

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

July 13, 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
Kylie Insco, Archer & Hound, Cycle Central Coast
Kathleen Naughton, SLO Coast Wine Collective

Board Members Absent: None

CBID: Cheryl Cuming

1. **Call to Order:** by Chair Dean Hutton at 10:01 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 May 11, 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. During summer, they continue to invest in SEM for H1DR and the local fund areas and it is doing well.
 - b. Transitioning Highway 1 Discovery Route to Highway 1 Road Trip. It will be a redirect and change in focus for search engine optimization. New campaign for Highway 1 Road Trip will launch on August 15. Will have more to report in the future.
 - c. Reviewed recent LFA funding projects including the Butterfly Ball which is connected to the Western Monarch Butterfly Trail signage. They are waiting for one more location to be approved then entire project will go in front of the CBID Board for approval.
 - d. TOT/Assessment growth comparing Avila Beach collections year-over-year: May 2020-\$28,050; May 2021-\$176,611; May 2022-\$209,143. SLO CAL and CBID are aware of some softness in the market, so they are launching their campaigns earlier than in the past to try to mitigate.
 - e. Hilary Townsend retired and found her PR replacement, Kirstin Koszorus. Katie Sturtevant will have an expanded role being the boots on the ground for visiting journalists.
 - f. Lots of new content for lodging partners including video and photos assets for neighboring communities to capture Google searches. Check out YouTube and Flickr.
 - g. Avila Beach's assessment collections were 19.35% of overall total contributions.
6. **Budget Update:** Stephanie Rowe reported that collections in May totaled \$23,037. Available funds (including the carry-forward) total \$327,910. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed total \$250,444.

7. Committee Reports:

a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Claudia Torkelson and Rick**

Turton: Claudia Torkelson reported on the social media activity in the last two months since we did not have a meeting in June. She noted that we had huge numbers due to a lot of spend towards ads. She reminded the board that the numbers will go down in the coming months due to the decrease in spend. Facebook fans increased by 277 fans to 78,819. Total Impressions slightly down to 909,371/-24% from 1.2million in May and engagements down to 22,736/-25% from 30,500 in May. Videos watched up at 46,289/+33,200% due to new videos from the Glocally partnership. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained 589 new followers for a total of 36,706, with impressions down to 1,036,500/-37% from 1.6million in May and engagements down to 6,100/-25% from 8,255 in May. She noted the top posts for Instagram. She has been seeing great success using carousel photos and videos from Glocally. YouTube increased last month to 460,492 lifetime video views, up to 180 monthly video views and 1.6 average monthly hours watched. She listed the top five videos. The blog was about family-friendly activities in Avila Beach. And the last quarterly e-newsletter was sent to our 22,815 subscribers about the upcoming summer events with an open rate of 26%.

Rick Turton reported on the website stats for the month. The total unique visitors for June were 35,528 vs 26,486 for a 23% increase year-over-year. Overall, we are up 17% for visitors in the first six months of the year. May had total unique visitors of 47,400. Rick checked the traffic sources to see what could explain the increases. He noted that in May 38% came from Direct and 28% from Other in June. Paid search was over 10% of all of our sessions. Top page views in May were Avila Lodging Specials with 15,800 and in June Avila Hotels with 6,300 which shows the differences in ad campaigns. We had 79% visitors on mobile devices in June. Top views on mobile in May were Avila Lodging Specials with 15,095 and 4,043 in June. There were almost 3,400 visits from CBID paid search efforts for 3.56 paid search pages/visit vs. 3.68 site wide average pages/visit which is good. Top non-lodging links were SLO CAL Events, Bob Jones Trail, and the loop map. CrowdRiff galleries continue to do well with 20,000 views in May and 14,000 views in June. Lodging referrals were down -13.42% with 6,059 this year vs. 6,998 last year but overall, we are up 1,600/6.14% referral sessions for the year.

8. Action/Discussion Items:

a. **2021-2022 Cycle Central Coast Recap/2022-2023 Cycle Central Coast Partnership Proposal** - Kylie Insko presented the recap from the 2021-2022 program partnership. She noted that Avila chose October and May as their takeover months. Avila specific blogs were published in October 2021 and May 2022 as well as social media postings during those months. The October blog received over 2,600 page views and the May blog received almost 750 page views. There is a landing page for Stay in Avila Beach in addition to three cycling routes. The Stay in Avila page received over 600 page views and the routes received between 800 and 1,400 page views. Avila specific e-blasts went out in October 2021 and May 2022 to over 3,200 subscribers with open rates of 33% and 45%, respectively. There were 12 Avila specific posts on Instagram with over 2,000 likes/comments and 12 Avila specific posts on Facebook with over 5,600 likes/comments. There were Avila Beach Strava ride events in October 2021 and May 2022 with 9 and 13 attendees, respectively, and overall, much interest. Avila Beach hosted cycling influencer, Monica Busby (TheCyclingCEO) in September 2021 who posted great drone photos and videos and wrote a guest blog during her visit.

