

*Draft Until Approved*  
**Avila Beach Tourism Alliance**  
**Board Meeting Minutes**

May 10, 2017 – Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Conference Room, Avila Beach

**Board Members Present:**

Charles Crellin, Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort  
Kalie Howard, Avila Lighthouse Suites  
Christopher King, Avila Village Inn

**Absent:** None  
Festival  
Association

Shirley Goetz, Avila Beach Bird Sanctuary Founder

**CBID:** Cheryl Cuming (CAO)

**Others Present:**

John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising  
Kaci Knighton, TJA Advertising  
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising  
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA admin  
AJ Fudge, Central Coast Art and Music  
Heather Muran, SLO Wine Country

Katie Sturtevant, Stewardship Program Liaison

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1. **Call to Order:** by board chair Charles Crellin at 10:00 am
  
  2. **Public Comment:** Shirley Goetz brought to the Board's attention that a non-profit organization by the name of Avila Beach Bird Sanctuary, Inc. has been formed. The new organization is not affiliated with the Avila Beach Bird Sanctuary which she founded. Funds donated to the incorporated organization are not used towards the existing Avila Beach Bird Sanctuary. She noted that the new organization owns the website, AvilaBeachBirdSanctuary.com. Visitors looking for her website should search for AvilaBeachBirdSanctuary.net. She also owns the domain name AvilaBeachBirdSanctuary.org
  
  3. **Consent Items:** The April 12, 2017 minutes were approved for review and approval. A motion was made by Chris King, and seconded by Kalie Howard. With no further discussion, the April 12th minutes were approved by a unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.
  
  4. **CBID and Financials Update:** Cheryl Cuming gave an update for the past month.
    - a. There are almost 65,000 subscribers on their eblast list and almost 80,000 Facebook fans.
    - b. 867 views for the Avila destination page; Kaci is doing a great job pushing people to our destination pages; Cambria had 6,300 views on their destination page because they were last month's destination focus.
    - c. There will be a new TOT update next month.
    - d. There has been much PR coverage from the Whale Trail FAM.
    - e. The 2016 CBID Status Summary Brief and Dashboard were reviewed. Highlights include: e-newsletter subscribers increased 59%, Facebook fans grew 37% and website sessions increased 17% all from previous 12 months; 40 billion earned media impressions and total publicity value \$66 million. Our key messages were found in well-known media outlets like LA Times, Forbes Travel Guide, SF Gate, and others.
    - f. Confirmed that Avila's assessments were 17.67% of the total collected.
  
  5. **Budget Update:** Stephanie Rowe confirmed that collections in March totaled \$10,240.36. Available funds (including the 2015-2016 carry-forward) total \$161,905.22 and funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed are \$20,394.58. The unused TJA funds for the current contract are

\$42,648.53. Total after unused TJA funds returned to budget is \$63,043.11.

## 6. Committee Reports:

a. **Stewardship Travel Program – Christopher King and Katie Sturtevant:** Chris passed around the newly printed stewardship travel posters. He discussed potentially buying frames for them that the lodging properties could prominently display.

b. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Kaci Knighton, Rick Turton:**

Kaci gave an update on social media in the last month. Facebook fans are over 71,000. Top referrals are Facebook.com, VisitAvilaBeach.com and Google.com. She showed the photos that received the most Facebook engagements and the top three Instagram photos. Instagram has just fewer than 12,000 followers. She will be asking Samantha Pruitt if they would like to take over our Instagram for the SLO Ultra and SLO GranFondo. The Instagram video and Facebook Canvas campaigns are doing well. As noted before, the Instagram website campaign has been terminated because the cost per click was too expensive. The YouTube top three videos are the Rural Road Trip, Bike to Paradise and Whale Watching in Paradise.

Rick noted that there were over 16,000 visitors last month. Sessions are up from last year. Mobile users are up since last year. He reviewed the landing pages with increased views from last month.

