

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

May 17, 2023

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 (via Zoom)
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA administrator
Mike Traynor, Pale Kai Outrigger Club
Geof Findley, Pale Kai Outrigger Club

Board Members Absent: None

CBID: Cheryl Cuming

1. **Call to Order:** by Chair Dean Hutton at 10:04 am.
2. **Roll Call:** by Stephanie Rowe
3. **Public Comment:** John Sorgenfrei thanked the board for continuing their partnership with TJA Advertising for another two years. He noted that their team loves Avila Beach and they look forward to continuing marketing efforts that bring an increase in overnight stays to our lodging properties.
4. **Consent Items:** A motion was made by Ken Kelly and seconded by Golda Escalante to approve the April 19, 2023 minutes. With no further discussion, the minutes were approved by a voice vote of the local Advisory Board.
5. **CBID Local Fund Area and Financials Update:** Cheryl Cuming gave an update for the past month.
 - a. Highway1RoadTrip.com rebranding from Highway1DiscoveryRoute.com continues to improve.
 - b. Organic sessions were up 17% Y/Y to 109,729 and users up 25% to 98,556.
 - c. Destination page views are low but only because Avila has its own website.
 - d. Facebook fans over 109,000 with over 3.2million impressions and 126,196 engagements.
 - e. TOT/Assessment still soft for Jan/Feb/March year-over-year: 2021-\$358,200; 2022-\$502,200; 2023-\$334,700. April is still low but hoping for a pickup starting Memorial Weekend.
 - f. CBID Board changing the Local Fund Area Matching Fund Program. Matching funds monies will be allocated to the LFA Imperative Program in the new fiscal year.
 - g. Top 3 Tourism Predictions in 2023-2024: Bleisure (business+leisure) travel will continue to rise; Sustainability will influence travel decisions; travelers will seek unique authentic experiences.
 - h. Key Initiatives for 2023-2024: Focus on CA drive market; implementation of updated Strategic Plan; branding H1RT; content is king...storytelling; sustainability & stewardship; partnership marketing opportunities. GA4, AI and more. Year-end report available on member site.
 - i. Avila Beach's assessment collections were 18.02% of overall total contributions for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.
6. **Budget Update:** Stephanie Rowe reported that assessment collections in March totaled \$11,780. Available funds (including the carry-forward) total \$352,627. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed total \$207,864.

7. Committee Reports:

- a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Claudia Torkelson and Rick Turton:** John Sorgenfrei announced that he hired a new website manager who will be working with Rick Turton. They will be working on visitavilabeach.com website updates and optimization in the coming weeks which are included in our current budget.

Claudia Torkelson reported on social media activity in the last month. Facebook fans increased by 4 fans to 78,956. Total Impressions -19% to 319,400 and engagements +15% to 41,300. Videos watched -78% to 35,400. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained 333 new followers for a total of 40,529, with impressions +19% to 996,600 and engagements -44% to 8,600. She noted the top Instagram posts. She also reported on the April spend which focused on Lodging Specials in Avila. Website visits 6,279; impressions 372,000; profile visits 1,000 and the cost per visit was .49 cents. YouTube increased slightly last month to 461,735 lifetime video views, up to 157 monthly video views and 1.7 average monthly hours watched. She listed the top videos. The monthly blog was about Avila Beach Farmers' Market, and she noted that the LocalHood Stories are doing well.

Rick Turton reported on the website stats for the month. The total unique visitors for April were 31,447 vs 21,267 for a 48% increase year-over-year and 41% increase in total visitors year-to-date. Organic search was 35% of traffic; paid search was 20%; and other was Claudia at 32%. The most visited page was Avila Beach Farmers' Market with over 4,900 views. Other top page views were Avila Hotels with over 3,300 views and Bob Jones Trail with over 2,670 views. We had 84% of visitors on mobile devices, which is very high. Top views on mobile were Avila Hotels, Bob Jones Trail and Avila Beach Lodging Specials. There were over 6,400 visits from CBID paid search efforts for 2.73 paid search pages/visit vs. 2.87 site wide average pages/visit which is pretty good. Organic search on Google had a huge increase in the last month. SLO CAL was the highest referral source. CrowdRiff galleries continue to do well with 11,370 views. Lodging referrals in April were +85.5%/6,000 this year vs. 3,200 last year and we are +33%/4,847 for lodging website referrals for the year.

8. Action/Discussion Items

- a. **Pale Kai Outrigger Club Event –** Mike Traynor, president of the Pale Kai Outrigger Club and Geof Findley, sponsorship coordinator, presented the Petro Rock Outrigger Event funding application. Pale Kai Outrigger celebrates the end of racing season with an annual race/fun paddle event. It is an opportunity for Pale Kai and guest clubs up and down the California Coast and their families to join for a 5M fun paddle or 12M race, raffle, silent auction, and luau in Avila. Funds raised from the event go towards promoting the club, new boats and maintaining existing boats, trailers, etc. The date of the event is set for September 23, 2023 but has not been finalized by their board so may change depending on the race schedule. The funding requested is \$4,500 which would pay for flyers sent to NorCal and SoCal paddlers, ads in publications outside of SLO County, an event raffle, and event t-shirts or light jackets. They are estimating 30 room nights from the event. There is a music festival that weekend at the Avila Golf Resort that may/may not have an impact. The board discussed different ideas to encourage overnight stays and agreed it could be a good first-time event that could grow exponentially each year.

A motion was made by Ken Kelly, and seconded by Dean Hutton, to approve \$4,500 for the Pale Kai Petro Rock Outrigger event, contingent on looking at changing the date from September 23, 2023. With no further discussion, the funding was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

- a. **FY 2023-2024 LFA Imperative CBID Co-op Program -** John Sorgenfrei presented his recommendations for the new year. Last year, the board approved \$12,000 and the results were

very good. He recommended using the same formula with a small increase for email retargeting: Search Engine Marketing Co-op - \$5,500 (\$500/month), August 2023-June 2024; Local Fund Area Paid Social Co-op - \$8,500 (\$8,500 match for \$17,000 total), August 2023-June 2024; Email retargeting - \$1,500, slated for March 2024; total spend for Avila = \$15,500.

A motion was made by Dean Hutton and seconded by Golda Escalante, to approve \$15,500 for the FY 2023-2024 LFA Imperative Co-op Program as proposed. With no further discussion, the investment was approved by a unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

9. Future Agenda Items/New Business:

- a. 2021-2023 TJA Marketing Recap and 2023-2025 Marketing Proposal – TJA Team
- b. 2022-2023 Cycle Central Coast Recap and 2023-2024 Partnership Proposal – Jessica Blanchfield
- c. 2023-2024 Draft Budget and Allocations – Stephanie Rowe
- d. Discuss whether to meet in July

10. Closing Comments: None

11. Next ABTA Local Fund Area Board Meeting:

Dates: **June 14, 2023**

Time: **10:00 am – 12:00 pm**

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

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:46 am.