

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

May 11, 2022 – Video Conference hybrid meeting due to COVID-19 Pandemic
Public meeting location at Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Boardroom

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
Kristin Howland, Central Coast State
Parks Association (CCSPA)
Monica Rutherford, Central Coast State
Parks Association (CCSPA)

Board Members Absent: None

CBID: Cheryl Cuming

1. **Call to Order:** by Chair Dean Hutton at 10:02 am.
2. **Roll Call:** by Stephanie Rowe
3. **Public Comment:** None
4. **Consent Items:** A motion was made by Dean Hutton and seconded by Ken Kelly to approve the April 13, 2022 minutes. 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. 700k visitors to website in past 6 months vs 400k the prior year.
 - b. TOT/Assessment growth comparing Avila Beach collections Q3 2020/Q3 2021/Q3 2022: 2020-\$248,443; 2021-\$358,227; 2022-\$502,235.
 - c. Hearst Castle opened on May 11th which brought some additional attention to our area
 - d. 578 projects funded by LFAs since inception with total value of \$9,346,233, so making a real impact in our local fund areas.
 - e. Next CBID Board meeting on May 18th at Cambria Pines Lodge
 - f. Produced a smaller brochure and testing the ability to capture people's emails addresses through QR codes for four specialty maps. Working with 200 separate locations and testing within market with visitors already here.
 - g. Spartan Races brought in 7,800 participants plus friends and family to Santa Margarita Ranch in March. CBID invested \$5,000 and collected 541 new email addresses and nice coverage from the effort.
 - h. Continuing to work on Google Business Profile by adding updated content
 - i. The new CBID budget will be reviewed at meeting on May 18th with proposed budget of \$1.5M
 - j. Avila Beach's assessment collections were 19.86% of overall total contributions.

6. **Budget Update:** Stephanie Rowe reported that collections in March totaled \$23,799. Available funds (including the carry-forward) total \$336,736. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed total \$210,921.

7. **Committee Reports:**

a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Claudia Torkelson and Rick Turton:** John Sorgenfrei reviewed the SF Gate Campaign results and showed the Story Studio and Highway 1 Discovery Route co-op story that we participated in. Because there was a bit of confusion between the two campaigns, SF Gate is giving us a million impressions on our own individual campaign.

Claudia Torkelson reported on the posts from the recent wine media visits and reviewed the bios for the three influencers we will be hosting in May. We are hoping to end up with some nice video and photo assets that we can utilize in our marketing efforts. Claudia also reported on the social media activity in the last month. She noted that some of the numbers went down because she put the ad spend towards the end of the month to promote the May 6th start of Farmers' Market. Facebook fans decreased slightly by 11 fans to 78,566 which is normal. Total Impressions down to 336,574/-40% and engagements down to 13,437/-10%. Videos watched (not to completion) down at 310/-6%. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained 431 new followers for a total of 35,467, with impressions down to 555,136/-41% and engagements up to 11,846/+13%. She noted the top posts for Instagram. She used the ad budget to boost three posts on Instagram for Avila Farmers' Market is Back! Avila accommodations and Avila activities and accommodations that did very well. YouTube increased slightly last month to 460,118 lifetime video views, up to 137 monthly video views and 1.6 average monthly hours watched. She listed the top five videos. The blog was about Avila Farmers' Market is Back!

Rick Turton reported on the website stats for the month. The total unique visitors for April were 21,200 vs 16,300 for a 30% increase year-over-year. Rick checked the traffic sources to see what could explain the increase. He noted that Other was 10.62% which was probably the FB/IG whale watching posts. Paid search was almost 9% of all of our sessions. Top page views were Farmers' Market with over 4,000 views, Events with over 3,500 views, Bob Jones Trail with over 3,200 views, and Avila Beach Hotels with 2,600 views. We had 74% visitors on mobile devices. We saw top mobile views of 2,300 for Events and 2,000 for Bob Jones Trail. Looking at organic traffic, we posted an 18.22% gain year-over-year. There were almost 1,900 visits from CBID paid search efforts for 3.41 paid search pages/visit vs. 3.26 site wide average pages/visit which is good. Lodging referrals were down -23.337% with 3,200 this year vs. 4,200 last year. Top non-lodging links were SLO CAL Events, Bob Jones Trail, and Central Coast Aquarium.

8. **Action/Discussion Items:**

a. **Funding Application for Western Monarch Butterfly Trail Interpretive Panel – Monica Rutherford** from CCSPA gave an overview of the project. The Western Monarch Trail is a series of sites along the migration path of the western monarch butterfly, similar to the Whale Trail sites. These sites, whether on public or private lands, are crucial overwintering and nectaring locations for monarchs. The Western Monarch Trail will serve as a platform for consistent education, outreach and resource avenues that focus on preservation of the western monarch along its migration path. Western Monarch Trail panel templates will have site-specific information in both English and Spanish. Once the panel content has been approved, the panels will be fabricated by printing the design on a 36" x 24" exterior grade Aluminum panel. The LFA funding will pay for the English version of the sign design and fabrication, and matching funds will produce the Spanish language version. The Avila Valley Barn has given permission to install the English version panel at their location and they will be covering the cost of the separate Spanish language version. The trail sites will be linked on CCSPA's website for visitors to follow and find in the western United States. The website will also link things to do and where to stay, thereby

creating more tourism around the Western Monarch Butterfly Trail. Funding requested for the individual English version panel is \$2,555.63. Cheryl noted that once all locations are confirmed, all the funding requests will go in front of the CBID Board for approval at the same time.

A motion was made by Dean Hutton, and seconded by Ken Kelly, to approve the amount of \$2,555.63 for the Western Monarch Butterfly Trail English version Interpretive Panel. With no further discussion, the panel was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

- b. Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Project Budget and Allocations** – Stephanie Rowe reviewed the current 2021-2022 budget, projected carry forward and proposed 2022-2023 budget and allocations. She suggested the same allocations as last year: Administration - 15%; Events - 15%; Marketing - 50%; General/Contingency - 20%. Cheryl Cuming noted that other boards have a capital fund or reserve fund where each year a certain percentage of money is set aside for large projects and asked if the board would like to create one. The Board agreed to keep the same allocations as last year without any changes.

A motion was made by Dean Hutton, and seconded by Golda Escalante, to adopt the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 projected budget and allocations as presented. With no further discussion, the budget was approved by a unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

9. Future Agenda Items/New Business:

- a. 2021-2022 Cycle Central Coast Partnership Recap/2022-2023 Cycle Central Coast Partnership Proposal – Jessica Blanchfield (June)
- b. Harvest on the Coast Funding Application (June)
- c. Discuss Having Special Marketing Meeting (June)
- d. Update on TOT/Assessment Collections from Flying Flags Cottages (June)

10. Closing Comments: Golda Escalante reported that she went to the opening of the Avila Farmers' Market on May 6th, and it was very busy.

11. Next ABTA Local Fund Advisory Board Meeting:

Date: **June 8, 2022**

Time: **10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

Location: **Hybrid meeting, public meeting location at Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Boardroom**

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 am.