



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

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### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m. by Gary Gardner, JPA Chair, at The Westin Rancho Mirage Golf Resort & Spa in Rancho Mirage, CA.

### **Roll Call**

The roll call is recorded on the following page.

**SEPTEMBER 27, 2024**

Location: The Westin Rancho Mirage Golf Resort & Spa

Room: Oasis 1-4

71333 Dinah Shore Dr,

Rancho Mirage, CA 92270

September 27, 2024

8:30am – 10:00am

JOINT POWERS AUTHORITY

Gary Gardner, Chair  
City of Desert Hot Springs

Waymond Fermon, Vice Chair  
City of Indio

Mark Carnevale  
City of Cathedral City

Dr. Frank Figueroa  
City of Coachella

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

Affab 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, <b>Chair</b>	x	
	Roger Nunez, Council Member		
CITY OF INDIO	Waymond Fermon, Council Member, <b>Vice Chair</b>	x	
	Elaine Holmes, Council Member		
CITY OF CATHEDRAL CITY	Mark Carnevale, Mayor		x
	Nancy Ross, Mayor Pro Tem		x
CITY OF COACHELLA	Dr. Frank Figueroa	x	
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	
	TBD		
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE	V. Manuel Perez, Supervisor, 4th District		
	Joaquin Tijerina, Economic Development Manager	x	
VISIT GPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS ROLL CALL		PRESENT	EXCUSED
	Rolf Hoehn, <b>Chair</b> - Indian Wells Tennis Garden	x	
	Peggy Trott, <b>Vice Chair</b> - Kimpton Rowan Palm Springs		E
	Tom Scaramellino, <b>Secretary</b> - Westin Rancho Mirage Golf Resort	x	

VGPS Board of Directors  
(continued)

**Shannon Gilbert**  
The Ritz-Carlton, Rancho Mirage

**Mark Girton**  
Goldenvoice & Empire Polo

**Rob Hampton**  
Palm Springs Convention Center

**Dan Johnson**  
Grand Hyatt Indian Wells Resort & Villas

**Jerry Keller**  
LULU California Bistro

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

Bob Schneider, Desert Consulting	x	
Ankit Sekhri, Two Bunch Palms		E
Barb Smith, Eventis Destination Services		E
Boris Stark, Palm Desert Vacation Properties	x	
Joe Tormey, CSU San Bernardino Palm Desert Campus		E
Doug Watson, Strategy   Innovation   Co.	x	

**A quorum was reached. 28 BOD and 9 JPA.**

#### STAFF/ATTORNEY

Scott White, President and CEO  
 Bill Judson, VP, Finance and Administration  
 Brian Kelty, Director of Finance  
 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  
 Samuel Thompson, Director of Indian Wells Tourism  
 Sean Smith, Director of Economic Development

Stefanie Kilcoyne, Director of Operations  
 Tammy Bucklin, Director of Sales  
 Sarah Goslin, Executive Assistant & Board Administrator  
 Kimber Foster, Director of Palm Springs Tourism  
 Andy Cloutier, Director of Human Resources  
 Bruce T. Bauer, Legal Counsel  
 Todd Burke, VP of Communications  
 Joyce Kiehl, Director of Communications  
 Emily Alvarez-Zurita, Convention Sales Coordinator  
 Bob Wilson, Brand Communications Specialist

#### 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.

#### Presentation

Chad Mayes from Capitol Advocacy provided an overview of the 2023/2024 legislation and the priority legislation for 2025/2026.

There were 4,821 bills introduced during this last legislative session, which ended at midnight on August 31<sup>st</sup>.

The priority legislation for 25/26 includes ensuring SB584, the short-term rental tax law, stays dead.

