



**Board of
Directors**

Michael Hanchett
Paul Panchal
Miguel Sandoval

Jeanne Hucek
Admin Coordinator

San Simeon Tourism Alliance

MEETING MINUTES
DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED

A board meeting of the San Simeon Tourism Alliance was held on **May 15, 2018** at the Cavalier Cove Room, 250 San Simeon Avenue, San Simeon, CA 93452. It was called to order at 1:03 PM and was presided over by the President of the Board, Michael Hanchett, with Jeanne Hucek as secretary.

Board Members Present:

Mike Hanchett
Miguel Sandoval
Paul Panchal

Staff: Cheryl Cuming, SLO CBID CAO;
Jeanne Hucek, Visitor Center Coordinator and SSTA Recording Secretary.

Guests:

Tim Bridwell, Lynette Harris and Cam Arnold, Friends of the Elephant Seal (FES); Daniel Brown, Zebra Radio 1610 AM; Mark Hucek, General Manager, Cavalier Oceanfront Resort; Stacie Jacob & Brad Rubin, Solterra Strategies; Parker Panchal, Day's Inn, Carolyn Skinder, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary & Coastal Discovery Center; Casey Rideout, Hearst Ranch Winery.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

PUBLIC COMMENT(S)

Miguel Sandoval as member representative of the Cambria Chamber of Commerce reported that the Cambria Pines Lodge has interest in expanding the area of visitation for the Christmas Market. They are considering solutions that will not impact the onsite parking and are wondering if San Simeon would consider partnering on bus rides to the event.

CORRESPONDENCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous April 17, 2018 meeting was made by Miguel and seconded by Paul, all were in favor.

SLO CIBD MONTHLY REPORT or UPDATE

Cheryl reported that the January, February and March transient occupancy tax was flat while April saw a slight increase. A Vacation Rental Analysis done by the county revealed that in Cayucos for 2015 only 123 of the 287 rental units (43%) were actively being rented. That number improved slightly in 2016 but then fell back again in 2017. What's interesting is that demand or interest in vacation rental housing appears to be up while the number of units available has decreased.

Cheryl provided a handout of the CBID Strategic Marketing Framework. The focus going forward is looking at Hwy 1 as an attraction versus a brand. It focuses on better coop opportunities to evolve the local fund base. It targets how CBID can be a more active support of local funds and has the potential for more shared fund opportunities. Stacie asked about next steps and commented that she hopes that there will still be a focus on shared collaboration as she feels it's important. Cheryl confirmed that each of the three imperatives are being evaluated to see what the next steps are.

Cheryl advised the group that the county is spearheading a SLO CAL Destination Management 20 Year Plan aimed at evaluating ways to improve the quality of life for residents while creating a robust visitor offering. The quarter of a million-dollar project is expected to take ten months to complete.

Finances

From July to March San Simeon contributed 18 percent to the total CBID assessment which was down from 23% prior to the closure of Hwy1. Available funds – currently \$395,115 before the next two years of the core marketing agreement are serviced.

SOLTERRA CORE MARKETING MONTHLY REPORT – Stacie Jacob

Stacie reviewed their public relations efforts.

- Santa Barbara Independent
- Cuestonian – Elephant Seals
- Sunset Magazine
- Visit SLO CAL
 - Curtis Stone
 - Italian Writers

San Simeon public relations efforts include:

- Hwy1 recap of preliminary discussions on the re-opening plan. They recognize SLO CAL and Visit California as our partners and do not want to duplicate efforts. To that end, they have asked Cal Trans to consider something big like Visit California did following the recent fires. Ideally, they would like to see them gear their programming efforts towards Hwy1.
- Stacie's group plans to use the re-filling of the pool at Hearst Castle to gain some traction during mid-summer season.
- Central Coast Visitors Map
- San Simeon in the News – New Blog on Visit San Simeon CA website.

Brad reported on the analytics.

