

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, July 10, 2024
Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Boardroom

Board Members Present:

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

Others Present:

John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising
Claudia Torkelson, TJA Advertising (via Zoom)
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising
Katie Sturtevant, CBID Stewardship Travel and PR
Marcia Scott, Friends of Avila Pier
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA administrator

Board Members Absent: None

CBID: Cheryl Cuming not in attendance

1. **Call to Order:** By board chair Dean Hutton at 10:05 am.
2. **Public Comment:** None
3. **Consent Items:** A motion was made by Ken Kelly and seconded by Chris Oh to approve the May 8, 2024 minutes. With no further discussion, the minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.
4. **Budget Update:** Stephanie reported that assessment collections in May totaled \$17,822. Available funds (including the carry-forward) total \$324,111. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed total \$259,826.
5. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Claudia Torkelson, Rick Turton:**

Claudia reported on social media activity in the last month. She noted that she increased the ad spend from \$2,200 to \$4,070 with a Pick Your Perfect Paradise reel. There was an increase in website visits, 16,054 vs 5,112 in May and decrease in cost per website visit \$.025 vs \$.044 in May, but a decrease in impressions and engagements. John and Claudia noted that their goal is to have lodging referrals so that is where they place their focus. Total Facebook fans -1%/-1,588 fans to 80,084. Total Impressions -37%/-126,405 to 215,107 and engagements -82%/-19,801 to 4,246. Videos watched increased +98%/+64,722 to 130,500 because the ad was a reel. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained +1%/+869 new followers for a total of 48,897, with impressions -58%/-633,17 for total 458,128 and engagements -55%/-10,000 for total 7,868. She noted the top Instagram posts. YouTube had an increase to 480,213 lifetime video views from 466,484; up to 13,758 from 556 monthly video views and up to 125 from 6 average monthly hours watched. She listed the top videos. The monthly blog was about upcoming events in Avila which was repurposed from the quarterly newsletter. She also noted the performance of the Localhood stories which continue to be high.

Rick reported on the website activity for the month. As was noted previously, lodging referrals is the goal. Rick noted that June had 17,152 lodging specials page views based on Claudia's efforts which is very high. February was also very high with 18,277 page views.

- b. **LA Times Campaign Results and 2024 2025 Marketing & Media Plan** – John reviewed the results from the spring LA Times campaign which performed very well with Social Handshakes exceeding industry standards in each category; every one of the tactics surpassed the ordered impression count; and great results between photo and video assets with both receiving fantastic engagement with clicks. Overall it was a very successful campaign. John also reviewed the updated marketing and media plan for the new year. TJA will continue to target the 3-5 hour drive markets and are proposing three campaigns this year: early fall, February, and spring. He reviewed the summary of costs. John also passed around the flyer for the Pale Kai Outrigger event on September 21st.
- c. **Stewardship Travel for Good and PR Updates** – Katie gave an update from the past year. She noted that their logo has been updated, but the colors are a bit muted so they will be updating it to be more vibrant. She is available for support about how to use the Stewardship Travel for Good program in your marketing efforts. She noted the Back to Nature Tours and the previous Season of Coastal Discovery, which is now focusing on Wildlife Viewing during winter. There are two events they focused on--Earth Day in April and Coastal Cleanup in September. They have continued to work on integrating STP into all CBID marketing efforts and partnered with SLO CAL to leverage the program. She noted several successful STP PR efforts with Carolyn Heller a Canadian food, travel and feature writer and articles in Smithsonian Magazine about the elephant seals and National Geographic about monarch butterflies.

6. Action/Discussion Items

- a. **Avila Beach Pier Funding Application** – Marcia Scott, President of Friends of Avila Pier, thanked the Board for the opportunity to present the funding application. She noted that the organization was created by the Port San Luis Harbor District to support fundraising efforts for the pier. The mission of the Friends of Avila Pier is to restore, renovate and maintain the Avila Pier. She noted that their mission rings the bell on all criteria for LFA funding because it enhances Avila Beach’s cultural, environmental, recreational and historical assets for locals and visitors. She reviewed the Avila Pier’s history and noted that it was closed on June 19, 2015 due to structural safety concerns. She reviewed the organization’s board and noted that ABTA board member Chris Oh is on the Friends of Avila Pier board. She reviewed the three stages of repair and noted that stage 1 is estimated to be completed before the terminus with a reopening date on December 31, 2024. An event is being planned for the reopening. Stages 2 and 3 are to come with repairs to the boat landing and restrooms on the pier terminus. Marcia reviewed the donor plaque campaign and the three tier options: \$1,000/\$5,000/\$15,000. The board discussed marketing assistance for the organization’s fundraising efforts with ideas that included creating a landing page, creating a video, and social media and eblasts detailing accomplishments and updates. Ken noted that supporting the funding request was a natural fit and suggested perhaps tying the reopening event with the Polar Bear Plunge on January 1st. The board agreed to go with the large 8x5 plaque and hoped to have it placed on one of the new light posts on the pier.

A motion was made by Dean Hutton, and seconded by Ken Kelly, to approve \$15,000 for the Friends of Avila Pier Renovation and Donor Plaque Project, as well as providing marketing assistance with their fundraising efforts. With no further discussion, the funding and marketing assistance was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board. Chris Oh abstained from voting as he is on the Friends of Avila Pier Board.

- b. **2024 2025 LFA Imperative Proposal** – John Sorgenfrei presented his recommendations for the CBID co-op program for new year. Last year, the board approved \$15,500. He recommended using the same formula: Search Engine Marketing Co-op - \$5,000 (\$500/month), August 2024-May 2025; Local Fund Area Paid Social Co-op - \$8,500 (\$8,500 match for \$17,000 total), August 2024-June 2025; Email retargeting - \$2,000, slated for February 2025; total spend for Avila = \$15,500 + \$8,500 Social CBID match for grand total of \$24,000.

A motion was made by Ken Kelly and seconded by Mindy Hunter, to approve \$15,500 for the 2024-2025 CBID 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.

7. Future Agenda Items

- a. C10 SLO Down Truck Show Follow-up Report (by September)
- b. Pale Kai Outrigger Event Follow-up Report (by November)

8. Closing Comments:

- a. Stephanie noted that 14 wine tasting passes have been redeemed so far and the SLO Coast Wine members were meeting that day to see if they would like to extend the program to the end of the year or end it on August 31.
- b. Stephanie also passed around the wine openers that will be included in the C10 SLO Down Truck Show goodie box.

9. Next ABTA Local Fund Area Board Meeting:

Dates: **August 14, 2024**
Time: **10:00 am – 12:00 pm**
Location: **Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort - Boardroom**

10. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:54 am.