS DATED FEBRUARY 2024**

The Warrants and Demands dated January and February 2024 for Pacific Premier Bank were presented for approval. JPA Chair Gardner asked for changes or abstentions. Hearing none, the Warrants and Demands were approved based on the roll call vote at the beginning of the meeting. The City of Cathedral City was not present to vote.

VGPS BOARD (BOD Vote Only)

- **No items for vote**

JPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (JPA Vote Only)

- **Approve Resolution JPA 2024-003 - Amendment to Section 12 of the Amended and Restated Joint Powers Agreement**

The staff report was presented for background and explanation of the proposed changes. Scott said VGPS recommended Coachella join the JPA based on the addition of economic development recruitment and their growing vacation rental segment. Based on the history of member payments, the proposed amended agreement requires an entry fee equal to estimated gross rental revenues x .55%. Additionally, there is a required Operational Fee of 15.62% x the Entry Fee. This totals \$35,372 in Coachella's case. The annual contribution from each JPA Member is the greater of \$35,000, or applicable contribution amounts based on a funding mechanism equal to .0015 x gross room rental revenue for lodging establishments, and .0035 x gross room rental revenue for Convention hotels.

Gary asked for a motion to add this language into our Amended and Restated JPA Agreement. Mayor Linda Evans with City of La Quinta made a motion to approve, and Mayor Pro Tem Jan Hamik with City of Palm Desert seconded.

Linda Evans requests that we equalize Riverside County's annual contribution as well. The new language would include Riverside County as part of the stated funding mechanism.

The recommendation is we update the JPA Agreement with this new language and take it back to the two members that have recently approved (La Quinta & Palm Desert) to present it again for approval, and then present the updated agreement to the other 8 members for approval vote (Desert Hot Springs, Cathedral City, Palm Springs, Rancho Mirage, Indio Wells, Indio, Riverside County, and Coachella). The goal is to have the Amended and Updated JPA Agreement signed by each JPA Member by the end of June 2024 in order to have it in place for fiscal year, July 1, 2024.

JPA Chair, Gary Gardner, called for an approval of Resolution JPA 2024-003 by a roll call vote. All members approved, with no abstentions. The City of Cathedral City was not present to vote.

PRESENTATIONS

Presentation One:

Scott White introduced Steve Hankin, President & CEO of Desert International Horse Park.

Steve Hankins, President and CEO of the International Horse Pack Park, highlighted the park's substantial impact on the valley since a new ownership group took over about four years ago.

- The park, the largest horse park in the U.S. at 239 acres, has undergone significant renovations with an investment of \$22 million.
 - The Horse Pack Park now hosts 2,000 horses and between 6,000 and 10,000 people weekly during
-

its season from November to March.

- Hankins discussed the economic impact of the park, citing a study from a COVID-19 year that estimated it at \$260 million.
- The park contributes significantly to the local hospitality industry, with expenditures for staff accommodations alone amounting to \$1.6 million.
- He emphasized the diversity of the park's demographic, including wealthy exhibitors, industry professionals, and international visitors.
- The park operates as a small city for five months each year, with activities and events that draw substantial public and economic engagement.
- Efforts are ongoing to make the park more accessible and welcoming to the general public, improving facilities and security.
- Hankins invited the community to engage with the park, especially during their significant Saturday night events which attract large crowds.
- The session concluded with appreciation for the local community's support and an invitation for further engagement and visitation.

Presentation Two:

Colleen Pace introduced Stephanie Walker, Area Manager for Greater Palm Springs, from Expedia Group to discuss various aspects of the travel industry, focusing on trends, market conditions, and AI integration.

Campaigns and Collaboration: Discussed successful destination campaigns with Expedia and VRBO, highlighting the integration of vacation rentals into their offerings.

Traveler's Path to Purchase: Explained the complex journey a traveler goes through before making a purchase, emphasizing the lengthy process involving extensive research and planning which is done in 4 steps.

1. **Traveler Insights and Trends:** Provided insights into market trends specific to the Greater Palm Springs area, including festival booking paces and the influence of advertising on traveler decisions.
2. **AI in Travel:** Discussed the role of AI in travel, predicting increased utilization of AI in travel planning and booking to streamline the extensive research travelers undertake.
3. **Impact of Advertising:** Highlighted the significant impact of visual advertising and the strategic use of media to influence travel decisions, stressing the importance of high-quality images and compelling content.
4. **Consumer Behavior:** Touched on how travelers consume information and make booking decisions, with a specific focus on the role of mobile devices and digital ads in influencing travel choices.

Economic Impact: Addressed the economic impact of travel on local economies, particularly through co-op campaigns with hotels and the broader media landscape.

Festival Impact: Delved into the specific impacts of local festivals like Coachella on travel demand and booking patterns in the Greater Palm Springs area.

