



CAMBRIA TOURISM BOARD (CTB)
(Cambria Local Fund Advisory Board)

Board Meeting Minutes

Cambria Pines Lodge

Treetop Room

February 13, 2024

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Greg Pacheco at 1:10 p.m.

Members Present

Greg Pacheco

Karen Cartwright

Jim Bahringer

Steve Kniffen

George Marschall

CBID

CAO Cheryl Cuming

Guests

Patty Rixman, Stephanie Vassigh,

Paula Ufferheide, Scarecrow Festival;

Elaina Jardini, Scott Ragosta, Angel

Gonzalez, Pacifica Hotels; Shannon

Marang-Cox, Erin Starck, Arthritis

Foundation; Mike Arnold, Cambria

Christmas Market; Jessica Blanchfield,

Archer & Hound; Jill Jackson, CTB MA.

2. Consent Agenda Items

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George Marschall moved, and Steve Kniffen seconded, to approve the board meeting minutes of December 12, 2023, as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Public Comment

No public comments were given.

4. Discussion & Action Items

4.1 Board Member Intent to Renew

Greg explained that George Marschall's term expired, and he submitted an intent to renew letter for an additional term. George confirmed. Greg asked about the length of the new term. Cheryl Cuming explained that the county is working to determine a regular term for all seven LFA Board Members. They are currently working on the final update to the by-laws. The term will probably be for two to four years. She thanked George for his continued service, said that she will take it before the CBID in the next two weeks, and then get it on the Board of Supervisor's agenda for approval.

Steve Kniffen moved, and Jim Bahringer seconded, to accept George Marschall's letter of intent to renew and approve him for another board term. The motion passed with 4 votes in favor; 1 abstention: George Marschall (subject of motion).

4.2 Arthritis Foundation's Bike Tour Event Funding Application

Greg stated next on the agenda, the Arthritis Foundation has submitted a funding application for the California Coast Classic Bike Tour event. He asked George to comment. George said that the application is in order and almost identical to prior years. He said that it is a conflict of interest because all of the rooms booked are at the Lodge, so he must recuse himself. He offered to have Shannon or Erin speak. Shannon agreed that the application is very much the same as prior years. A couple of items she said that she wanted to draw the board's attention to, first despite Highway 1 being closed, they still upheld their traditional route by shuttling riders to stay overnight in Cambria and if needed they will do it again. In the past the event was promoted as an L.A. event, last year

they pivoted and changed that to a “national destination event.” They have also doubled their investment to bring new riders in. They will be bringing people in nationally. Shannon said she thinks it continues to be a great partnership and hopes the board agrees that it is a mutual success. George asked for any questions. Greg asked if it was the same amount as they asked for last year and George confirmed. He said that last year exceeded their expectations. The event usually takes place in September, last year it took place in October. Shannon said this year it will be on September 21. Shannon thanked the board.

Greg Pacheco moved, and Karen Cartwright seconded, to approve funding the Arthritis Foundation’s application from Event budget funds. The motion passed with 4 votes in favor; 1 recusal: George Marschall (conflict of interest).

4.3 Christmas Market Shuttle

Greg said that next on the agenda is a discussion about the Christmas Market Shuttle funding. We are starting on this early this year. Cheryl explained that the current policy does not allow for the CTB to pay for the shuttle directly. It may change when the bylaws are reviewed, but as of now you would need an organization to apply for funding. The earlier the process starts, the better. However, it is permissible to pay an administrative fee for their work on the application, and the liability of signing the contract. She suggested \$2,500. The next step is identifying an organization that would be interested in doing that. Greg said that someone had mentioned the Lions. Jim is the president of the Lions. Greg said that the Chamber voted against applying last year. Lorraine said that Steve is a Chamber board member. Steve said that he would recommend the Odd Fellows. Karen asked if the amount would be the same this year. Mike Arnold said that the market will take place for 27 nights this year, so it is longer. He can discuss it with Trevor at Safe Ride to get a better idea. Cheryl said that she is concerned if the board is willing to fund it, the cost may be north of \$90,000. Is the board interested in that big an investment first, before the work is started on an application? Mike said actually the amount requested last year was \$50,000. Jill said that the amount was reduced to \$40,000 by having two instead of three shuttles. Greg said that they did still have rooms available last year. If they had the shuttle, they would definitely promote packages. George said that the Sea Otter had a private shuttle and December was gangbusters, because they could promote that guests would have a ride. Karen said that the feeling she has gotten is that hoteliers are not willing to pitch in. Greg said his only feedback from constituents has been, “that is what the assessment money is for.” Greg said that he believes the shuttle does allow for properties to get more business. Jim said he would like to see San Simeon involved. Steve confirmed with Greg that he thought it was a good investment at \$50,000. Jim said that he could bring it to the Lions. Steve offered the Oddfellows. Mike will get shuttle quotes first.