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## JPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (JPA Vote Only)

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- **Approve Resolution No. JPA 2024-010 – Legislative Platform for 2024-2025 Legislative Session**

The legislative platform was presented for approval. Waymond Fermon with the City of Indio made a motion, and Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta seconded. No abstentions. Mark Carnevale from the City of Cathedral City was not present to vote. All approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

- **Approve Resolution No. JPA 2024-009 – Amended Conflict of Interest Code**

The amended conflict of interest was presented for approval. Steve Downs made a motion, and Greg Sanders seconded. All approved. No abstentions. Mark Carnevale from the City of Cathedral City was not present to vote. All approved based on the roll call at the beginning of the meeting.

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## JPA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATES

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Jeffrey Bernstein with the City of Palm Springs:

1. The Thompson Palm Springs hotel's ribbon cutting ceremony is this afternoon.
2. The City of Palm Springs is hosting a ribbon cutting on Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup> for the Palm Springs Navigation Center to mark the completion of the second phase of the large-scale facility for unhoused people in Palm Springs.
3. College of the Desert's groundbreaking ceremony for the West Valley Campus is scheduled to be held on November 14<sup>th</sup>. The campus is scheduled to open in fall 2027.
4. The 2024 Palm Springs Pride takes place on the weekend of November 2<sup>nd</sup> and is going to be the biggest pride event since its inception.
5. The Palm Springs State of the City is being held on October 30<sup>th</sup>.

Jan Harnik with the City of Palm Desert:

1. CSU campus groundbreaking scheduled for Q2 of 2025.
2. The City Council approved thirty thousand dollars for Palm Desert business to become autism certified.
3. Measure G is going onto the November 5<sup>th</sup> ballot, which is a one-cent sales tax increase ( a 1% tax on items bought and sold in the City).
4. The Blue Envelope Program is in place in Riverside County. The program is designed to promote inclusivity and serve as an enhanced communication awareness tool between law enforcement and community members.
5. A Shake Shack is opening later this year on El Paseo.

Kate Anderson with Agua Caliente Tribe of Cahuilla Indians:

1. Spa Séc-he and the Agua Cultural Museum were named one of Time magazine's 2024 world's greatest places.
2. The Junior Ranger Expo is coming up October 19<sup>th</sup> and is free for families.
3. The annual Native American Learning Day & Market will be on November 16<sup>th</sup> and is free for families.
4. The annual Singing the Birds (Bird Song & Dance Festival) will be held on January 25<sup>th</sup>.
5. The Regional College Fair will be held on October 9<sup>th</sup>. This supports/educates students and future employees on options available to them after college and draws about 6,000 people.

Patrick Klein with The Gardens on El Paseo:

1. December or early next year Shake Shack is going to be opening.
2. Restoration Hardware under construction opening before next year,
3. Alo hopes to be open before Black Friday, and Carolina Herrera is under construction.

Linda Evans with the City of La Quinta:

1. November 14-17<sup>th</sup> is the La Quinta Arts Celebration.
2. December 8<sup>th</sup> is the Joint-Ironman event.
3. The Talus project is moving through the courts, and the Montage is still very engaged.

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Waymond Fermon with the City of Indio:

1. The Indio International Tamale Festival is being held December 7-8, 2024.
2. In June of 2023, Indio passed a resolution that allowed the creation of a Joint Powers Authority (the "Indio Electric Financing Authority") comprised of the City of Indio and the Imperial Irrigation District ("IID") for the provision of electric service in the City of Indio. This per kilowatt charge was implemented at the beginning of the year and has already generated about sixty million dollars in funds for the city.

Dr. Frank Figueroa with the City of Coachella:

1. Tacos, Tequila & Chavelas Festival taking place on October 21<sup>st</sup>.
2. The Run with Los Muertos takes place on November 2<sup>nd</sup>.
3. The Coachella State of the City is being held on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Steve Downs with the City of Rancho Mirage:

1. At the September 19<sup>th</sup> Rancho Mirage City Council Meeting, we passed a measure on gift cards, the Shop Local Rewards and E-gift card Program, which is designed to incentive locals to spend local.
2. The Gallery Classic Golf Tournament is taking place at the end of March.

