

# San Simeon Tourism Alliance

## MEETING MINUTES

**DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED**

January 16, 2018, 1:00 pm

**Cavalier Cove Room**

**250 San Simeon Ave., San Simeon, CA**

*The meeting was called to order at 1:15 pm*

### **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

**Board Members Present:** Mike Hanchett, and Kaushik (Ken) Patel. Paul Panchal was absent.

**Staff:** Cheryl Cuming, SLO CBID CAO; Michele Roest, Visitor Center Coordinator and Recording Secretary.

**Marketing Firm:** Stacie Jacob and Brad Rubin, Solterra Marketing

**Guests:** Taylor Hilden, Dennis Frahman and Paulla Ufferheide, Cambria Scarecrows; Lynette Harris and Cam Arnold, Friends of the Elephant Seal (FES); Carolyn Skinder, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary; Daniel Brown, San Simeon Radio, Kathleen Naughton, Hearst Ranch Winery.

**PUBLIC COMMENT(S)** None

**CORRESPONDENCE** None

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES** for November 21, 2017: Ken made the Motion, Mike 2<sup>nd</sup>; All in Favor.

**SLO CBID UPDATE** Cheryl reviewed the Local Fund Summary. The Rural Road Trips for each community (Cayucos was the last) have brought good visibility. TOT numbers for San Simeon are down in the last quarter of 2017, a consistent trend since the Highway 1 road closure. Cheryl discussed the revision of the Visit SLOCAL website and that the two BID's are working together on cooperative efforts. Cheryl called attention to the \$100,000 Beautification Grant; applications are due 3/15/18.

**SOLTERRA CORE MARKETING MONTHLY REPORT** Stacie and Brad presented an update on the website revision. Overall, numbers are up, including web visits, social media and email address accruals. Solterra is working with CBID outreach efforts including the 'Bucket List' video to highlight recreation areas and attractions along the north coast. Reports on direct click-thrus to lodging properties are tracked. One clear correlation: properties with better photos get more attention and longer views. Overall, the new website is effective at attracting new visitors and providing the information they are looking for.

**OTHER REPORTS/UPDATES:**

1. **Visitor Center Report:** Michele provided a visitation summary of the last 3 years at the Visitor Center. Visitation for 2017 was 7,394, about the same as 2016.

2. **Alliance Partners Report/Update:**

**Scarecrow Festival:** Dennis and Paulla offered a summary of the 2017 Scarecrow Festival, indicating that the mega-displays on the corner and flags attracted more visitors. Their "on the street" interviews included over 300 respondents who said they were here for the festival and were staying in San Simeon. The Scarecrow Festival Board will be working on a 3-year strategic plan and invited members of the San Simeon Tourism Alliance to attend.

**Cambria Film Festival:** Dennis reported that the Cambria Film Festival will be on February 8-11, the same weekend as Blendfest and that there may be opportunities for cooperative marketing. He and Stacie will follow up. He presented the Board with two tickets to the gala opening and hoped that they would be used to promote the festival.

**Friends of the Elephant Seal:** Cam Arnold provided an update on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, scheduled for March 10<sup>th</sup> at the Hearst Castle Theater. She brought screen shots to show that the electronic RSVP for the event has a direct link to the San Simeon website. Lynnette announced that the rack cards, funded by SSTA, are being distributed by Certified Distributors and were also delivered to all lodgings in the county. Lynnette indicated that visitation was down in the second half of 2017, presumably due to the Highway 1 closure. Total 'clicker' counts (indicating direct contacts between docents and visitors) was 145,000, down from 225,000 in 2016.

**MBNMS:** Carolyn reported 15,600 visitors to the Coastal Discovery Center in 2017. She

is hosting elephant seal talks on Saturdays through March, and tidepool walks during low tide events. She reports that there are some subadult male elephant seals on the beach at San Simeon Cove, and that state parks 'ambassadors' are there to advise people to keep a distance.

3. **Highway 1 Closure Update:** Nothing new to report
4. **Blendfest 2017:** Cheryl confirmed that the CBID contributed \$5,000 to Blendfest again, matching \$5,000 each from Cambria and San Simeon.
5. **RFP For Marketing Services:** Proposals are due on Thursday, January 18. The next steps will include evaluation and interviews, to be scheduled on or near February 20. This is also the date of the next SSTA meeting, so it is possible the presentations will be scheduled for another day (see Action Item 2, below).

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

1. **San Simeon Chamber Support Services contract for 2018**, renewal in the amount of \$43,650 to be distributed in four quarterly payments. Ken made the Motion, Mike 2<sup>nd</sup>, All In Favor.
2. **RFP Evaluation Meeting Date:** It was agreed to wait and see how many proposals are submitted before setting a date for presentations. No Action Taken.

#### **Next Advisory Board Meeting**

**February 20, 2018 @ 1:00 pm**

**Location: Cavalier Cove Room**

*Meeting adjourned, 2:15 pm.*