



**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 22, 2019** at the Cavalier Cove Room, 250 San Simeon Avenue, San Simeon, CA 93452. It was called to order at 1:08 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

Quorum Present (simple majority): Yes

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

Guests:

Cam Arnold, Friends of the Elephant Seal (FES); Jim Bahringer, Cambria Tourism Board Chair; Mary Ann Carson, Cambria Chamber of Commerce; Ryan Cooper, Piedras Blancas Light Station; Stacie Jacob & Alyssa Krichevsky, Solterra Strategies; Brad Rubin, Vingage Consulting (for Solterra Strategies); Debi Saunders, Hearst Ranch Winery; Katie Sturtevant, Hwy1DR Stewardship Travel Program Director.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

PUBLIC COMMENT(S)

CORRESPONDENCE

Cheryl explained that Hwy1DR is trying to build a reciprocal linking program with key tourism partners to help to improve their visibility with Google. As part of that she indicated that FES can expect to receive some correspondence from her, to that end, in the near future.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on March 19, 2019 was made by Miguel Sandoval and seconded by Paul Panchal, all were in favor.

SLO CIBD MONTHLY REPORT – Cheryl Cuming

LFA News & Info

Cheryl shared that the number of sessions on Hwy1DR site is strong, between 30,000 and 50,000 sessions per month. Going forward they hope to evolve the content for smaller destinations within the CBID into their site. Where San Simeon is concerned, the goal is to be a referral partner as we have a solid offering and a marketing team in place. She shared the good news that the CBID was renewed for another year and indicated that she will be getting together with the LFA's to share details of the approved Marketing Plan. She described the new lodging specials page on the website and encouraged the hoteliers to share their specials.

Cheryl shared some stats from Travel Track that suggest that only 4% of visitors are traveling to the Central Coast leaving lots of opportunity for growth. Cheryl called attention to the new History and Heritage Trail Map on their site and encouraged everyone to take a look at it.

Tool& Promotions

The numbers are in for the Coastal Discovery Celebration, a total of 700 people attended the Oceans movie at the Hearst Castle. That number reflects a more “normal” attendance where last year's viewers seem to be overinflated due to a high number of locals enjoying the movie.

Stewardship Travel Report – Katie Sturtevant

Katie provided an update on the recent Sea Glass festival in Cayucos.

She shared the agenda from the spring LFA meeting that outlined the Stewardship Program's desire to help the fund areas explore marketing ideas for the new History & Heritage Trail Map, as well as their motivation to initiate regional ideas for STP. Included were tips on ways to incorporate the fastest growing trend, historical and heritage tours, on destination sites and in social media efforts.

In addition to providing an update on the Coastal Discovery Celebration, Katie also shared several public relations updates that included various articles that were recently published.

Finances

- Cheryl reported that from July – March San Simeon contributed 37.25% of the overall assessment.
- Michael noted that there's \$174,905.11 of available unencumbered funds.

SOLTERRA CORE MARKETING MONTHLY REPORT – Solterra Strategies

Stacie introduced her team and presented their annual board review for the marketing contract term April 2018 to March 2019. She provided an overview of the marketing plan and strategy used to reach visitors as well as various communication tools.

- Website
- Newsletter
- Social Media
- Blog Post
- Media Relations

Solterra collaborates with a network of tourism partners, including Highway 1 Discovery Route utilizing tools offered such as the new CrowdRiff marketing platform, as well as photographic assets and media outreach. The Keystone Content being focused on includes:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Hearst Castle | San Simeon history |
| Elephant Seals | San Simeon beaches |
| Hiking | Camping |
| Piedras Blancas Light Station | Old San Simeon |
| Fishing | Wind activities |
| Pet Friendly lodging and activities | Cycling |

The editorial calendar is built around quarterly topics,

- Q1 Beautiful Scenic Coastal Highway 1
- Q2 Outdoor and Active Adventure
- Q3 Family Travel
- Q4 Fall and Holiday Travel

Solterra provides a variety of creative services, media relations and handles promotions for San Simeon. Where social media is concerned, they are actively supporting three platforms, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. In addition to providing representation the firm also drives collateral purchases and collaborates with Jeanne to prepare and execute monthly eBlast content to the healthy 6000+ subscriber base.

From April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019 the VisitSanSimeonCA.com site generated ~113K users and converted 3.9% or 5,506 Book Now clicks. The site boasts the second highest traffic rankings after the visit SLO CAL site delivering above average engagement results on keystone content pages. Currently VisitSanSimeonCA.com appears in the top 5 of search results with the SEO rising year over year. Brad shared his excitement that the comparables show that the San Simeon site is number two in the county despite its dramatically smaller budget.

The Solterra team continues to work in collaboration with their partners at the county, the CBID and Visit California to deliver great results. Since January San Simeon has been mentioned in numerous articles and lead stories.

REPORTS/UPDATES:

1. Visitor Center Report/Volunteer Fair– Jeanne Hucek
 - a. Visitor Center traffic was up 24.2% in March with the seasonal area attractions being the Cayucos Sea Glass Festival and Vintage Paso Weekend.
 - b. A deep dive on the traffic for April revealed some interesting things. Overall the month was up a whopping 33.7% over 2018 and just barely fell short of 2017, when Hwy1 was open, by 18 visitors. Interestingly enough, the eight days of Easter break when the center was open, from the 12th – 22nd, accounted for 43.1% of the monthly total. The seasonal attractions were the Eroica bike ride, the Morro Bay Kite Festival and the marathons in Big Sur and San Luis Obispo.
 - c. Seven of the top ten regions that visitors hailed from in April were international. The ranking was as follows: California, Canada, England, Australia, Germany, New York, France, North Carolina, Netherlands and Italy.
 - d. That New York ranked highly was surprising which prompted a YTD look at total monthly visitors by region. New York placed fifth in the top ten. Jeanne shared this tidbit with the board and Cheryl was able to explain that CCTC had spent some energy targeting the New York area recently; perhaps we can attribute those visitors to that effort.
 - e. We met with the folks from the San Luis Obispo Bicycle Club recently to discuss the Lighthouse Century Bike Ride rest stops moving to San Simeon for 2019. Michael added that the meeting was successful and that we gained a contact that can advise us as San Simeon entertains plans to establish a bike route from the campground to the community.
 - f. Jeanne shared that she and Mary Ann had been busy hosting the Community Volunteer Fair which was successful but was not as well attended by the local community as they would have expected given their efforts to promote the event.
 - g. The visitor center is looking forward to the newly expanded hours (“C” shift) at the Rookery for the summer season.
 - h. Jeanne is working on getting our Facebook page credentials.
 - i. Upcoming Events – PBLs Hike In and Tide Pooling on May 25th at 10:00 AM.

2. Alliance Partners Reports/Updates
FES - Cam Arnold
The beach is very crowded with Elephant Seals, Cam reported that their numbers are up 18 % year over year. She extended her thanks on behalf of the organization for the work that was put in to the Community Volunteer Fair. Unfortunately they did sign up new volunteers at the fair but she hopes that a seed may have been planted.

3. Eroica California Bike Ride – The group plans to attend the July meeting to give their post report.
4. Cambria Art & Wine Festival Report
Mary Ann provided a recap of the festival attendance, 550 people came to the three-day event of those, 80% were from out of town. She attributes their success in external markets to the sponsorship that SSTA provided, thanks to those dollars she was able to place ads in the Tribune, Vintages, the NY Times Travel section and more.
Unfortunately, the artists sales were down from previous years, she attributes this to an

increase in their prices making the art too pricey for most to consider. She thanked the board for their support of the festival and offered to answer any questions, none were asked.

5. Piedras Blancas Light Station – Ryan Cooper

Ryan looks forward to the arrival of this year’s summer interns, hopefully in the next few weeks. The increased hours for the summer season start on June 15th. They are working with Harmony Cellars putting together an event on Oct 5th that will replace Hops for the Top. They haven’t come up with a name yet, but he hopes everyone will plan to attend. Ryan and Jeanne met with Kaori and Amedeo from Eroica for a retrospective on the rest stop at the Light Station. Ryan reported that he feels that things for 2020 are moving in a good direction as evidence by the planning that was already discussed.

Cheryl injected that Cambria is working with the Arthritis Foundation ride and San Simeon may want to join that effort. She also noted that Paso Robles is working with Cycle Central Coast. This spurred some conversation about the Cycle Central Coast site being hosted by Cambria and interest from other cities in buying into that program. Cheryl queried Jim as to the status and together they agreed that Archer & Hound, the marketing firm for Cambria, are entertaining paths toward that end and promised more to follow as the information becomes available.

DISCUSSION:

1. Miguel Sandoval Appointment to the Board.

Michael asked Cheryl if she would be able to provide a sample of the letter that Miguel should submit to the board and she agreed.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Planting for Highway Sign

Miguel made a motion to approve \$1250 of funding to the San Simeon Service District to refresh the plant material near the welcome sign with the contingency that the SSSD provide the required Infrastructure Beautification grant to the CBID. The motion was seconded by Michael Hanchett, all were in favor.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS:

Next Regular Advisory Board Meeting:

Date and Time: June 18, 2018 @ 1:00pm

Location: Cove meeting Room

Meeting adjourned: 2:26 pm