Greg Sanders with the City of Indian Wells:

1. The Hyatt Regency Indian Wells Resort & Spa has been elevated to a Grand Hyatt Indian Wells Resort & Villas.
2. The Epsom Tour (qualifying LPGA golf tournament) taking place October 3-6 at the Indian Wells Golf Resort.

Gary Gardner with the City of Desert Hot Springs:

1. Signed the contract with KD Homes for approximately 280 more new homes, bringing the total to just shy of 400 new homes being built in Desert Hot Springs.
2. An article ran in the Desert Sun on our successful revitalization project.
3. Desert Hot Springs State of the City luncheon being held on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Kelly McClean with Poppy:

1. The Palm Springs Hospitality Association is having its first pickleball tournament on Saturday, November 16<sup>th</sup>, benefiting the Boys & Girls Club and Scholarship Fund.
2. Splashhouse has a new event taking place November 15-16 called Desert Air, at the Palm Springs Air Museum.

Nusrat Mirza with JW Marriot Desert Springs Resort:

1. The Annual Children's Miracle Network Walk/Run takes place at Desert Springs Villas tomorrow morning – goal is 40k dollars.

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## CEO / PRESIDENT'S REPORT

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The complete Board Packet can be viewed on our website [here](#), and a direct link to the presentation also available on our website is [here](#).

**Scott White:**

1. The American Travel Sentiment Study's national results show that a desire for experiences play an important role when selecting a destination, and for the most part, travelers are not changing their plans due to politics. For Greater Palm Springs, indigenous experiences are critical for our destination to stay relevant.
  2. Palm Springs International Airport now has twenty-eight non-stop flights across thirteen airlines through the end of the year. This includes the new flight to Dulles in Washington, D.C.
  3. VGPS is promoting our destination to the Olympic international teams to train prior to the 2028 Olympics being held in Los Angeles. We are working with Rod Davis, Davis Sports + Entertainment Consultant, on initiatives to host delegations fitting for VGPS based on venue and summer climate. The priority being sports that require minimal specialized equipment or set up.
  4. The TED Conference, one of TED's flagship events, changes locations every ten years. The 2027-2037 Sponsorship was sent out for bid, and Greater Palm Springs is one of three destinations they
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are considering. We have solidified a sponsorship for their 2025 TED Conference taking place in Vancouver, Canada, and may also sponsor their Design Summit in 2027.

5. VGPS has hired the consultation group, Coraggio, to facilitate our Board Strategy Sessions to set our 2025-2027 Board Priorities, with results presented at our January 31, 2025, Board Meeting.
6. Board Member and Board Officers' election and renewals will take place at our December Board Meeting. The recommendation is to keep the same slate of officers for the 2025/2026 term.

#### **Colleen Pace provided updates on Marketing, Sales, and Travel Trade:**

##### Marketing:

Some highlights of VGPS's summer marketing.

This was our most successful co-op program to date, with 15 partners this year. Many adjusted their timing to include September.

VGPS also implemented high-impact advertising that increased our impressions by almost twenty million across all digital campaigns.

For the first time, VGPS participated in the Expedia National Brand campaign. - Next phase of that is VGPS aligning with their 2025 Trend Report, which will be aligned with "Detour Destinations" included in their 2025 trends in November.

The VRBO Summer Vacation Rental Campaign garnered 6.1 million impressions, and twenty-three thousand vacation rental nights which resulted in thirteen million dollars in revenue.

Summer Social Media Campaign reached 1.6 million people, gaining three thousand one hundred and seventy-eight new followers.

The New Brand Campaign has been a year-long process. We went out for competitive bids and selected Starfish as our production company. We chose 'Escape Your Ordinary' as the new brand campaign, which was launched this week with the start of fall.

##### Sales Report Out:

Our bookings and room nights are at 110% of our YTD Goal. Leads have stabilized compared to the last couple of years, but we're encouraged to see the next three years show as ahead of pace.

