



CAMBRIA TOURISM BOARD (CTB)
(Cambria Local Fund Advisory Board)

Board Meeting Minutes
Zoom Video Meeting

January 12, 2021

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Greg Pacheco at 1:09 p.m.

Members Present

Greg Pacheco
Jim Bahringer
Karen Cartwright
George Marschall

CBID

CAO Cheryl Cuming

Guests

Jessica Blanchfield, Archer & Hound
Annalee Fanucchi, Archer & Hound
Mary Ann Carson, Cambria Chamber
Paula Ufferheide, Scarecrow Festival
Dennis Frahmman, Scarecrow Festival
Jill Jackson, CTB MA

Absent: Amber Martin (Work)

2. Consent Agenda Items

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Jim Bahringer moved, and George Marschall seconded to approve the meeting minutes of November 10, 2020 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Discussion & Action Items

3.1 Current Covid-19 Status

Greg said that this topic has become a standing agenda item. He stated, I do not recall our last meeting numbers, but we are a little bit worse now, we are in more of a shut down and have been lumped in with Southern California. I am sure that is impacted all of all of you, as far as the hotels, but I do not know if it is better around town, the restaurant and retail shops. Greg asked Mary Ann what she could report. Mary Ann shared, these last weeks are the worst of the year traditionally, through the end of January. We do not really get going again until Valentine's Day. We had the art and wine festival which brought people in January, but that is not happening. November was big, until the new restrictions. We have been taking lots of calls and answering questions. George said that he noticed a lot of last-minute bookings over this weekend, we had four or five walk-ins. Reservations, as a whole, are very last minute. The time window is very short compared to normal. George said that the carryover of the lights through January has helped the lodge tremendously.

4. Information Items/Presentations

4.1 Scarecrow Festival 2020 Follow-up Report

Dennis Frahmman gave the report. He said, I have a few comments and then I will ask if you have any questions. Thank you for believing in us and letting us continue with the funding because we were very happy to be able to conduct a festival in October. I think it turned out quite well against all odds. I do believe it was something both appreciated by the visitors who came and that did attract visitors. We ran all five weekends, we created five large displays, and many businesses also put-up scarecrow so that helped a little bit with the town. We invested in creating a much more active website with an interactive map including an online survey

which had nearly 1800 respondents. Based on the self-reported data in that survey from 660 completions we believe at least 276 room nights were used by visitors, which is fewer than we recorded in previous years, but I think it is a really good number nevertheless and probably undercounted because 41% of those respond to the survey said they did come and stayed overnight in a property in Cambria. That is a higher percentage than our person on the street surveys in the past. 75% of those who responded to the survey said they came specifically to see the scarecrows. 68% of those responses said they were from outside of the County. Almost none from outside the state. I think the bottom line is it did attract people to come to the area from outside the County and they did stay overnight. Hopefully, that was reflected in the hotel businesses, as well as in the shops and restaurants. Cheryl confirmed that Dennis did not need to return the overage, it can be applied to next year. Dennis said that overall, we are very happy with what happened, and I think our board members are very happy with what we were able to do. Anything you would comment or add to that. We heard from a lot of the businesses that they were so grateful we were able to pull it off, that made us feel good, that we are able to support them. We are already getting ready to have our retreat this year and start putting plans in motion not only for what kind of festival we will have in the future, but also trying to broaden our reach into the community. We got a lot of really positive feedback to having the large displays in the central locations. One of the questions we are going to grapple with is whether to continue those in the future years or trying to get more scarecrows throughout the town. We welcome hearing your thoughts. Greg said he would just like to say October was a good month. I think it was a combination of things; people ready to get out and do something, and grateful that you gave them something to do. I think that the timing was right.

Dennis gave an update on the Film Festival, this year it is a virtual festival. We have been very proactive selling passes, and actually a significant portion of our sales are outside the county, even outside of the state, which is really gratifying. We are working with Jessica and your agency to do a promotion encouraging people to win a two night stay in Cambria at some future date, and a pass to enjoy from home. I think that is going well. We think we are going to get a lot of people who came to the festival virtually that might not have come in reality and maybe next year they will.

4.2 Marketing Committee Report

Jessica reported, we did not have a board meeting in December, however we did have a conversation once things changed. We did put together a December recap report that was in your board packet, if you have any questions about that let me know. Otherwise, I will quickly go over just snapshots. December numbers are all in the report that you received. We geared up with high hopes and expectations that things would remain sort of how they were at the time. We were inviting folks into Cambria for the holidays, obviously things changed. While our marketing efforts continued, they sort of pivoted back into our safe travels campaign. We did change the language a little bit, said something like “when the time is right and you’re ready” Cambria’s open to welcome guests back. We are taking the stance that we are still open; we did not want to encourage people necessarily to travel, but we do know based on the chatter that is happening in social and the conversations that we are having organically, that there are some people that are traveling. We wanted to make sure that we continue to give them that option. One thing that we are seeing as we continue to monitor it, the booking engine in November got 16 room nights and so far in January we have 8. We are continuing to monitor this for any sort of insight on where we see these trends or where we see people's intention, again marrying that with sort of the organic chatter that is happening. January feels better than December. Our cost per result is advertising is extremely low. The Eblast continues to have decent open rates. Eblast subscription rate continues to be good. We are trying to move people down the funnel of being able to continue to have conversations with them, and that's part of that strategy. As we move into January, February we have the virtual Film Fest, we have Coastal Discovery, and Health and Wellness. Valentine's Day campaign, or really the underlying theme was love or heart centric. The campaign for January is still safe travels. because there is still a lot of questioning about lodging and safety, as Mary Ann said. We focus

