

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

November 9, 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
Ken Kelly, Coastal Vacation Rentals
Golda Escalante, Avila Lighthouse Suites

Others Present:

John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising
Claudia Torkelson, TJA Advertising
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA administrator
Katie Sturtevant, Stewardship Travel for Good &
PR Programs Liaison

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 Golda Escalante and seconded by Ken Kelly to approve the September 14, 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 sessions are down but only because of the transition to Highway 1 Road Trip. They are expecting to have organic traffic improve as the Highway 1 Road Trip name gets out there more. Total page views are around 150,000 a month which is comparable to Visit SLO CAL so Cheryl feels good about this number of sessions.
 - b. Claudia doing really well for social media. Facebook fans over 107,000 with 2.7 million impressions. Continuing to build audience for video.
 - c. TOT/Assessment growth comparing Avila Beach collections for Q1 the past three years: 2020-\$878,000; 2021-\$1,041,000; 2022-\$1,079,000. Some areas a bit soft, but we are tracking a little ahead of budget so no concerns.
 - d. Have started to create “things to do on Highway 1 Road Trip” content which should help SEO and search placement on Google. Will also be creating content for each local area.
 - e. CBID Board having a combined November and December meeting on December 7th at Cambria Pines Lodge.
 - f. Will be doing Season of Coastal Discovery promotion in January and February.
 - g. Avila Beach’s assessment collections were 21.47% of overall total contributions for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

6. **Budget Update:** Stephanie Rowe reported that collections in September totaled \$25,705. Available funds (including the carry-forward) total \$369,592. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed total \$112,961.

7. **Committee Reports:**

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

John Sorgenfrei gave an update on the fall SF Gate campaign that is running from mid-October through mid-December. He reviewed the Story Studio article and noted that an error was found which they corrected immediately. Because of the error, the story will be live longer. He also noted that SLO Coast Wine's PR person was sending a couple of wine journalists from the International Wine Review to attend Harvest on the Coast and we agreed to host their stay for the event.

Claudia Torkelson reported on the social media activity in the last month. She noted that we had a good month. Facebook fans increased by 49 fans to 79,013. There was a natural slide down for everything else because she diverted spend to a highly targeted Instagram campaign. Total Impressions down to 385,013/-23% and engagements down to 11,664/-60%. Videos watched down to 67/-98% because she's been mostly posting reels on Instagram. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained 257 new followers for a total of 38,146, with impressions up to 898,730/+50% and down a bit to 8,782/-30%. She noted the top posts for Instagram. As noted before, she ran a lodging specials ad that reached over 185,000 people, 1,658 content interactions, and 3,341 ad taps directly to our lodging page. YouTube increased slightly last month to 461,000 lifetime video views, down to 117 monthly video views and 1.2 average monthly hours watched. She listed the top five videos. The monthly blog was about visiting Avila in the fall. She also showed the LocalHood Stories that she created about food and wine which continue to get extremely high engagements.

Rick Turton reported on the website stats for the month. The total unique visitors for October were 17,900 vs 18,700 for a -4.13% year-over-year which is normal when getting into our fall season. He noted that traffic sources from Claudia were listed in the Other column for 17.42%. This was from her promos which drove over 3,000 visitor sessions. Paid search was 18.7% of all of our sessions for over 3,400 sessions. For the year, the most visited page was Avila Events with over 42,000 views so we are working to make sure our Events Calendar is always up to date. Other top page views for the year are Lodging Specials with over 41,000 views and Farmers' Market with over 40,000 views. We had almost 74% visitors on mobile devices which is about 3% less than our season average. Top views on mobile year-to-date are also Avila Lodging Specials and Events. There were over 3,300 visits from CBID paid search efforts for 3.04 paid search pages/visit vs. 3.04 site wide average pages/visit which is great. Organic search within 4% from last year and almost 13% total year-to-date. There were 146 sessions from SLO Coast Wine. CrowdRiff galleries continue to do well with over 7,000 views. Lodging referrals were down a bit -14% with 3,270 this year vs. 3,800 last year but we are about even in referral sessions for the year.

b. **Stewardship Travel Program and Public Relations Update – Katie Sturtevant gave an update on what has been happening in the last year.**

1. She continues to provide ongoing support on how to use Stewardship Travel for Good and ways to integrate program in your region.
2. Recently participated in a roundtable discussion with SLO CAL and World Travel & Tourism where they talked about stewardship and sustainability efforts throughout the county. Will be getting the video and hoping to find ways to leverage the content. Visit CA and Visit SLO CAL currently creating their own framework for stewardship and sustainability programs.
3. Started creating stewardship travel focused itineraries in the last year or so based on data that visitors want to have more meaningful experiences during their travel. Avila Beach and Cambria are included in most of the itineraries because we have the Stewardship and Beach Cleanup program. She will be creating an Earth Day itinerary for April.

4. Will be promoting Season of Coastal Discovery in January and February 2023 which will feature stewardship travel itineraries in our region. Program use to focus on events but have shifted to more wide-open spaces and wildlife focus. Will have a media kit to help promote the program as we get closer.
5. Working on more Travel for Good special projects that include self-guided tours, wildlife and wide-open spaces to explore. Visitors are more reliant on having tours created for them per Tourwriter.com. Guided and self-guided tours will include birding, biking, horseback riding, kayaking, seaweed foraging, trails, etc.
6. She also included links to recent stewardship and sustainability articles.
7. Katie also works with Kirstin Koszorus on PR. Loop in Katie for anything new in your area to help promote.
8. Upcoming media visits: LA Parent Magazine and Travel Awaits. Also have person from Wine Enthusiast coming to do article on Avila, Harvest on the Coast event and surrounding wine areas.

8. Action/Discussion Items:

- a. None

9. Future Agenda Items/New Business:

- a. 2022 Harvest on the Coast Follow-up Report – Kathleen Naughton

10. Closing Comments: Cheryl Cuming reported that Harvest on the Coast ticket sales were less than expected. They were expecting to sell around 450 but had only sold 250 tickets at this time. Claudia noted that she would run ads for the event to push sales.

11. Next ABTA Local Fund Area Board Meetings:

Special Marketing Meeting:

Date: **November 16, 2022**

Time: **9:00 – 10:30 am**

Location: **In person at Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Boardroom**

Monthly Advisory Board Meeting:

Dates: **December 14, 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 10:42 am.