- They intend to continue to increase trends for traffic and user engagement.

- Organic search numbers were up 2.4% and the YOY comparison showed that the numbers caught back up to where we were before the launch of the website.
- Targeted paid search is the number one channel for acquisitions on the site.
- Paid search was up 100%, as there was none last year.
- Paid search is primary generator of reservation leads for the website.
- There were 472 book now clicks in April. Mark is going to see if he can identify how many of those leads turned into bookings.
- Instagram is now on the bottom of each page on the website.
- Camping and the Cavalier lead the Metric leads for April followed by Quality, Morgan and Ragged Point.
- Ad word spend was \$1553, cost per lead \$6.21 and the conversion rate was 5%.
- Elephant Seals lead the traffic followed by “What to do” and blog posts.
- Hwy1 update moved into the top ten for the first time.
- Email marketing achieved a 31.9% open rate with 200 hits and 118 shares, one of the strongest months to date.

REPORTS/UPDATES:

1. Visitor Center Report – Jeanne Hucek

Jeanne reported that foreign visitors accounted for 40.1% of the traffic seen at the center. The amount of traffic was down 27% from 2017 to 2018 with 569 visitors and an average of 25 visitors served per day. California composed of 34.1%. Visitors traveling from Germany continues to be a strong trend. She also noted that Germany has been in the top 5 list eleven times since January of 2017.

Foreign (top ranked): Germany, England, Australia, Canada, Switzerland and France tied for fifth place.

Stacie asked Jeanne to capture information on the top questions the visitors ask for as well as the tools they are seeking.

2. Volunteer Appreciation Fair – Jeanne Hucek

The chamber is coordinating a Community Volunteer Fair in conjunction with the Cambria Chamber and their constituents to be held at the Cavalier Cove room on May 16, 4:00 – 6:00 PM to celebrate the current volunteers and all that they do for our community as well as to attract new ones. Fourteen organizations are expected to participate in the event.

3. Alliance Partners Reports/Updates

FES:

Tim addressed the group with a concern over a perception that the Friends of the Elephant Seal have manipulated SEO in order to attract visitors to the FES office to maximize the revenue. They have done some testing and Google search key words are bringing travelers to the FES office. The organization feels that a practice of intentional deception is highly unethical, and if they were aware that this has taken place they would have said that this is unethical. They more so want visitors to know where the Rookery is. Finding a solution is important to the Friends of the Elephant Seals. They don't know

what the solution is. Tim asked Brad for help updating their Google business page and Brad agreed.

MBNMS//CA State Parks Coastal Discovery Center:
Carolyn reported that she needs more docents.

4. Highway 1 Closure Update

Michael has been able to schedule a town hall meeting with Cal Trans on May 21st at 3:00 PM, this is open to the public.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Possible Mid State Fair Community Display -

The California Mid State Fair has invited all the cities, towns and unincorporated areas to participate in a new feature this year, The Showcase of Cities. This is an opportunity to be showcased in an animated display of 8'x6'x2' windows in the Frontier Pavilion. Several cities have already indicated their intention to participate. If interested, there would be a commitment to join as well as some effort to hire someone to design and implement a display that embodies what our area can offer to nearby residents and visitors. Stacie indicated that those who are planning to attend have a gentleman's agreement not to exceed \$5000 on their window. A social media kit is included in the offering and installation would be from on July 5-7. Cheryl provided statistics for the fair; attendance runs over 420,000 over the twelve days it operates, 55% from SLO, Santa Barbara, Bay Area, Monterey; 83% of attendees are under the age of 12. There was some discussion about lighting the window and the availability of electricity.

Miguel made a motion to pass on the opportunity and consider for next year after viewing the inaugural showcase. Paul seconded the motion and, all were in favor.

Meeting adjourned: 2:10 pm

**Next Regular Advisory Board Meeting:
Date and Time: June 19, 2018 @ 1:00pm
Location: Cove meeting Room**