Future Outlook: Shared expectations for future travel trends and the continued importance of innovative marketing strategies to attract travelers, especially in competitive destinations like Palm Springs.

CEO / PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Colleen Pace:

Colleen provided a brief update on the current and upcoming marketing initiatives, with a full update scheduled for the next board meeting.

Current Campaigns:

Spring Getaway Campaign: Launched to boost visitation during the spring season. The campaign includes:

- Custom landing pages.
- Ads running across digital and social media platforms.

-
- Geo-targeting in key fly-and-drive markets.
 - Promotion of getaway offers. Partners are encouraged to submit their offers to be included in the campaign.

Co-op Season Recap:

- Production: A 10-day production featuring 10 new and 4 existing spots, totaling 14 spots this year.
- Participation: Thanks extended to all who participated, making the season fun and productive.
- Behind-the-Scenes Video: A video recap of the season was shared, highlighting fun moments and teamwork.

Media Partnerships:

- Good Morning Washington Collaboration: Following a connection made at IMM in January, a partnership was established with "Good Morning Washington," which featured five episodes this week showcasing the valley. The segment included 21 partners, ranging from Palm Springs to Coachella, significantly increasing exposure in the DC market.
 - Colleen hinted at potential future efforts to increase awareness in the DC market, indicating strategic marketing planning for broader reach.

Davis Meyer:

Davis presented a brief update on recent partnerships and achievements, highlighting significant awards and new collaborations aimed at expanding accessibility and strengthening government relations.

Awards and Recognitions:

- Visit California's California Dreamer Award: Highlighted the prestigious California Dreamer Award, which is awarded every two years, recently received by Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, for outstanding contributions.
- Content Marketing Award: Received the Poppy Award from Visit California for exceptional content marketing, thanking all partners for their contributions that led to this success.

New Initiatives:

- Accessible Travel: Discussed the importance of accessible travel, a \$120 billion a year industry, noting that 15 million Americans with disabilities travel annually. Emphasized the need for accessible information about accommodations and attractions for travelers with disabilities.
- Partnership with Wheel the World: Announced a new partnership with Wheel the World, a booking platform providing detailed accessibility information. Plans include collaborating with local partners to enhance property accessibility information and integrate this data on a microsite linked through the Greater Palm Springs website.

Government Relations:

- Collaboration with Capital Advocacy: Following a competitive bidding process, Capital Advocacy was selected to handle government relations in Sacramento. The partnership aims to build a legislative platform that supports the region's tourism priorities.
- Engagement with Local Government: Chad Mays will spearhead efforts to meet with city and county government relations teams and partner agencies to ensure strategic alignment and enhance the organization's advocacy efforts in Sacramento.

Davis concluded by expressing enthusiasm for the new initiatives and partnerships, emphasizing their potential to significantly impact both accessibility in tourism and legislative support for the region's tourism industry.

Colleen Pace:

Staff updates:

- Sean Smith returns to the team as the Director of Economic Development.
- Jackie Vega is the new Senior Community Events Manager
- Ashley Owens joins as the new National Sales Manager for the SE Market
- Samuel Thompson is the new Director of Indian Wells Tourism.

JPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATES

- Gary Gardner:
 - Asking for letters of support from any hotels or tourism-related businesses, for the Chuckwalla National Monument, in anticipation of the Senate resolution introduction by Senator Padilla's office.
- Jan Harnik:
 - Highlighted the absence of a 24-hour veterinarian clinic in Coachella Valley, with a plan to advocate for one through a signed letter from all city councils and unincorporated areas.
 - Breaking ground in two weeks on Desert Surf.
 - April 18th free concert at Civic Center Park – music is created from bio-waves of native desert plants which somehow turns into music.
 - Living Desert has Glow in the Park until April 28th.
- Waymond Fermon:
 - Tap House on Miles just had its grand opening.
 - Our local American Idle contestant, Abby Carter, did a free concert this past Saturday in Indio.
 - WoodSpring Suites Indio opening July 29, 2024
- Jeffrey Bernstein:
 - Steve Chase awards tomorrow, April 7th
 - White Party scheduled for the following night.
 - Free Opera in the Park on April 17th.
 - Surf Park to have parties for both weekends of Coachella,
- Rolf Hoehn:
 - Record setting year for the BNP Paribas of over 493k visitors the first week, and 440k visitors the second week. Thank you to everyone in this room.
- Scott White:
 - Recognized Board & JPA birthdays for February and March.

FUTURE MEETING DATE

- June 14, 2024 | Agua Caliente Resort Casino Spa Rancho Mirage

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Scott White & Gary Gardner at 9:55 a.m.

Clerk for the Board:



Sarah Goslin, Executive Assistant & Board Administrator

VGPS Board of Directors Secretary:



Tom Scaramellino, Secretary

Approval Date:


