

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2022 – Video Conference due to COVID-19 Pandemic

Board Members Present:

Dean Hutton, Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort & Spa
Golda Escalante, Avila Lighthouse Suites
Ken Kelly, Coastal Vacation Rentals

Others Present:

John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising
Claudia Torkelson, TJA Advertising
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA administrator
Kathleen Naughton, SLO Coast Wine Collective

Board Members Absent: None

CBID: Cheryl Cuming

1. **Call to Order:** by Chair Dean Hutton at 10:00 am.
2. **Roll Call:** by Stephanie Rowe
3. **Public Comment:** None
4. **Consent Items:** A motion was made by Ken Kelly and seconded by Golda Escalante to approve the February 9, 2022 minutes, as amended. With no further discussion, the minutes were approved by a voice vote of the local Advisory Board.
5. **CBID and Financials Update:** Cheryl Cuming gave an update for the past month.
 - a. Website traffic still going strong which is the main goal. Subsequent goal is keeping visitors on the website for at least 1 minute or getting conversions with people giving their email address.
 - b. Reviewed detailed website data: 6.3m impressions for Jan 2022 from media buy (many more than in the past); 152k clicks (30% more than before); \$.34 CPC (42% better than Dec); approximately 50k new visitors from paid media (60% of all new visitors); 305k engagements (compared to 248k for all last FY); 10k 1+ minute users from paid media; over 3,000 maps downloaded/email from media.
 - c. TOT/Assessment growth comparing Avila collections Jan 2020/2021/2022: 2020-\$103,805; 2021-\$125,430; 2022-\$155,178. The whole county is doing well.
 - d. YouTube has greatly increased due to concerted efforts: 9,300 views and 96.2 hours watched
 - e. Created authority pages for neighboring destinations based on search volume: whale watching, Morro Bay, Morro Rock, and the state park there.
 - f. Next CBID Board meeting on March 23 at Cambria Pines Lodge
 - g. All Agency/LFA meeting on March 11 where Best Beaches toolkit will be reviewed for spring campaign that was launched on March 1.
 - h. Starting to work on the FY 2022-2023 budget and strategic plan for the next 5 years.
 - i. Interested in hearing if the Spartan Games on March 12-13 had any impact on stays.
 - j. Avila Beach's assessment collections were 19.41% of overall total contributions.
6. **Budget Update:** Stephanie Rowe confirmed that collections in January totaled \$17,183. Available funds (including the 2020-2021 carry-forward) total \$350,055. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed total \$177,044.

7. Committee Reports:

- a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Claudia Torkelson and Rick Turton:** John Sorgenfrei reported that they are working on ideas for additional marketing campaigns to be presented at the next meeting.

Claudia Torkelson reported on social media activity in the last month. She noted that we had a really strong month. Facebook fans decreased slightly by 35 fans to 78,618 which is normal. Total Impressions down because she ran the ad towards the end of the month to 391,739/-37% and engagements down to 14,239/-27%. As Cheryl mentioned above, she is leaning into video views. Videos watched (not to completion) at 530/+151% and video watched (100%) at 390/+153%. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained 535 new followers for a total of 35,538, with impressions down to 539,624/-55% and engagements the same 11,300/0%. She noted the top posts for Instagram. She used the ad budget to boost a post on Instagram for the Charm of Avila that had 5,800 website taps, over 2,000 profile visits, 171,000 people reached, 211,200 impressions and 254 follows. She boosted a couple of other posts about spring and rejuvenation in Avila which she will report on next month. Carousels doing really well so she will continue to use them. YouTube increased last month to 459,896 lifetime video views, up to 123 monthly video views and 1.5 average monthly hour watched. She listed the top five videos. No e-newsletter was sent but working on the next one about Farmers' Market coming back. The blog was about the Central Coast Aquarium.

Rick Turton reported on the website stats for the month. The total unique visitors for February were up to 20,100 vs 16,000 for a 27% increase year-over-year. Traffic from social was almost 34%. Top page views were Avila Beach Hotels with over 2,800 views and Sycamore Mineral Springs with over 2,000 and Lodging Specials with almost 2,700. Social media was pointed to our lodging page as well as our SF Gate campaign. We had 77% visitors on mobile devices. We saw top mobile views of 2,200 for Lodging Specials. There were almost 3,000 visits from CBID paid search efforts for 3.75 paid search pages/visit vs. 3.42 site wide average pages/visit which is very good. Google search at 6,700 vs 6,300 for 8.37% increase year-over-year. Lodging referrals were up 6% with over 4,100 this year vs. 3,900 last year. Top non-lodging links were SLO CAL events, Avila loop map and Avila wine map. CrowdRiff galleries always do well.

8. Presentation

- a. **Follow-up Report from SLO Coast Wine VIP Promotion – Kathleen Naughton** gave an overview of the advertising campaign which ran from end of December through end of January. She reported that this was one of the most successful campaigns. The regions that had the most click-throughs were Fresno/Visalia, Los Angeles and San Francisco/Oakland/San Jose. Kathleen also reviewed the list of Eventbrite registrations. There was a total of 249 nights with some anomalies. With the anomalies removed, there were about 150 overnight stays. All of the wineries felt that they would do something like this again. John Sorgenfrei and Kathleen noted that website traffic to VisitAvilaBeach.com and SLOCoastWine.com increased during the promotion which is good for branding and awareness. Kathleen will send a written follow-up report before the next meeting.

Kathleen reported that there is a wine event in Santa Barbara the same weekend as Harvest on the Coast scheduled for November 12th. She asked the board whether they had a preference between keeping it on November 12th or moving to the next weekend on November 19th. The board confirmed they would like to keep the event on November 12th which is Veterans Day weekend. Ken Kelly asked if SLO Coast Wine was considering a veteran's discount. Kathleen would check with their board members.

9. Action/Discussion Items:

- a. **Discuss Potential Hybrid Board Meetings and Update Protocol** – Cheryl Cuming reviewed things to consider about future meetings as related to Covid and Brown Act requirements. She noted that things may change, but as of now, there are three types of meetings that are allowed: 1) All in-person 2) Hybrid where someone is at a location that is open to the public and, 3) All virtual where the board passes a resolution for their next meeting and, therefore, a public location is not require. Cheryl noted that many board members like the flexibility of virtual meetings. The board agreed to have a hybrid meeting in April. Dean Hutton confirmed that the public location would be the Boardroom at Sycamore Mineral Springs and he would set up his laptop for any public attendees who wished to view the meeting with him there. All board members would also need to post the agenda at their locations. The board will discuss the format for future board meetings at the April meeting.

- b. **Update on TOT/Assessment Collections from Flying Flags Cottages** - Cheryl Cuming reported that as of now, there are no recent updates, and it is considered decided that TOT/assessments are not being collected at this property. We will check for updates in a couple of months.

10. Future Agenda Items/New Business:

- a. Review Additional Marketing Campaigns for Current TJA Budget - John Sorgenfrei (April)
- b. Visit SLO CAL's Travel & Tourism Training Curriculum and Events & Festivals Strategy - Melissa Murray (April)
- c. Discuss Format for Next Board Meeting and Confirm Protocol (Standing item)
- d. Consideration of Administrative Services Contract Renewal (April)
- e. Review of Harvest on the Coast Funding Application (May)
- f. Review of Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Projected Budget and Allocations (May)
- g. Update on TOT/Assessment Collections from Flying Flags Cottages (June)
- h. Discuss Ideas for Proposals to Directly Benefit Avila Beach Lodging Partners (Oct)

11. Closing Comments: None

12. Next ABTA Local Fund Advisory Board Meeting:

Date: **April 13, 2022**
Time: **10:00 am – 12:00 pm**
Location: **Hybrid meeting**

13. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 am.