

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 14, 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:

Ally Padua, Avila Beach House (excused)

Others Present:

Cheryl Cuming, Highway 1 Tourism Alliance
John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising
Kaci Cox, TJA Advertising (Zoom)
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising (Zoom)
Tom Walker, TJA Advertising (Zoom)
Dawn Ortiz-Legg, SLO County District 3 Supervisor
Kelley Abbas, SLO County District 3 Chief of Staff
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA Administrator
Tracy Campbell, Highway 1 Tourism Alliance
Monica Gonzales, Avila La Fonda Hotel
Will Friedman, Port San Luis Harbor District
Kate Gillespie, Central Coast Aquarium

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1. **Call to Order:** By Chair Ken Kelly at 10:05 am. Ken welcomed potential board members Monica Gonzales, GM at Avila La Fonda Hotel and Will Friedman, Port San Luis Harbor District Director. Everyone introduced themselves. Roll call by Stephanie.
 2. **Public Comment:** None
 3. **Information Items:**
 - a. **Next Meeting** – November 11, 2026, 10am-12pm, Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort.
 - b. **H1TA Local Fund Area Updates and Financials:** Cheryl gave an update from the last month. She also reviewed the by-laws for board absences and the draft policy for the 1994 formation. The petition drive resulted in 69% weighted percentage. Avila Beach's assessment collections are 21.72% of overall total contributions for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.
 - c. **Monthly Budget Report:** Stephanie reported that assessment collections in August totaled \$38,797. Available funds (including the carry-forward) total \$281,540. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed total -\$6,520 but will move into the positive by next month with September collections.
 - d. **Marketing Agency Updates:** Kaci reviewed last month's activities and social media results. The BreakaWave Rodeo was wildly successful on social media. Tom noted that he will be presenting the website reports going forward. He showed the new dashboard. Tom will work on giving access to constituents so they can review the dashboard anytime.
 - e. **Turtle Statue Events:** Stephanie reminded everyone about the upcoming statue celebration events. There will be a ribbon cutting on Thursday, October 15, 5:00-5:30pm and a leatherback turtle educational talk at the Central Coast Aquarium on Saturday, October 17, 2:00-3:00pm.

4. **Consent Items:** A motion was made by Mindy Hunter and seconded by Ken Kelly to approve the September 9, 2026 minutes and August 2026 financials. With no further discussion, the documents were approved by majority voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

5. **Action Items:**

- a. **Leatherback Turtle Statue Naming Contest** – Ken suggested developing a campaign over the next year to name the turtle. He suggested a process that encouraged visitors to go to the Central Coast Aquarium to participate in the naming contest. There was some discussion about ending the contest sooner to correspond with a turtle event. Ken noted that Upwell and the Swift family wished to be on the panel to select the final name. John, Kate and Ken will meet to discuss a plan and report back at the next meeting.
- b. **Avila Beach Websites** – The board discussed the four Avila Beach websites and plan for consolidation. The board agreed that visitavilabeach.com (VAB.com) should be the visitor facing site. Stephanie recommended Avila business owners check VAB.com and contact her if their business is not on the site. Dawn agreed that the newly created welcometoavilabeach.com site does not need to be launched. The newly created site with resource information for businesses does not need to be linked to VAB.com. Tom will reach out to the owner of the old Avila visitor site to ask him to take it down. Will asked if RV camping was listed on VAB.com. Cheryl noted that because Flying Flags did not collect assessments, they were not listed on our website. Will and Dawn noted that they would check with Flying Flags about this.
- c. **Emergency Information Flyer for Lodging Partners** - Kelley presented the draft flyer to the board. Dawn noted that it is important to communicate to visitors the constraints of Avila having one way out in the event of an emergency. Stephanie will send the flyer to the board and TJA for feedback and compile edits for Kelley and Dawn.
- d. **Board Seat Renewal for Mindy Hunter** - Stephanie noted the Mindy's board term will end on December 6, 2026. Mindy has graciously agreed to continue on the board.

A motion was made by Ken Kelly, and seconded by Dean Hutton, to accept the letter of interest submitted by Mindy Hunter to continue on the Avila Beach Tourism Alliance Board for another term. With no further discussion, the letter was accepted by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

6. **Future Agenda Items**

- a. **New Board Member Applications** (Nov)
- b. **Turtle Naming Contest Campaign** (Nov)
- c. **ECOSLO Partnership for Event Cleanup** (Nov)
- d. **2026 C10 SLO Down Truck Show Follow-up Report** (by Nov)
- e. **2026 Creeks to Coast Cleanup Follow-up Report** (by Nov)
- f. **2026 Avila Farmers' Market Follow-up Report** (by Dec)
- g. **Bob Jones Trail Kiosk Signage Follow-up Report** (after completion)
- h. **Upwell Turtle Statue Follow-up Report** (by Dec)
- i. **2026 Pale Kai Outrigger Expo Follow-up Report** (by Dec)
- j. **2026 City to Sea Race Follow-up Report** (by Dec)
- k. **Update by-laws to include provision for multiple year event funding** (Jan)

7. **Closing Comments:** Stephanie noted the Avila Beach Golf Resort is going through a rebrand and will be called The Avila. She has sent the press release to the board and will send to Monica and Will. She also noted that she is working on the funding repayment for the shortened farmers' market season.

8. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 pm.