

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, August 9, 2023
Public meeting location at Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Boardroom

Board Members Present:

Dean Hutton, Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort
Golda Escalante, Avila Lighthouse Suites
Ken Kelly, Coastal Vacation Rentals

Board Members Absent: None

CBID: Cheryl Cuming

Others Present:

John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising
Claudia Torkelson, TJA Advertising
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising
Tom Walker, TJA Advertising (via Zoom)
Jessica Blanchfield, Archer & Hound (via Zoom)
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA administrator

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1. **Call to Order / Roll Call:** By board chair Dean Hutton at 10:38 am; roll call by Stephanie Rowe
 2. **Public Comment:** None
 3. **Consent Items:** A motion was made by Golda Escalante and seconded by Ken Kelly to approve the June 14, 2023 minutes. With no further discussion, the minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.
 4. **CBID Local Fund Area and Financials Update:** Cheryl Cuming gave an update for the past month.
 - a. Web traffic was a bit down so an increased investment in SEM is being implemented.
 - b. TOT/Assessment collections were projected to be down by 20% last year, but overall, they were not as low as expected.
 - c. Showed the list of lodging property data in SLO County by area.
 - d. Showed highlights from Visit SLO CAL Resident Sentiment Survey. Residents in SLO County rated the importance of tourism to economic vitality higher than respondents in California-84% vs 59%. See full survey for more data.
 - e. CBID Board meeting on August 23 at Cambria Pines Lodge.
 - f. Avila Beach's assessment collections were 18.03% of overall total contributions for the 2022-2023 fiscal year.
 5. **Budget Update / Harvest on the Coast Update:** Stephanie Rowe reported that assessment collections in June totaled \$18,544. Available funds (including the carry-forward) total \$292,718. At the end of this Fiscal Year total collections were \$268,446 and including the carry-forward, total funds were \$567,036.

Stephanie reported that she had reached out to Kathleen Naughton at SLO Coast Wine to see if she would be submitting a funding application for the 2023 Harvest on the Coast event. Kathleen texted that they had decided to host it in Edna Valley at Chamisal Winery. They were scaling back, and the Avila Resort just didn't make sense. They might host something the Friday night before at the Central Coast Aquarium, but nothing is confirmed yet. Cheryl Cuming noted that 70 people who have attended the event in the past are staying in Avila for this year's event. John Sorgenfrei suggested coming up with ideas for smaller events that SLO Coast Wine could then implement.

6. Committee Reports:

- a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Claudia Torkelson and Rick Turton:** John showed the flyer, t-shirt and cap designs for the Pale Kai Outrigger event. He noted that this year's event would start out slow and hopefully with more planning, it would grow next year. They are hoping for a good turnout of paddlers this year. John will have a videographer at the event to get some good footage.

Claudia reported on social media activity in the last month. Facebook fans increased by +1%/51 fans to 79,927. Total Impressions -84% to 69,846 and engagements -61% to 10,000. Videos watched greatly increased +967% to 102,100 due to an ad. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained 264 new followers for a total of 42,702, with impressions +45% to 707,227 and engagements +52% to 9,564. She noted the top Instagram posts. She also reported on the July spend which focused on Pick Your Perfect Paradise: Website visits 7,500; impressions 400,640; profile visits 1,200 and the cost per visit was .43 cents. YouTube increased slightly last month to 462,497 lifetime video views, up to 176 monthly video views and 1.4 average monthly hours watched. She listed the top videos. The monthly blog was about Family Friendly Avila Beach, and she noted that the LocalHood Stories are doing well.

Due to time constraints, Rick was unable to provide the website reports.

7. Action/Discussion Items

Review and Discuss New Design Ideas for Website Refresh - John reviewed the new website design. He noted that it will be more interactive. The board agreed they liked the blue color version better than the yellow color version.

- a. **Board Seat Resignation from Golda Escalante** – Golda noted that she has accepted a position at a hotel in San Luis Obispo and therefore, has submitted her resignation from the Avila Board effective 8/11/23. She has greatly enjoyed her time serving on the board. Dean and Cheryl thanked Golda for her service and wished her the best.

A motion was made by Dean Hutton, and seconded by Ken Kelly, to accept the resignation from Golda Escalante for her seat on the Avila Beach Tourism Alliance Advisory Board effective August 11, 2023. With no further discussion, the resignation was accepted by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

- b. **New Board Seat Application from Mindy Hunter** – Dean noted that Mindy Hunter, GM at Avila Village Inn has submitted her board application. She was unable to attend the meeting but is very excited to serve on the board. Golda also noted that the management at Avila Lighthouse Suites would like to continue having representation on the Avila board and a board application will be submitted when a new GM is hired.

A motion was made by Dean Hutton, and seconded by Ken Kelly, to accept the application from Mindy Hunter, GM at Avila Village Inn, for a seat on the Avila Beach Tourism Alliance Advisory Board. With no further discussion, the application was accepted by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

- c. **Cycle Central Coast 2022-2023 Recap / 2023-2024 Renewal** – Jessica Blanchfield presented additional data to address the board's concerns regarding ROI and influencer/social media engagements. She noted that this is a niche market that is different from other markets in that it is dominated by older male travelers who predominantly use Facebook. The presentation included a general overview of the budgets for the past three years, the assets received, the CPC and CPI, and the growth for social media and email subscribers this FY. The influencers they go after are niche micro influencers who have smaller but more loyal followers which they believe brings more value. She showed the value from the Strava events for possible bookings. She

concluded her presentation with ideas for consideration. Jessica noted that she didn't see the program getting any bigger as they are trying to protect the brand and keep it on Highway 1. The board was impressed with the additional data. Dean noted that he would like to continue the partnership with CCC because he felt the program gives exposure to Avila. Golda suggested promoting the brand with an eco-friendly, stewardship message. Ken suggested funding more bike infrastructure in Avila. John suggested working with Jessica to discuss ideas for widening the brand to a bigger audience by promoting the Bob Jones Trail for the casual/moderate cyclist.

As noted in the proposal, the program runs for 8 months, July-October and March-June. The partnership includes: organic social content, monthly social advertising, and the Cycle Central Coast website; and two takeover months with route feature, blog, eblast, featured Strava and Meta event and 1-2 influencer visits. The cost of the partnership is \$14,450.

A motion was made by Ken Kelly and seconded by Golda Escalante, to continue the FY 2023-2024 Cycle Central Coast Partnership, to be funded as a separate budget item outside of the current TJA budget, for a total investment of \$14,450. With no further discussion, the partnership was approved by a unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

8. Future Agenda Items/New Business:

- a. Discuss ideas for small wine events hosted by SLO Coast Wine (Sept)
- b. New board application from Avila Lighthouse Suites (Sept)
- c. Recap from Pale Kai Outrigger Event (Oct)

9. Closing Comments: None

10. Next ABTA Local Fund Area Board Meeting:

Dates: **September 13, 2023**
Time: **10:00 am – 12:00 pm**
Location: **Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort - Boardroom**

11. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 12:26 pm.