Kylie reviewed the 2022-2023 partnership proposal. The program runs for 8 months, July-October and March-June. The partnership includes: inclusion in organic social media, monthly social advertising, and the Cycle Central Coast website; and two takeover months with custom route, social media, blog, eblast, featured Strava and Meta event and 1-2 influencer visits. The cost of the partnership is \$14,450 with an additional ad-on option of \$1,500 for a new route buildout. Kathleen Naughton noted that she would like to collaborate on a wine trail route. The board agreed that a new route would keep the program fresh.

A motion was made by Golda Escalante, and seconded by Dean Hutton, to approve the Cycle Central Coast Partnership, including the new route buildout, to be funded through the TJA Marketing budget for a total investment of \$15,950 effective July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023. With no further discussion, the partnership was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

- b. 2022 Harvest on the Coast Funding Request** - Kathleen Naughton gave an overview of the fund application. She noted that they have moved their main fundraising event to April and Harvest on the Coast (HOTC) will be a consumer-front event to bring awareness of Avila and the surrounding wine country. HOTC will be held this year on November 11 & 12, with a small event on Friday, November 11th at the Central Coast Aquarium and the Grand Tasting on Saturday, November 12th at the Avila Beach Golf Resort. The Aquarium evening event will host 175 attendees. The Grand Tasting will host 400 attendees with an add-on exclusive experience for 175 guests in the Clubhouse. In 2019, about 780 attendees participated in the event. Funds requested are \$26,000. They are estimating 60% of the 400 guests will be from out of the area, utilizing 130 room nights at \$200 average daily rate. Kathleen reviewed the advertising plan and budget. She noted that costs have gone up 20-30%. John Sorgenfrei recommended advertising in the local NPR radio station, KCLU, that extends to Santa Barbara instead of KCBX, which is local. He also suggested hosting a wine influencer for the event. Dean Hutton recommended revising the application to include breakdown of where the requested funds will be used and their benefit and value to lodging partners. John will also collaborate with her to re-work the advertising plan. Kathleen will present the revised funding application at the next board meeting in August.
- c. 2022-2023 Local Fund Area Imperative Co-op Opportunities with CBID** - John Sorgenfrei presented his recommendation of the options. He noted that last year's campaigns worked really well so let's keep using the same formula: Search Engine Marketing Co-op - \$6,000; Local Fund Area Paid Social Co-op - \$6,000 (\$6,000 match for \$12,000 total); he is not recommending participation in the tiered SF Gate campaign at this time until more info is known about how it will be promoted; Total Co-op spend for Avila = \$12,000. John noted that the program will start in August instead of July.

A motion was made by Ken Kelly and seconded by Dean Hutton, to approve \$12,000 for the LFA Co-op Opportunities with CBID. With no further discussion, the investment was approved by a unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

- d. Update on TOT-Assessment Collections from Flying Flags Cottages** - Cheryl Cuming reported that she asked an engineer at RRM if they considered the cabins there temporary or permanent. The engineer responded that they were temporary structures with skirting around them, so he thought it makes sense that TOT-Assessments are not collected.
- e. Discuss Having Special Marketing Meeting** - Dean Hutton suggested having a special marketing meeting to talk about how we can best serve our constituents by spending the funds we have in the past on the constituent mixer on something that could directly help the lodging properties. Additionally, looking at funding requests for infrastructure & beautification projects and events. The Board agreed to have the meeting on Wednesday, November 16th, 9:00-10:30am on Zoom.

9. Future Agenda Items/New Business:

- a.** 2022 Harvest on the Coast Funding Request (Aug)
- b.** Board Term Expiration 12/8/22 (Sept)

10. Closing Comments: Ken Kelly noted that the American Farmland Trust is asking for people to vote for their favorite farmers' market. He asked everyone to vote for Avila Farmers' Market. Claudia will share on social media.

11. Next ABTA Local Fund Advisory Board Meeting:

Date: **August 10, 2022**
Time: **10:00 am – 12:00 pm**
Location: **Hybrid meeting, public meeting location at Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Boardroom**

Special Marketing Meeting:

Date: **November 16, 2022**
Time: **9:00 – 10:30 am**
Location: **Hybrid meeting, public meeting location at Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Boardroom**

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:04 pm.