on outdoor activities, observing the splendor of local animals with the whale trail, or mark your love on moonstone beach, let your heart lead the way to the ocean. All of these link out to the website. We continue to receive requests on an ongoing basis from folks wanting to have their wedding in Cambria. I know Jill is sending them out to constituents. The virtual film fest has an enter to win, like Dennis reported. We have already had 188 entries. The moment they enter into the contest they are immediately put into a drip campaign. They will receive an email with a \$10 off coupon code for them to book directly with the film fest. It is a really nice feed into our email subscription list. It is a great way to invite people to Cambria and a great opportunity to educate them about the film fest; then it links them back directly to the film fest where they can purchase their ticket. Jim shared that he is trying to come up with a bundle to accommodate 12 people to stay together in the barn and use his wedding venue. We can accommodate 85 people for an event, it could be a three-day weekend event place. There were no questions.

4.3 CBID Update

Local Update – December 2020 and January 2021

The report was provided to the board but not discussed at the meeting.

4.4 CBID Presentation

CBID CAO Cheryl Cuming reported that we are continuing with our All-Agency meetings on the first Friday of the month. We covered a couple things there I did want to make you all aware of. Although we did not launch the paid campaign for the season of Coastal Discovery, we are messaging through search engine marketing. We are also optimizing, we are sending it out in Eblasts and social, with a really positive message about the season and of the things you can see. The wildlife, and how you can enjoy the ocean and the coastal hikes and all of those things. We will launch the paid campaign once we know a little bit more about the shelter in place order being extended. Once we launch it, we will have more money to spend because we did not launch it on the 28th, as anticipated. If you look at our paid campaign for fall of 2019 versus fall of 2020, our costs are way down, and our clicks are way up. We really have been able to optimize our paid marketing and we are getting lots of folks to the highway 1 discovery root site. The December stats were seasonally down but we have exceeded over 400,000 folks to the website in the last five months. We will continue to push to ensure that folks come to the destination page for Cambria on our site. We are figuring out additional ways to ensure that we are getting them over to your site. One of the things we are doing with the big three, which includes Sam Simeon, Cambria, and Avila is a new app platform for Google. It is working extremely well. It is referring a lot of folks directly to your website, then certainly Jessica can see what happens with those folks from that point. They are working so well that we are actually investing additional dollars there. We are coming up with other opportunities in order to continue to try to build on the LFA imperatives. Such as the newly released 51 shopping and dining videos. The new California Welcome Center did reopen in the Pismo shops. It is an excellent source for sharing information about the Highway 1 Discovery Route, we have our own big display. We created a loop video of spots along Hwy 1, and they have our Hwy 1 Discovery Route Map all over the place. I have a training with them tomorrow to ensure they understand what is along the Discovery Route; what that means as far as communities; and travel for good, and some of the other programs we are pursuing. We will get December numbers by Thursday and I will share those as soon as I can with Jill. November looks great, we will see what December looks like. We will continue to push out our season of Coastal Discovery to welcome people here, when they can see all those special things along the coast. I have lots more but that is a good update for now. No one had questions.

4.5 Cambria Chamber of Commerce

Mary Ann Carson updated the board on a couple items. We are doing the marketing the same as everybody else, trying to make the businesses look attractive. The biggest job we have is screening information, there is a huge amount of information that comes to the Chamber from the US chambers, from the state of California, from the County, and other local chambers.

It is a big job to refine and get out to our members, including loan and grant info. The bike rack finally got removed. We continue to struggle with funding. I cannot thank you enough for your generous grant to keep us functioning and now we have applied for a California relief grant and the second round of the PPP. Fortunately, I think we are going to be okay for the next six months. We were able to hold hospitality day, but we mostly promoted to the town and not outside of it. It was really slow and not much of a celebration. We could not have any entertainment, or any place that gathered people. We are having a citizen of the year and the business of the year during a general membership meeting, instead of a big banquet. It will be on zoom. Nothing can be done with the chamber website. We have a new website built but it is still getting finished up. We did write letters to the Governors, Legislators and Supervisors trying to keep the outdoor restaurant service. Mel is a tireless advocate.

4.6 Budget Reports – October and November 2020

Revenue and Expenses

October 2020 - Prior Year Revenue and Expenses Comparison

November 2020 - Prior Year Revenue and Expenses Comparison

Marketing Budget Expenditures

Grant Funding Detail

The budget reports were provided to the board but not discussed at the meeting.

4.7 Brown Act Amendment (AB 992)

Cheryl explained that it is an amendment to include guidelines for board member communication via social media. It is saying that board members should not interact with other board members social platforms, even as simple as liking a page or posting comments. There will be a training on this in the end of March. I have asked that it get recorded and then I can share it out with the administrators and all of you. We have asked for some additional clarification, that I can give board members on how to interact with the destination marketing organizations social platforms. I got a very long-winded attorney sounding answer which basically said, “sign a contract with me, I’ll charge \$1000, and I’ll tell you your answer.” So, for now, just be aware and if you do have any questions or clarifications on what a process should be, I can shoot an email off to County Council.

4.8 Committee Meeting Minutes

Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes – November 10, 2020

The minutes were provided to the board but not discussed at the meeting.

5. Public Comment

6. Future Agenda Items/New Business

7. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

Respectfully given,

Jill Jackson
Managing Assistant