4.4 Highway 1 Reopening

Greg stated that the next item is the reopening of Highway 1. He asked for updates. There was another slide. George said that it is a big concern, what this year’s rain will do. Cheryl said that Cal Trans received so much pressure from both Monterey and SLO that they had upped the date from late Summer to Spring, but she is not sure how the new slide and upcoming weather will affect that. She said there is another conversation planned for tomorrow with SLO Cal and Visit California. Reopening for Highway 1 will be different. No one is complaining it is closed, so you do not want to do a big “now open” promotion that will confuse folks. Last time Visit California promoted the reopening and will this time too. They have many communities on Highway 1. Greg added that no matter what, we cannot predict what the weather will do. Cheryl said that she would keep everyone updated as their conversations continue.

5. Information Items/Presentations

5.1 Scarecrow Festival 2023 Follow-up Report

Greg introduced the Scarecrow Festival 2023 Follow-up Report presentation. Paulla Ufferheide said she would like to introduce two wonderful women. She said she is happy to turn the festival over to the new president, Patty Rixman, and Stephanie Vassigh her Co-Chair. Paulla served as president for seven years. Everyone applauded Paulla. She will still be on the board though. Patty gave a PowerPoint presentation of the report that was previously sent to the board. It was the 15-year

anniversary, and they kicked it off with the Cambria Drive. They had six displays throughout, including San Simeon, you could not miss the aliens. It was a very big year for very big displays. They had 1,050 respondents to the survey, which is up 50% over 2021. She shared 350 opted in for their newsletter and emails; 316 opted in to receive Cambria Tourism Board emails. 65% indicated that they lived outside of SLO county, which is up too. L.A. and Fresno were the largest areas visitors were from. 78% visited specifically for the Scarecrows. She showed a graphic of the data. The other large out of county area is Santa Barbara. 386 reported staying in lodging with an average of 2.8 days. Paula had three tour bus groups come in and they spent 234 nights. Respondents came from a total of 38 counties. Patty confirmed that the survey was taken through a QR code on the posters, if you fill it out you may win a hotel stay. She said that they expanded their email list to 1331 active, very engaged, subscribers. She shared that their social media went crazy with 118,000 – double of last years number. Instagram tripled. Visits increased by 19,000. She said that they continue to work with businesses to sponsor and rent scarecrows. The 2023 Friends Program really took off. Individual donors are down, but businesses are up, thirty-five new businesses added in 2023. George complimented the quality of their follow up report. Jessica said that it was nice to be able to track conversion from social media ads. She said she would like to do it again this year and do the same with other events too.

5.2 Marketing Committee Report

Jessica Blanchfield said that everyone caught the end of the marketing committee meeting earlier, so she probably does not need to repeat. She said that the meeting ended with a list of action items for them. Jill said that both the December and January marketing activity reports are included in the binder.

5.3 CBID Updates

Local Fund Summary – February 2024

Mid-Year Roll Up Report – December 2023

The reports were provided to the board, Cheryl reviewed highlights of the new roll-up report.

5.4 CBID Presentation

CBID CAO Cheryl Cuming presented an update. She said in organic traffic they were up 54% in users and 48% in sessions. Authority content they created for each of the LFAs around dining explains some of that. Similar content development will continue. Their email list is up to about 117,000. 1,200 to 1,500 people download maps every month and give us their email address. They have achieved an increase in open rate. Since July 2023 they have worked with a company that provides email strategy. She said it has made a big difference. They have personalized and animated the emails. Top paid media continues to be social media and SEM. The CBID continues to fund the LFA imperative programs and work well with our marketing partners. Native ads are driving visitors to Highway 1. Paid email continues to perform well. CPE for videos is down to .06 each. They have received over two million impressions and 154,000 video views on YouTube. They are also doing some neat stuff on Spotify that has had a 95% engagement rate and 89% completion rate. They have added nine new things into their paid program this year. In social media they are focusing on video and photography. The LFAs have requested raw footage, so they have continued to work on an enormous library of it. They are working on getting more journalists here. They just got a wonderful article in National Geographic on the Monarch Butterflies. Travel for Good continues to hit on all of our different platforms. They are promoting Earth Day activities, as well as wildflowers from all this rain. That is always really popular content. They will be adopting a new brand for Highway 1 Road Trip, the logo in use was temporary. There will also be an exciting new brand promise, that hopefully folks will respond to. Cheryl also shared that all the BlendFest event tickets are sold out.

5.5 Budget Reports

Month Ended December 31, 2023:

Revenue and Expenses

Budget vs Actual

Marketing Budget Expenditures

Grant Funding Detail

The budget reports were provided to the board, Jill explained that the January revenue number was just received the prior night. She updated the reports and placed the new report in the board's binders.

5.6 Committee Meeting Minutes and Reports

Event and Marketing Committees Meeting Minutes – December 12, 2023

Outreach Committee Meeting Minutes – December 12, 2023

The committee minutes were provided to the board but not discussed at the meeting.

6. Future Agenda Items/New Business

No future agenda items were suggested.

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Jackson
Managing Assistant