

Draft until Approved
SLO Wine Lodging
Board Meeting Minutes

March 18, 2026 – Edna Production Facility, 2585 Biddle Ranch Rd. SLO, CA 93401

Board Members Present:

Leigh Woolpert (Chair)
Lizzy Thompson (Vice Chair)
Jena Wilson
Karen Reed
Sarah Hames

Others Present:

Danielle Carpenter, Admin
Christine Rizzo Assistant to Danielle
Cheryl Cuming CBID | H1TA
Ava Crouse
Kendra Paulding ECOSLO
Jessica Ireland CEO Sunshine & Bourbon
Keith Ireland ECD Sunshine & Bourbon
Nilesh Patel ESD Sunshine & Bourbon
Maddie Fawcett-Dubow D&S Shadetree

Absent: Alicia Cocks

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- a) **Call to Order:** by Leigh at 3:03 pm **Roll Call:** see above
- b) **Public Comment** Lizzy announces her resignation from the board in June. Today the board will be voting on a new Admin, Ava Crouse who will transition in April-June.
- c) **Presentations:**
- a. Sunshine & Bourbon rebranding proposal: VIA ZOOM Jessica introduced the team and Keith presented. Their company has done campaigns in the area including California Hwy1 Road trip rebrand, Visit SLO Cal as well as other destinations: Billings MO, Galveston TX and Phoenix AZ. Their rebranding will be focused on the Brand Name, Brand Identity and Brand Promise and will convey an experience to be memorable and long lasting. Develop the path through delving into data and determining the 4 truths: 1. the product truth, 2. human truth, 3. competitive truth and 4. The current truth. They will derive the Brand Promise and Identity from here. The cost of \$7000 includes research, analysis, creative strategy brief, brand planning and concepting, and brand style guide within a 4-month timeline. If desired, we can add a brand video for \$5000.
- b. ECOSLO tree planting proposal. **Kendra:** presents a project budget for the “Follow the Redbud Road” project. The plan is to plant twelve Native Western Redbud Trees along the roadways with the hope that more businesses will do the same and create a corridor effect leading through Edna Valley. The budget ask is \$2500 for 12 trees, including planting and caring for the trees for 3 years until they are developed and viable.
- d) **Consent Item:** Lizzy motions to approve the minutes from 12/17/25 meeting with the correction of the date and location to 12/17/25 at Biddle Ranch. Leigh seconds motion. No objections. All in favor. **Minutes are APPROVED**

e) CBID/H1TA Update:

- a. **Brown Act:** Cheryl passed out copies of the Brown Act to board members – this is now required each year, and also noted the Brown Act was included in the board packet.
 - b. **Survey Results:** SLO county asked that a third-party manage the survey process, which took 4 1/2 months. The county provided the master constituent list; there was a Spanish version that didn't have any responses. Weighted results have not been provided by the county yet. The survey launched on October 17 and closed November 19. 55% of vacation rentals show zero rent collected, so they're inactive and not being used as vacation rentals. 659 vacation rentals are active, and surveys received a 24% response rate of active vacation rentals and 90% of hotels/motels. The CBID learned a lot and received positive feedback. One of the findings was that we need to tell more people about our successful efforts. The results show that people want us to prioritize tourism marketing, events, beautification, and then stewardship. Those who protested also returned the survey with positive overall ratings, and SWLA and the CBID need better visibility so that more people know what we do.
 - c. **Board Vacancies:** The board roster shows one available slot, and now with Lizzy announcing her departure, there will be two.
 - d. **Update from BOS meeting February 10.** The survey results were presented and at this BOS meeting the H1TA collected almost 50 letters of support and had 2 letters of concern, including one from Oceano constituent Bonita Ernst. BOS voted 5-0 to move forward with their support of the 1994 formation. A packet was given to the board with the accomplishments and statistics of the CBID | H1TA, showing how the communities have benefited from the amount of TOT invested back in marketing and funding projects for the LFAs. CBID | H1TA TOT has grown 183% since inception in 2009.
 - e. **Local Fund summary.** The first half of the year showed some softening; the reason may be due to the closure of Highway 1. The good news is the highway is now open, and the expectation is that TOT will have a slight increase from last year.
- 6. Budget:** Leigh; the carryforward has been shrinking because money was used early in the year for marketing. Danielle pointed out the SFGate story was a large chunk in the beginning of the fiscal year, but spending will even out by the end of the year. If moving forward with tree planting or rebranding the money will come out of the contingency. Vacation rentals have been slow but seem to be picking up for spring.
- 7. Marketing Partner Update:** Maddie VIA ZOOM: Followers on FB and INSTA are growing steadily, more on INSTA probably because it's such a photo heavy site. Organic posts: most popular were Galentine's and focus on nature. Boosted post are doing well – the last boosted was wedding with the mini burros. Social media ads are performing well. Clicks on the wedding ads are sent to the wedding page on the H1RT website. Danielle: newsletter goes out in couple weeks and will highlight this property and new bridal suite at White Barn. Newsletter has grown 9.5% new

subscribers since July. Open rates are above average. FB and new map download have increased the subscribers. LFA imperative program invests \$1000 per month (\$500 EV/AG + \$500 CBID) and have increased impressions by 140%, clicks 115% and conversions were up 81%. The SFGate story was a great success. There were 4427 engagements and 1,581,057 impressions and 5,315 clicks to SLO Wine Lodging and H1RT website. Since we aren't building CrowdRiff stories any longer, there is the opportunity to spend more on boosting posts to grow our social channels. The board agree to allocate an additional \$250 per month towards social media ads.

8. Discussion and Action Items

a. Vote on Chair and Vice Chair: Since Lizzy has stepped down as Vice Chair someone needs to replace her. Jena volunteered to be Vice Chair. Lizzy motioned to vote for Leigh for Chair and Jena as vice chair for the next year. Sara seconded. All in Favor. **MOTION PASSED**

b. Discuss and Vote on ECOSLO proposal Everyone is very excited for this project and Kendra will be contacting other business to get them involved. ECOSLO next planting season is this Fall. Proposal is to purchase 12 trees this 2025 2026 fiscal year and 12 more in the 2026 2027 fiscal year. Leigh motioned to approve \$2500 to ECOSLO for 12 trees, Lizzy seconded. All in Favor **MOTION PASSED**

c. Discuss and vote on Admin Scope of work for Ava Crouse Ava submitted her resume. Everyone met her and discussed how she would be a good fit for the group. A transition time will be April - June. Scope of duties were provided in the packet along with the budget. Leigh motioned to approve Ava as the administrator with the scope of duties as presented for a total not to exceed \$9250 effective April 1, 2026, thru June 30, 2027. Jena seconded, all in favor. **MOTION PASSED**

d. Discuss Sunshine & Bourbon rebranding proposal. Board discussed what the deliverables will be for the \$8000 investment and with an additional \$5000 for branded video. The general consensus was that rebranding was needed and worth the investment but they will vote on the expenditure at the next meeting when they review the overall budget for the 2026 2027 FY year. **NO ACTION TAKEN**

9. **Closing Comments:** Thank you to Lizzy for her years of dedication to the board. Lizzy will provide a letter of resignation at the next meeting.

10. **Next SLO Wine Lodging Alliance Meeting:**

Board discussed the need to move the meeting date earlier in order to accommodate for the new fiscal year contract renewals that would need to be voted no later than the May H1TA Board of Directors meeting.

Date: May-June TBD, 2025

Location: TBD

11. **Adjournment:** 5:07 pm