## 7. Presentations:

a. **AJ Fudge, 2017 Whale Tail and #UnlockYourAdventure Fund Application:** The Board asked clarifying questions about the fund request. AJ noted that the art installations would be set up on the beach in Cayucos for attendees to view. Each installation would be created with a wire frame and 10,000 plastic bottles to bring attention to plastic pollution in our oceans. She is estimating 5,000 attendees for the free 2 day event. Last year, 2,000 people attended over 2 days. Data will be collected from the attendees for the ABTA to use in future marketing efforts. Cheryl Cuming noted that the funds requested will go towards marketing efforts to promote stays in Avila for a 6-month period after the festival. This #UnlockYourAdventure campaign will feature Stay, Play and Pay components for unique, turn-key adventures. AJ noted that she will work with Avila lodging properties to create a special package for the STAY components. Then she would work with Avila businesses for special PLAY and Pay components. Kalie Howard noted that the concept is genius but that there are many variables, and the details have not been worked out. Chris King noted that asking local businesses for an onboarding fee to participate in the Play and Pay components may be prohibitive. Charles Crellin noted that the return-on-investment for \$7,500 cannot be counted on given all the variables. And he wasn't sure if the data collected would provide an equal return. AJ noted that the idea was about creating something unique that people want to experience. She noted that the data collected would be valuable. The Board agreed that they would like to see more details around the Stay, Play and Pay components in order to make an informed decision. Cheryl Cuming noted that the concept has a stewardship travel focus and could be promoted during Coastal Discovery & Stewardship month. She noted that AJ will be presenting the concept to the CBID Board on May 24. John Sorgenfrei agreed that it fit into the board's initiatives for stewardship. The Board will provide feedback to Stephanie Rowe to see if there is a consensus to hold a special meeting for consideration of the fund request.

- a. **Heather Muran, 2017 Harvest on the Coast Fund Application:** Heather gave a recap of last year's event and an overview of the 2017 fund application. Funds requested are \$18,000 for the following: Regional Targeted Marketing Campaign (\$10,000) and Exclusive Partnership (\$8,000). The Exclusive Partnership, in past years, focused on offering a \$20 discount to attendees who stayed in Avila Beach. Heather noted that, in the last couple of years, the offer was not providing a real value to attendees. For 2017, she is proposing they offer an exclusive experience for those staying in Avila Beach. She is picturing the experience to be: VIP tasting area for anyone who shows their Avila lodging/confirmation code can access the VIP Lounge. The VIP Lounge will be built-out as a unique area and have winemakers pouring reserve wines in the space. Heather confirmed that 70% of attendees come from out of the county. Kalie Howard noted that as the event has become more successful, she is wondering why the funding request has increased from last year \$18,000 from \$15,000. She thinks the funds requested should go down, not up. Heather noted that the VIP Lounge would be expensive to build-out. Heather noted that the geo-fencing marketing that worked well two years ago did not work well last year so she is dropping it. She is instead focusing more on hosting journalists. Chris King asked if Heather could reallocate \$3,000 budgeted for local advertising and put it towards out of county advertising to bring the funds requested to down to \$15,000. Heather will send the outline of the VIP Lounge experience and an updated fund application for the Board's consideration at the June meeting.

**8. Action/Discussion Items:**

- a. **Review TJA Newsletter Proposal:** Kaci Knighton gave an overview of the proposal. She noted that email marketing offers a great opportunity to individualize the message to our 11,000 Avila email subscribers. Cost would be \$350 per month. John Sorgenfrei noted that we can do contests to continue to collect emails. Charles Crellin asked if we needed a newsletter since we already have a blog. Kaci noted that these were two different audiences and that the newsletter specifically targets people who have asked for Avila information. The Board agreed that the newsletter would be a good investment. John will include this item in the TJA contract renewal proposal presented at the June meeting.
- b. **Discuss Loop Map Additions/Edits:** Board did not discuss due to time constraints.
- c. **Discuss Potentially Changing July Meeting:** Chris King noted that he would be out of town during the July board meeting and asked if the board would like to reschedule or proceed with the meeting without him. The board agreed to change the meeting to Wednesday, July 19 from July 12 so Chris could attend.
- d. **TJA Advertising Projects:** None

**9. Future Agenda Items/New Business:**

- a. Michael Wambolt, Review Visit SLO CAL Group Opportunities
- b. 2017 Harvest on the Coast Fund Application Consideration
- c. 2017 Avila Whale Tail and #UnlockYourAdventure Fund Application Consideration
- d. 2016-2017 TJA Contract Recap / Review 2017-2018 TJA Contract Renewal Proposal
- e. Review Fiscal Year 2017-2018 Budget Proposal
- f. 2017 SLO Ultra Post Report
- g. 2017 SLO GranFondo Post Report
- h. 2017 Bubblyfest Post Report

**10. Closing Comments:** None

**11. Next ABTA Local Fund Advisory Board Meetings:**

Dates: **June 14, 2017 and July 19, 2017**

Time: **10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

Location: **Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort Boardroom**

**12. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 12:26 pm.