

*Draft Until Approved*  
**Avila Beach Tourism Alliance**  
**Special Board Meeting Minutes**

November 16, 2022

In-person meeting 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 (via Zoom)  
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising  
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA administrator

**Board Members Absent:** None

**CBID:** Cheryl Cuming

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1. **Call to Order:** by Chair Dean Hutton at 9:20 am.

2. **Roll Call:** by Stephanie Rowe

3. **Public Comment:** None

4. **Action/Discussion Items:**

a. **Potential marketing campaigns to directly benefit Avila Beach lodging partners:**

- Dean noted that instead of having a mixer he was thinking about doing a campaign that would directly benefit Avila Beach lodging partners.
- Dean suggested giving our lodging partners memberships to the California Hotel and Lodging Association or the Vacation Rental Management Association.
- Dean also suggested potentially featuring a different vacation rental management company or lodging property every month on our various channels. Claudia noted that she does some of that already, but we need to make sure it is equitable across all lodging properties.
- There are around 60-70 active vacation rentals in Avila Beach. Rick noted that he would be able to run a report with active URLs so we can see how many active vacation rentals there are.
- John and Claudia presented a proposal to allocate \$2,000 from the current TJA budget to go towards a 3 month Pinterest campaign promoting Avila as a destination. They noted that Pinterest is a planning device with 478 million monthly users that is gaining momentum. It is a platform that is viewed as more positive and user friendly than Instagram and Facebook. Cheryl mentioned that perhaps Pinterest could be added to the LFA Imperative co-op program in the future. John recommended starting the campaign to evaluate it, then depending on the outcome, come back with a second proposal for spotlighting individual lodging properties. **The board agreed to allocate \$2,000 and have Claudia move forward with the 90 day campaign.**
- The board discussed potentially enhancing the listings and visuals of each lodging property with expanded profiles and professional photos and/or videos.
- Cheryl noted another idea could be the stimulus program she worked on in Santa Maria a couple of years ago where if a guest stayed for 2 consecutive nights, they would receive a \$100 gift card. The program was wildly successful and made national news but was extremely hard administratively to manage.

- She also suggested taking a program such as the newly created SLO CAL Welcome Customer Service program and having our lodging properties be the banner holders by incentivizing them with prizes. Unfortunately, it is extremely hard for lodging properties to take the time and effort to do something outside of their daily work.
- The board agreed any campaigns implemented would need to have most of the work done on our end and then presented to the lodging properties as a completed product.
- John also suggested creating marketing collateral such as a new rack card or visitor guide that would include a QR code.
- The board discussed potential events in Avila. John noted that it is hard to hold an event because we would need an event promoter and also Avila is small, so promoters don't necessarily want to have events here. Furthermore, people do not necessarily want to attend big events these days.
- The board discussed potentially partnering with our local community organizations, Visit SLO CAL, Pismo Beach or local event planners to build a successful strategy to bring events to Avila.
- **John noted that they would ask Pale Kai Outrigger Club if there was the potential for canoe races between Avila and Pismo.**
- Other ideas suggested were a sandcastle contest or qualifying heat held in Avila for a sports event in another town. Ken suggested a sandcastle and surfing contest event between Avila and Pismo, respectively.
- **John recommended that SLO Coast Wine be encouraged to extend their events over longer periods for longer stays when asking for funding.**
- Golda suggested bringing an ice skating rink to Avila during the winter months like they successfully do in Napa.
- **Cheryl noted that she and John are on the Visit SLO CAL board so they will get the message out to SLO CAL that Avila has an interest in collaborating with them on an event strategy. Stephanie will check with Katie Sturtevant at the Avila Golf Resort about potential events that she can organize that the Avila board can sponsor.**

**b. Potential Beautification & Infrastructure Projects:**

- Cheryl noted that the board could fund potential beautification and infrastructure projects such as the ones funded in Cayucos for the renovation of their Veteran's Hall, the opening of beach street access stairs, and the funding of a whale trail bench.
- The board discussed funding potential Instagram-able moment or iconic project ideas such as public art installations and signage like the large Pismo Beach letters near the pier where people take photos. Other funding ideas included bike racks, all-in-one bike stations, electric vehicle charging stations, or projects at the Central Coast Aquarium or Point San Luis Lighthouse.

**5. Future Agenda Items/New Business:**

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

**6. Closing Comments:** None

**7. Next ABTA Local Fund Area 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**

**8. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 11:11 am.