We had four partners join us for the ASAE Annual Meeting – where we hosted different events and activations. One event was a joint breakfast with Palm Beaches, where we had 100 attendees join us. This was to attract association business, since they rotate east-west.

Our sales team attended 11 sales trips and tradeshow from July – August, with 29 more planned for the next few months.

We are planning for the Maritz Sourcing Team to come out for an immersion experience, as well as the Palm Springs Film Festival Fam.

If interested in a full list of events for our team, please let Colleen know.

##### Travel Trade:

Our Travel Trade Sales Team participated in eighteen sales trips and trainings from July – September, connecting with clients across 11 countries. The team has twenty-four more sales trips, missions, tradeshow, and trainings in ten countries, planned for fall.

##### **Todd Burke:**

1. VGPS joined with Mattel to host a Barbie inspired art installation at the London Design Festival, which ran from September 14-22, 2024. 3 pieces were included, called the Pavilions of Wonder. This year's theme, "Play," allowed Greater Palm Springs and Barbie to come together to highlight our destination's outdoor wellness activities in addition to our iconic midcentury modern design.

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This garnered two hundred twenty-seven million impressions, with an ad value of over 2.1 million dollars. A nationwide clip also ran on CBS Saturday morning, which had over two point six million broadcast viewers.

We had print in the Times of London, The Telegraph and a few other publications.

We hosted fifty media and content creators for a sneak peek of the installation, and dinner, before the festival started.

2. Media teams travel over the next few months include:
  - a. IGLTA in Osaka, followed by Tokyo to meet Luxury Media Journalists in October.
  - b. Korea & China with VC in November.
  - c. ITLM and VC France Media Mission in December.
3. GoPro is in the destination now, and SATW will be here next week.
4. Fall in-market media includes:
  - a. October - Modernism Week Fam,
  - b. November – UK/Irish Media, and VGPS hosted Pride Fam,
  - c. December – Media Fam to celebrate the new united flight from Dulles.
5. The Meet the Mentors program was even more successful this year.

**Davis Meyer:**

Economic Development – Sean Smith has been working with Northstar on our brand and marketing strategy for economic development, we are in the creative design phase.

We hosted a welcome reception for the ICSC group during their conference at PSCC this week, which was a great opportunity to connect with the Economic Development team members from the shopping centers.

We signed up for Jobs EQ, which is a robust platform that allows us to see very granular specific job data for the region, and it has been shared with our Economic Development TAC members. This is available to our cities to pull reports on data for their specific cities. We will be sharing with all of the Board soon.

This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year we've hosted an Event Services Professional Celebration spearheaded by Elizabeth Jamison. Honored 11 professionals this year.

We have a partnership with the booking platform, Wheel of the World, which is for individuals with wheelchairs. We still have 19 spots available for partners – this is free – please sign up and reach out to Lauren Bruggemans with questions.

We had a very successful summer pilot Internship program with 6 hospitality students. We will be expanding this program next summer.

We are continuing our Autism Certification and would love to become a certified autism destination. We are only two hotels and one attraction away from becoming certified. Thank you to the city of Palm Desert for putting together the grant program to help us.

TEAM GPS is our Ambassador and Workforce Training program. Two hundred and twenty new champions have taken the course since we rolled it out this year. This is available for anyone to take, just go to [goTeamGPS.com](http://goTeamGPS.com).

The Leadership Institute Certificate classes through COD start October 8<sup>th</sup> and are free through the Tourism Foundation for hospitality employees. You can find more information on [goteamgps.com](http://goteamgps.com).

COH Awards on November 25<sup>th</sup> at the JW Marriott Desert Springs. We still have sponsorships available!

Recognized Board & JPA birthdays for July, August, and September.

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FUTURE MEETING DATE

- December 13, 2024 | Palm Springs Convention Center

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned by Scott White & Gary Gardner at 9:56 a.m.

Clerk for the Board:



Sarah Goslin, Executive Assistant & Board Administrator

VGPS Board of Directors Secretary:



Tom Scaramellino, Secretary

Approval Date:

