

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, June 10, 2026
Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Boardroom

Board Members Present:

Ken Kelly, Coastal Vacation Rentals
Dean Hutton, Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort & Spa
Mindy Hunter, Avila Village Inn

Board Members Absent: None

Others Present:

Cheryl Cuming, Highway 1 Tourism Alliance
John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising
Claudia Jensen, TJA Advertising (on Zoom)
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising
Tom Walker, TJA Advertising (on Zoom)
Dr. Kristin Reed, Upwell Turtles
Liz Gregg, Upwell Turtles
Julie Andrews-Scott, Avila Farmer's Market
SLO County Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg
Kelley Abbas, SLO County Board of Supervisors Chief of Staff
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA Administrator

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1. **Call to Order/Introductions:** By Board Chair Ken Kelly at 10:03 am.
 2. **Roll Call:** by Stephanie Rowe
 3. **Public Comment:** None
 4. **Information Items:**
 - a. **Next Meeting** – July 8, 2026, 10am-12pm, Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort.
 - b. **H1TA Local Fund Area Updates and Financials:** Cheryl reported on the activity in the past month. The 1989 district was renewed. The BOS motioned to have additional input into the 1994 District MDP. This will delay the June petition launch to fall which will extend the formation to 18-24 months. Supervisor Ortiz-Legg noted that the folks who don't rent their properties and don't collect TOT are the ones who mainly protest. A new process will be implemented to curb this. Avila Beach's assessment collections are 18.21% of overall total contributions for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.
 - c. **Monthly Budget Report:** Stephanie reported that assessment collections in April totaled \$18,164. Available funds (including the carry-forward) total \$281,701. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed total \$169,375.
 - d. **Marketing Agency Updates:** Claudia reviewed last month's activities and social media results. She is working on a reel "A Day in the Life of Avila" with SLO CAL. Avila was voted best beach in SLO County in New Times so she is promoting it. Rick gave updates on website stats. Tom is working on AI and website maintenance.
 5. **Consent Items:** A motion was made by Dean Hutton and seconded by Mindy Hunter to approve the May 13, 2026 minutes and April 2026 financials. With no further discussion, the documents were approved by majority voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

6. Action Items:

- a. Upwell Turtles Funding Application** – Dr. Kristin Reed, Operations Director, introduced herself and Liz Gregg, Development & Communications Manager. Upwell Turtles is a non-profit organization based in Monterey, California. Their mission is to protect and recover endangered populations of turtles by reducing threats at sea. They work in partnership with NOAA to monitor critically endangered leatherback turtles on the West Coast. They are asking for \$30,000 to install a life-size statue of a male leatherback sea turtle in Avila. The statue site is in a planter at Avila Beach Park adjacent to the Central Coast Aquarium. They have already secured contributions totaling \$90,000 to begin the project and have partnered with SLO County Parks & Rec and the Central Coast Aquarium. The board agreed that the project’s education and signage can be tied to tourism and a festival event could potentially be created around the leatherback turtles.

A motion was made by Ken Kelly, and seconded by Mindy Hunter, to approve \$30,000 for the Leatherback Turtle bronze statue, with \$15,000 earmarked for education and signage and \$15,000 for the statue. With no further discussion, the funding was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

- b. Avila Beach Farmers’ Market Funding Application** – Julie Andrews-Scott, manager of the market, presented the funding request. She noted that the farmer’s market was created to enhance tourism after the big dig. The season runs every Friday, 4-8pm from May through August on the Avila Beach promenade. This is the only farmers’ market in the county that pays for their location. Every year the permit cost has increased from County Parks and Rec. Ken asked if the season could be extended to the original timeframe, April through October. Julie noted that they had to shorten the season because they could not sustain the overhead, but with funding she would look into it. Supervisor Ortiz-Legg suggested not extending to April but extending to October. She would check with County Parks & Rec for the permit. Stephanie noted that Kendra Paulding at ECOSLO is interested in a partnership to help clean up after every farmers’ market and have a booth. The board agreed that the farmers’ market was very popular and a big draw for visitors.

A motion was made by Dean Hutton, and seconded by Ken Kelly, to approve \$10,000 to sponsor the Avila Beach Farmers’ Market for the 2026 season. With no further discussion, the sponsorship was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

- c. Pale Kai Outrigger Expo Funding Application** – Stephanie reviewed the updated funding application and responses from Tamara Jones after the discussion at the last meeting. This item was tabled when it became known that the Breakwave Cal Poly Rodeo is scheduled for the same day in September. The new date of the event is October 9-10, 2026. The amount requested is \$6,500. Pale Kai noted that they have heard the message: more heads in beds. They have added a pick-up party the Friday before the event and have reached out to Avila lodging properties to host the packet pick-up. They have a campaign to convert participants into overnight guests and are building a reason to stay the weekend. They are also creating a survey to measure where folks are staying and for how many nights.

A motion was made by Ken Kelly, and seconded by Mindy Hunter, to approve \$6,500 to sponsor the Pale Kai Outrigger Exposition to be held at Avila Beach on October 9-10, 2026. With no further discussion, the sponsorship was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

- d. Promotional Giveaways for C10 SLO Down Truck Show** – Stephanie reviewed the proposals for the truck show goodie box, branded sunglasses or beer can sleeve. Cheryl noted that Visit SLO CAL in collaboration with Firestone Walker has new beer can sleeves. She suggested asking if they could give us a supply, or perhaps we could purchase them. Stephanie will check with SLO CAL but noted we are running out of time as the truck show is at the end of July.

7. Future Agenda Items

- a. **Bob Jones Trail Kiosk Signage Funding Application** (July)
- b. **2026 Breakaway Cal Poly Rodeo Funding Application** (July)
- c. **FY 2025-2026 TJA Year-End Recap** (July)
- d. **2026 City to Sea Race Funding Application** (Aug)
- e. **2026 C10 SLO Down Truck Show Follow-up Report** (by September)
- f. **2026 Creeks to Coast Cleanup Follow-up Report** (by November)
- g. **Upwell Turtles Follow-up Report** (Nov)
- h. **2026 Avila Farmer's Market Follow-up Report** (by Oct)
- i. **2026 Pale Kai Outrigger Expo Follow-up Report** (Nov)

8. Closing Comments: Supervisor Ortiz-Legg reported that the next phase of the Bob Jones Trail extension will be starting. She is working on additional signage for the trail. Kelley noted that bike lockers will be installed in Avila Beach soon.

9. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:39 am.