

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, September 13, 2023
Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Boardroom

Board Members Present:

Dean Hutton, Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort
Ken Kelly, Coastal Vacation Rentals
Mindy Hunter, Avila Village Inn

Others Present:

John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising
Claudia Torkelson, TJA Advertising (via Zoom)
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising
Tom Walker, TJA Advertising (via Zoom)
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA administrator

Board Members Absent: None

CBID: Cheryl Cuming

1. **Call to Order:** By board chair Dean Hutton at 10:08 am; Dean welcomed Mindy Hunter to the board. Mindy introduced herself. She is the GM at Avila Village Inn and is looking forward to serving on the board. She has worked in hospitality for 18 years, all in Avila Beach.
2. **Roll Call:** Stephanie Rowe
3. **Public Comment:** None
4. **Consent Items:** A motion was made by Ken Kelly and seconded by Dean Hutton to approve the August 9, 2023 minutes. With no further discussion, the minutes were approved by unanimous 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. Web traffic was a bit down because there was no advertising in August. The next campaign is about Small Towns, Big Experiences and will launch in September.
 - b. Open rate for their email subscribers is up to 35%.
 - c. TOT/Assessment collections for July are up from 2022 but slightly down from 2021.
 - d. CBID Board meeting on September 27 at Cambria Pines Lodge.
 - e. New images have been added to the Flickr account for LFA use. New content is regularly added.
 - f. Thank you for contributing to the CAO performance evaluation.
 - g. A new survey regarding the H1RT brand will be sent out soon.
 - h. Avila Beach's assessment collections were 17.84% of overall total contributions for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.
6. **Budget Update:** Stephanie Rowe reported that assessment collections in July totaled \$31,564. Available funds (including the carry-forward) total \$304,540. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed total \$45,209.
7. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Claudia Torkelson and Rick Turton:** Tom Walker reviewed the new website refresh. The board agreed they liked all the changes. They asked that the homepage display multiple months for upcoming events. Stephanie Rowe will send out the link to the board for further input.

John passed around flyers and posters that will be posted in Avila for the Pale Kai Outrigger event. So far, the organizers have received 67 paddler RSVPs with half coming from SLO County. He noted that the first event would start out slow and with more planning and education, it should grow next year. They are hoping for 10 rooms this year. John will have a videographer at the event to get some good footage for next year.

John noted that he is working with Jessica Blanchfield on the Cycle Central Coast partnership and plans to work with Mike Sinor on smaller wine event ideas. Dean suggested a Wine & Wag event which are always very popular.

Claudia reported on social media activity in the last month. Facebook fans increased by +1%/53 fans to 79,980. Total Impressions +364% to 324,538 and engagements +82% to 18,351. Videos watched decreased -26% to 75,28. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained +1%/150 new followers for a total of 42,852, with impressions -37%/444,506 and engagements -5%/9,064. She noted the top Instagram posts. She also reported on the August social ad spend which focused on the Pale Kai Outrigger event: Website visits 4,475; reach 134,900; post engagement 5,582 and the cost per website visit .25 cents. YouTube increased slightly last month to 462,642 lifetime video views, down to 143 monthly video views and 1.2 average monthly hours watched. She listed the top videos. The monthly blog spotlighted Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort, and she noted that the LocalHood Stories are doing well. The quarterly newsletter was about upcoming events with an open rate of 36%.

Rick Turton reported on the website stats for the month. He noted that session analytics looked good. They show how well the ads are doing. He showed the outbound tracking for Avila lodging properties and how granular the data can get. It is hard to compare data to last year because of the change in tracking methodology. Cheryl noted that she will send out the recent Short Term Rental Study to see if the board would like to further discuss. Among the findings, the study found that short term rentals were occurring in the wealthiest, least affordable parts of the community, and did not necessarily take away from affordable rental housing.

8. Action/Discussion Items

- a. **Local fund area by-laws for board member and officer terms** – Cheryl Cuming reviewed the current local fund area by-laws for board member and officer terms. She noted that the Board of Supervisors asked that the boards review them to come up with one set of by-laws for CBID and LFAs. She also noted that most of the LFAs are not adhering to their board chair terms. Avila currently allows the board chair to serve 2 consecutive 4-year terms. Avila’s board chair term is in compliance. The board agreed to change the chair term to 2 consecutive 2-year terms. They also agreed to formalize the officer terms for chair and vice-chair. The vice-chair term would need consent by the board to assume the role. The board agreed to continue having the CBID board in an oversight role. The board also agreed they do not need committees with a 3-member board. Cheryl will circle back after talking with the other LFAs.

9. Future Agenda Items/New Business

- a. Discuss ideas for small wine events hosted by SLO Coast Wine
- b. Recap from Pale Kai Outrigger Event (by Nov)
- c. Updates on Bob Jones Trail, Cherry Canyon emergency access, and future flooding improvements – Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg (Dec)

10. Closing Comments: None

11. Next ABTA Local Fund Area Board Meeting:

Dates: **October 11, 2023**
Time: **10:00 am – 12:00 pm**
Location: **Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort - Boardroom**

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:23 am.