

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

February 10, 2021 – Video Conference due to COVID-19 Pandemic

Board Members Present:

Dean Hutton, Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort & Spa
Golda Escalante, Avila Lighthouse Suites
Ken Kelly, Coastal Vacation Rentals

Others Present:

John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising
Jamie Foxen, TJA Advertising
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA administrator

Board Members Absent: None

CBID: Cheryl Cuming

1. **Call to Order:** by Board Chair Dean Hutton at 10:02 am.
2. **Roll Call:** by Stephanie Rowe
3. **Public Comment:** None
4. **Consent Items:** A motion was made by Dean Hutton and seconded by Ken Kelly to approve the January 13, 2021 minutes. With no further discussion, the minutes were approved by a voice vote of the local Advisory Board.
5. **CBID and Financials Update:** Cheryl Cuming gave an update for the past month.
 - a. Website traffic +23% Y/Y. Unique visitors +11.7%. Pageviews +12% Y/Y.
 - b. Lead generation has been working very well. 600-700 people per month signing up for e-newsletter.
 - c. Almost 100,000 fans on Facebook and almost 30,000 fans on Instagram
 - d. Highlights from Mid-Year Roll-up Report for H1DR marketing efforts, July 1-December 31, 2020
 1. Website users are up 90%; very engaged users who spend lots of time on site; users being remarketed through social media with goal of encouraging visits.
 2. Transitioned Stewardship Travel Program to Travel for Good: Created Coastal Discovery Trail, strong lead generation piece, and transitioned Coastal Discovery Celebration to Season of Coastal Discovery.
 3. Created 500 new photos and 70 new videos in last 6 months for over 7,000 photos in Flickr
 4. Over 23 new pieces of content – H1DR is the authority on Google in multiple topics
 5. Average Google search position up over 22% - we are in the top 5 for Highway 1 search
 6. Paid media achieved 32% more clicks with 35% less budget
 7. SF Gate hub traffic spending average of 3-5 minutes with our content
 8. Focusing on LFA Imperatives including Google Discovery ads and enhanced SEM
 9. Social media had increased engagement with fewer posts
 10. PR – 46 articles to date and 50% there on our Top 50 “publications to get in” list
 - e. TOT – Avila Beach +4.6% and CBID -12.8% 2020 vs 2019

- f. Travel Sentiment – Rejuvenation travel will be a trend in 2021. Forecasts are that this year will exceed 2019 as people look to travel to small towns/rural areas.
- g. Spartan Race has been moved to November 21-22, 2021
- h. Avila Beach’s assessment collections were 20.53% of total contributions.

6. **Budget Update:** Stephanie Rowe confirmed that collections in December totaled \$14,692.52. Available funds (including the 2019-2020 carry-forward) total \$223,333.11. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed are \$107,697.15.

7. **Committee Reports:**

- a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Jamie Foxen and Rick Turton:**

John Sorgenfrei gave an update on the SF Gate Campaign. He has been working with SF Gate on the story which will focus on “Pick Your Perfect Paradise”. There will also be a contest for an overnight stay. The campaign will launch at the end of February and run 4-6 weeks.

Jamie Foxen reported on social media activity in the last month. Facebook numbers were down because the ad from last month did extremely well. Facebook fans at 78,079 for a loss of 36 fans. Impressions down 44.5% and engagements down 70.4%. Jamie noted that across the board interest in Facebook is decreasing in general. She noted the top posts promoting nature and wide open spaces. Instagram gained 320 new followers, with impressions up 10.6% and engagements up 5.5%. Many people are moving over to Instagram. Reddit ad did well with 102,265 impressions, 272 clicks, and 22,386 video views. Jamie will continue running Reddit ads for two more months to collect data. Facebook/Instagram ads also doing very well with 205,373 reach, 651,660 impressions, and 4,567 link clicks. YouTube had 457,303 lifetime video views, 441 monthly video views and 4.5 monthly hours watched. E-newsletter was a combination of Season of Coastal Discovery and restaurant month, sent to our 23,353 subscribers with an open rate of 16.5%. The travel blog was also about the Season of Coastal Discovery.

Rick Turton reported on the website stats from the last month. The numbers were very good. The total visits for January were 18,083 compared to 10,786 visitors last January for a 68% increase. 35% Other and 10% Display Traffic Sources came in through Facebook/Instagram and Reddit ads. 3,500 of the total page views landed at Avila Beach hotels which is our goal. We had 65% visitors on mobile devices which is slightly lower than normal. 2,500 mobile visitors went to our hotels and 1,220 went to vacation rentals. January had 1,500 paid search visits with 3.72 paid search pages/visit vs 3.08 for our site wide average. Search source increased 83% year over year. Avila Beach Tides is becoming a good referral source for us. Rick will check to see if the H1DR Google Discovery ads are also a referral source.

8. **Action/Discussion Items:**

- a. **Discuss Ideas for Cross-Promotions with SLO Coast Wine:** Cheryl Cuming asked the Board for ideas to continue our partnership with SLO Coast Wine given that Harvest on the Coast may not be in person in November. She asked the Board to think about how to work with the SLO Coast Wine audience to promote overnight stays in Avila. Ken Kelly and John Sorgenfrei suggested offering some sort of wine package/wine incentive/wine discount to visitors who stayed in Avila. Cheryl suggested asking Kathleen Naughton to come prepared to the next meeting to discuss reviving the Passport Program and a potential sponsorship opportunity.

9. Future Agenda Items/New Business:

- a. Introduction of SLO Coast Wine Executive Director Kathleen Naughton and Passport Program Sponsorship Discussion (March)
- b. Board Seat Renewal from Dean Hutton (April)

10. Closing Comments: None

11. Next ABTA Local Fund Advisory Board Meeting:

Dates: **March 10, 2021**
Time: **10:00 am – 12:00 pm**
Location: **Video Conference**

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:54 am.