

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, January 8, 2025
Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Boardroom

Board Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Cheryl Cuming, CBID
John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising
Claudia Torkelson, TJA Advertising (on Zoom)
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising
Bruce Hilton, Friends of the Bob Jones Trail
Helene Finger, Friends of the Bob Jones Trail
Steve Ansolabehere, Friends of the Bob Jones Trail

Board Members Absent:

Call to Order/Introductions: By board chair Dean Hutton at 10:10 am. The members from Friends of the Bob Jones Trail were introduced.

Public Comment: None

Administrative Items:

1. **Roll Call:** By Cheryl
2. **Consent Items:** A motion was made by Dean Hutton and seconded by Ken Kelly to approve the October 9, 2024 minutes. With no further discussion, the minutes were approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.
3. **Monthly Budget Report:** Cheryl reported that assessment collections in November totaled \$11,476. Available funds (including the carry-forward) total \$365,716. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed total \$145,246.
4. **Next Meetings:** February 12, 2025 & March 12, 2025; 10am-12pm, Sycamore Mineral Springs Boardroom

Information Items:

1. **CBID Local Fund Updates and Financials:** Cheryl reported updates from the past month.
 - a. The CBID Advisory Board and San Luis Obispo County are working with Civitas Advisors to modify the 1989 district ordinance to allow the County to contract with a non-profit to carry out tourism marketing services of the CBID. The goal is to transition the administrative, financial and procurement services from the County to the new non-profit. The process includes ordinance modification, formation of a new nonprofit corporation and drafting a service agreement between the County, the CBID and the non-profit corporation.
 - b. Avila TOT: November 2024 = \$103,254 compared to November 2023 = \$166,164.
 - c. Next CBID Board meeting on January 22, 9am at Cambria Pines Lodge.
 - d. Paid Media: Higher conversions at lower costs: a 42% increase in key event conversion while spending rate was 15% less; Engaged with high quality traffic: visitors engaging with 4+ pages increased 37% Y/Y and map downloads increased 30%.
 - e. Avila Beach's assessment collections were 19.18% of overall total contributions for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

2. **Review of Updated CBID and LFA By-Laws Approved by BOS:** Cheryl reported that the County Board of Supervisors has approved the updated By-laws for the CBID and the Local Fund Areas. The updated documents are available in the Resource Center section of the Member page.
3. **Marketing Agency Updates:**
John reported the results from the recent Visit California newsletter campaign. Claudia reported on the social media activity and quarterly newsletter results. Rick reported on the website analytics for the past month. Ken suggested that we reach out to AI to become the authority on ABTA and H1 and to look into Blue Sky.

Action Items:

1. **Bob Jones Trail Funding Application** – Bruce Hilton from the Friends of Bob Jones Trail (FBJT) presented a video and introduced the funding application. The total cost of the project is \$37M and 80% has been funded. The FBJT’s goal is to raise \$1M in donations and future commitments by January 30th to convince CA that they can eventually fund the project’s remaining \$5.5M by 2026-2027, or they may lose the original \$18M grant. Dean asked about the new route. Ken asked how much they had raised to date. Bruce reported that they had raised \$200,000 with half as pledges through 2027.

A motion was made by Ken Kelly, and seconded by Dean Hutton, to approve \$15,000 for the Friends of the Bob Jones Trail – Extension Gap Closure project pursuant to the receipt of an itemized budget for \$1M. With no further discussion, the funding was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

2. **Unused Monies from Pale Kai Event Funding** - Cheryl noted that the County has asked that the Pale Kai Outrigger Canoe Club return the unused portion of event funding. The County noted that allowing the organization to keep the amount would be an impermissible gift or loan, even if they are to deduct from next year’s request. Stephanie is working with Pale Kai to get the unused amount of \$1,000 returned to the County and credited to our account.
3. **Status of Board Member** - Dean confirmed in a letter that board member Chris Oh has left his position at Avila Lighthouse Suites and is no longer eligible to be on the ABTA board. Dean noted that while Chris was on the board, his presence and contributions to the promotion and marketing of Avila Beach tourism were appreciated and he wishes him success in his future endeavors.

A motion was made by Ken Kelly, and seconded by Dean Hutton, to accept the letter submitted by Dean Hutton as formal notice and resignation that Chris Oh has left Avila Lighthouse Suites and will no longer hold a seat on the Avila Beach Tourism Alliance Board effective immediately. With no further discussion, the letter was accepted by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

4. **New Board Chair** - Dean has been the board chair since October 2020 and has served the maximum terms allowed based on the previous by-laws, therefore, the board must nominate and approve a new board chair for a 1-year term. Dean nominated Ken Kelly for board chair and he accepted the nomination.

A motion was made by Dean Hutton, and seconded by Ken Kelly, to approve the nomination of Ken Kelly for chair of the Avila Beach Tourism Alliance for a 1-year term effective February 1, 2025. With no further discussion, Ken was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

5. **New Board Vice Chair** - Cheryl noted that based on the new by-laws, a vice-chair should also be confirmed for a 1-year term. The vice-chair would lead meetings in the absence of the board chair. Dean agreed to be the vice-chair.

A motion was made by Ken Kelly, and seconded by Dean Hutton, to approve Dean Hutton as vice-chair of the Avila Beach Tourism Alliance for a 1-year term effective February 1, 2025. With no further discussion, Dean was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

Future Agenda Items:

- a. None

Closing Comments and Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am.