

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

February 8, 2023 – 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

Board Members Absent: None

CBID: Cheryl Cuming

1. **Call to Order:** by Chair Dean Hutton at 10:08 am.
2. **Roll Call:** by Stephanie Rowe
3. **Public Comment:** Golda Escalante shared that as of February 1st KSL Resorts acquired five hotels that were previously owned by Martin Resorts. The five properties include Avila Lighthouse Suites, Pismo Lighthouse Suites and Shore Cliff Hotel in Pismo Beach and Paso Robles Inn and The Piccolo in Paso Robles. KSL also owns Vespera Resort in Pismo Beach for a total of six properties on the Central Coast.
4. **Consent Items:**
 - A motion was made by Ken Kelly and seconded by Golda Escalante to approve the November 16, 2022 minutes. With no further discussion, the minutes were approved by a voice vote of the local Advisory Board.
 - A motion was made by Dean Hutton and seconded by Ken Kelly to approve the December 14, 2022 minutes. With no further discussion, the minutes were approved by a voice vote of the local Advisory Board.
5. **CBID / Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary / Financials Update:** Cheryl Cuming gave an update for the past month.
 - a. Cayucos & Los Osos have seen 20% increase in email addresses for their database using either the Hidden Secrets or Points of Interest Map to obtain emails.
 - b. TOT/Assessment growth comparing Avila Beach collections for July-December for the past three years: 2020-\$ \$1,385,275; 2021-\$ 1,624,263; 2022-\$ 1,616,328. There may be potential softness in the summer so reach out to Cheryl if concerned.
 - c. Season of Coastal Discovery promotion delayed a bit but launched in January and February. Toolkit available on member page.
 - d. Visit SLO CAL Welcome training in English and Spanish versions available to customer facing employees in the industry.
 - e. Presented mid-year milestones to CBID Board: 84% increase in new web sessions; 4.5M organic impressions; 31,000 new email subscribers; 42% increase in YouTube video views; \$1.14 cost per new website visitor.

- f. Showed the map for the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary that will hopefully be designated in 2024. Will be a wonderful thing to market for our area.
- g. Avila Beach's assessment collections were 19.08% of overall total contributions for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

6. Budget Update: Stephanie Rowe reported that assessment collections in December totaled \$17,649. Available funds (including the carry-forward) total \$352,647. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed total \$171,230.

7. Committee Reports:

- a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Claudia Torkelson and Rick Turton:** John Sorgenfrei reported on the results of the SF Gate fall campaign that ran from October 18-December 18, 2022. The objective was to create a high-impact campaign encouraging readers to visit Avila's lodging website page and highlighting ways to make the best of an autumn trip to the area. This campaign was guaranteed 5,500 engagements and 1mm impressions over the two month period. Actual numbers garnered over 7,000 engagements and over 2mm impressions with over 2 minutes average time on the webpage. It was targeted to families interested in travel with a household income of \$100K+ and located in the SF and LA DMAs and Sacramento. Because of the typo in the StoryStudio article, a full page ad will be run in the digital version of the SF Chronicle on February 26.

Claudia Torkelson reported on the social media activity in the last month. Facebook fans increased by 57 fans to 78,996. Total Impressions +169% to 453,166 and engagements +68% to 41,073. Videos watched -22% to 125,600. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained 439 new followers for a total of 39,254, with impressions up +18% to 1,011,404 and engagements up +56% to 15,947. She noted the top posts for Instagram. She ran a reel ad that got 738,000 plays, 8,751 website visits and over 2,000 likes. YouTube increased slightly last month to 461,425 lifetime video views, up to 135 monthly video views and 1 average monthly hour watched. She listed the top five videos. She also reported that the Pinterest campaign has been doing very well. She has been meeting with Pinterest customer support to optimize our ads to drive the most traffic to our lodging specials page. The 90 day campaign will end in March and Claudia will report on results at that time to decide whether to continue. The monthly blog promoted Avila Beach restaurants.

Rick Turton reported on the website stats for the month. He noted when he ran the reports the results didn't make sense. He did some research and discovered a technological glitch when he switched between two companies where there was no tracking for over two days. He has corrected this issue and will never run into it again. He also noted that there were no promotions run until the end of the month so between these two issues, he felt it didn't make sense to review the data. He noted that February numbers were looking good.

8. Action/Discussion Items:

- a. **Updates from special meeting ideas –** Stephanie Rowe reported that she had asked Katie Sturtevant at Avila Golf Resort if there were any upcoming events that the board might be interested in sponsoring. She said that the Mac and Cheese Festival and a large truck show event may be possibilities. She would check with her clients to see if it made sense to connect us. John Sorgenfrei noted that he had presented the possibility of outrigger races between Avila and Pismo Beach and the Pismo board was supportive. He will follow-up with Pale Kai Outrigger Club.

- b. **State of California's short-term lodging per diem reimbursement rate** – Ken Kelly asked if the board would like to send a letter to Senator Laird asking for assistance to increase the California per diem reimbursement rate.

A motion was made by Ken Kelly, and seconded by Dean Hutton, to send a letter to Senator Laird in support of an increase to the state short-term lodging per diem reimbursement rate. With no further discussion, the action was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

9. Future Agenda Items/New Business:

- a. None

10. Closing Comments: Stephanie Rowe noted that the Avila Farmers' Market season will start May 5th and run through August 25th this year. The season in the past ran from April through September but they have shortened it going forward to run from the first Friday in May to the last Friday in August.

11. Next ABTA Local Fund Area Board Meeting:

Dates: **March 8, 2023**

Time: **10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

Location: **Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort - Boardroom**

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 am.