

Visit Los Osos/Baywood
(Los Osos, Baywood Park, uninc. Morro Bay
Local Fund Advisory Board)

Draft Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2024
Baywood Inn

Board Members Present:

Jamie Wallace, Wallace Hospitality (Chair)
Curtis Armstrong, Baywood Inn

Others Present:

Danielle Carpenter, Admin
Cheryl Cuming, CBID
Katie Sturtevant, Stewardship Travel
Sierra Emrick, CCSPA
Jim Stanfill, Chamber

Absent: Pandora Nash-Karner, Vacation Rental Owner (excused)

1. **Call to Order:** By Chair Jamie Wallace at 10:03 a.m.
2. **Public Comment:**
 - a. Jamie: State of Tourism: The Washington Post had an article about Big Sur on the front page that explored whether keeping Hwy1 open there is sustainable. The road keeps breaking as soon as it's fixed. It addressed businesses that are trying to stay afloat, the Instagram effect on Bixby Bridge and tourism in the area and explored whether Big Sur should be accessible only from the north or whether the challenging part of the road should be used only for hikers and bikers. Cheryl said that San Simeon and Cambria are trying to adapt, but that San Simeon is being hit harder by the closures. Jamie also said he would keep inviting the people from the Back Bay Inn to our meetings and wished Pandora luck in selling her property in BC.
3. **Consent Items**
 - a. Curtis motioned to accept the minutes of the 3/28/24 meeting, Jamie seconded; and the motion carried.
4. **Presentation:**
 - a. **Katie Sturtevant, Stewardship Travel for Good:** The program has a new logo and recently launched the new Back to Nature tours which lists guided and self-guided tours and will be featured in upcoming marketing and promotions. The Season of Coastal Discover has been morphed into a Wildlife Viewing program, including integration of Travel for Good into the Wildlife Viewing authority page and many other pages on the H1RT site. The program also focuses on Earth Day (April) and Beach Clean Up Day (September) and Katie requested information on any events based taking place locally. Stewardship activities are now being integrated into the authority pages as a section on existing pages and stewardship tips are being published in each newsletter. Instead of a stand-alone program, stewardship and sustainability are being integrated into everything the CBID does and there is a new landing page. There is also collaboration with SLO CAL, as they launch their own sustainability efforts, including looping in the county of SLO to represent stewardship efforts on the Visit California website. Jamie mentioned that he learned on Earth Day how underfunded our parks are. Danielle also told Katie about Mirazur as an option for visiting media.
5. **CBID Update (Cheryl Cuming):**
 - a. The H1RT website surpassed 1 million visitors by the end of March. The email open rate is 38% and there are now 125k subscribers. There was softness at the end of last year and the county is hoping for a strong spring and summer. The CBID Meeting is May 22 and the BOS is voting on the annual

approval of the CBID, which is based on getting less than a 51% protest rate. Normally the protest rate is under 1% though this year a larger hotel is protesting paying the assessment.

6. Financials (Danielle): Our revenues are down about \$2000 YOY, and we are budgeting flat for the next fiscal year. Our spending is less than budgeted, however, so we will still end the year with a decent carryforward.

7. Committee Reports

- a. CCSPA (Sierra): The Ranch House and the gift shop look great and Jamie's family from the UK loved the tour. Keeping the stores stocked is a challenge with CCSPA financials and staffing. They are losing another staff member, Julie, who is Sierra's co-leader. Programs are running as planned, AWN are taking place 2x per week and MindWalks are running monthly. State parks are severely understaffed and their funding allows for only the bare minimum, so CCSPA steps in to help, like taking over the MindWalk program. They recently received a \$325 grant to update the Morro Bay Museum, but it's a reimbursement grant, which is why finances are so tight right now. There will be new digital touch tables that will bring new life to the exhibits. Parks Week will take place June 12 – 16, bringing awareness to CA State Parks. "This is Where You Live" is the theme and there will be events every day. The Butterfly Ball is October 12 and they are working with the Parks Foundation who will probably match \$25k to restore the Pismo Grove. The fence is broken and the signage does not represent how magical (and accessible) it is there. It will cost \$80k just to fix the fence and all proceeds of the ball will go towards this restoration. CCSPA is also having some interns working on a podcast: "Veleva, Veleva" and Sierra will send Danielle the link. They also just finished their School Group program, where they used a \$12k grant to pay for transportation of kids from Title 1 schools to come to the coast and the state parks.
- b. Travel for Good (Cheryl): see Katie's presentation
- c. Beautification (Pandora): The corner where the Cow Bear lives needs some tending and when Pandora gets back Celebrate will look for volunteers to do some trimming and weeding. A new, larger sample lamp at the Baywood Inn will arrive on Friday and Curtis will let us know if it looks better.
- d. Events (everyone): Monday is super strong in Baywood with live music, beer gardens and the farmer's market.
- e. Chamber Liaison (Jim): This Saturday is the Awards Dinner at the Community Center. There is an excellent meal planned, tickets are \$70. Citizen of the year is Annette Sheely, Business of the Year is Carstairs Energy and Carstairs Realty, New Business of the Year is Brightside Pizza and Volunteer of the Year is Annie Wahler. They are still trying to move into the Community Center, but it's being held up by changes that need to be made to the lease. Oktoberfest planning is starting soon.
- f. Marketing Update (Danielle): Danielle presented the annual report, and our average open rate is 48%. Our mailing list has grown by 5% and the goal for the upcoming fiscal year is to grow it by 10%. The Facebook channel has grown by 20% and Instagram by 10%. Our best CrowdRiff story is "The Best Small Town You've Never Heard Of" with over 17k views.
- g. Vacation Rentals (everyone): No report.

8. Action Items

- a. Discuss and vote on Marketing Proposal for 2024-25 Fiscal Year: Danielle reviewed the proposal and reiterated the goal of growing the mailing list by 10% by A/B testing other map downloads, in addition to growing the social channels. A motion for the renewal of the marketing contract to retain D&S Shadetree July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025 for a total of \$49,116 was made by Jamie and seconded by Curtis. Motion carried.
- b. Discuss and vote on Budget for 2024-25 Fiscal Year: Revenue was projected as flat to the current fiscal year, with a total projected income of \$72,236 and expenditures of \$99,442 for the fiscal year from July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025. A motion to approve the budget as presented with the decrease in LFA Imperative spending from \$18k to \$15k, including potentially spending \$27k of our carryforward was made by Jamie and seconded by Curtis. Motion carried.

- c. Discuss and vote on Butterfly Ball Sponsorship: Sierra presented the sponsorship application for the Butterfly Ball, noting that we will have 6 tickets to give away and our name on all promotional materials. There has been a lot of monarch exposure this year and the goal is to get out of town visitors to attend the ball. Jamie motioned to approve the sponsorship of \$2500 for the 2024 Butterfly Ball. Curtis seconded the motion; motion carried.

9. Future Action Items

- a. Vacation Rental Involvement
- b. Cross marketing with Chamber – Jamie wants to attend a meeting.

10. Closing Comments: We are a small but mighty board and we have done a lot with a balance of being good community members and supporting tourism.

11. Next Visit Los Osos/Baywood Meeting

Date: Tuesday, June 25, 2024

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at Baywood Inn

12. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:29 p.m.