



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

Board Meeting Minutes
Zoom Video Meeting

March 9, 2021

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Greg Pacheco at 1:02 p.m.

Members Present

Greg Pacheco
Jim Bahringer
George Marschall
Karen Cartwright

Absent: Amber Martin (Work)

CBID

CAO Cheryl Cuming
Bram Winter

Guests

Jessica Blanchfield, Archer & Hound
Mary Ann Carson, Chamber
Claudia Harmon, Beautify Cambria
Scott, Beautify Cambria
Mike Arnold, Cambria Pines Lodge
Jill Jackson, CTB MA

2. Consent Agenda Items

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George Marschall moved, and Jim Bahringer seconded to approve the meeting minutes of February 9, 2021 as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Discussion & Action Items

3.1 Scarecrow Festival Funding & Matching Fund Applications

Greg stated that the Cambria Scarecrow Festival applied and was approved at the last meeting for CTB event funding in the amount of \$15,000. Based on the two criteria of: 1) growth of a current event and 2) CBID multi-regional event because San Simeon assists in funding; the CTB potentially qualifies for \$5,000 in Matching Funds from the CBID. George expressed again that he believes the Festival does need to work to become more self-sustaining, so as not be dependent on CTB funding in future years.

George Marschall moved, and Karen Cartwright seconded to approve submission of the CBID Matching Funds Application in the amount of \$5,000 for the Cambria Scarecrow 2021 Festival based on the event's consistent growth and multi-regionality. Motion carried unanimously.

3.2 Beautify Cambria Association Dark Skies Support Letter

Claudia Harmon presented slides on the Dark Sky Certification program that included the benefits to wildlife, residents, visitors, and tourism. There is an exemption for Christmas lights. She stated that they do have a fund to assist with refurbishing lights, but they hope that most businesses will pay for this themselves. The fixtures can be replaced or just shaded to direct the light. Lights need to be directed downward not skyward. Illuminating the ground better makes it safer for everyone. A Dark Sky Certification has been known to double tourism. She asked that the CTB join several other Cambria organizations that have written letters of support for Dark Sky Certification. George Marschall pointed out, that depending on the number of rooms, it could be quite expensive for lodging properties to do. Bram Winter said that he feels visitors already come to Cambria and know it has a dark sky. George commented that he can see stars and the milky way from his home in Cambria, despite lighting. Claudia shared that

the lighting code is outdated and will need to be updated no matter what. George said he thought that the last thing Cambria lodging and businesses needed were more regulations and expenses after the last year's hardships. Greg stated that the meeting needed to move forward.

Karen Cartwright moved to issue a Dark Sky Certification support letter; the motion was not seconded. Motion failed.

3.3 *Current Highway 1 and Covid-19 Status*

Greg said, as all of you are well aware, we are now into the red tier. The county is giving the vaccines out at a pretty good pace currently. I think during phase one the hospitality segment should be eligible for vaccines. We can open our business centers now. Although indoor pools and hot tubs stay closed. The California Department of Public Health tourism advisory still remains in effect. Wineries and restaurants will open at 25%. Outdoors we can start small gatherings and weddings. It sounds like the plan is to have Highway 1 repaired and re-opened by the beginning of summer. Greg asked if there were any other comments. Cheryl stated, I realize this does not impact Cambria directly, but there has also been discussion about closing the Oceano Dunes. The state parks have a big impact and with Hearst Castle closed too and then the Highway 1 closure, it does not help any. Someone needs to have a word with Mother Nature. I do know January was soft, from a numbers perspective, and chatting with folks February feels better. I will know more by Thursday and I will get that info out to Jill as quickly as possible. We're going to continue to invest from the CBID perspective. We are a marketing organization and will keep focusing on that. We will keep pushing out messaging as often and as quickly as possible.

4. Information Items/Presentations

4.1 *Marketing Committee Report*

Jessica Blanchfield gave the monthly presentation to the board. She began, I'll try to be quick. Marketing has been in full effect, you all got the report, so if there are any questions, I will certainly take those but otherwise I will just do a quick overview. One of the things that we are watching closely is the iOS updates have happened and third-party cookies are starting to go away. What we are starting to see is there is a lot of additional social features that are happening within the platforms themselves. We can continue to communicate and track those folks in each of the social platforms. We have a smaller duration of time that we are able to track when they click over to our website, so while the end goal is to convert people to Visit Cambria, we are having to pivot a little bit and how we are making that happen. A few things that you will start to notice if you follow us on all of our social platforms, there are new things like Instagram Guides, that is user generated content that we collect and put together. It is sort of like itineraries. We are developing quite a lot of those, anywhere from shopping to hiking guides, to dining and pet specific guides. Those are up and running and doing really well. Pinterest also launched their story opportunities, so we are running stories there and that is getting a great organic engagement. 24,000 immediate impressions within the first couple days, which is great. As you start to follow our social, you will see this, new GIF opportunities on Instagram. As people are taking photos, they can search keywords, from hiking the beach to Cambria, a whole slew of keywords that allow GIFs to pop up that we have in input into the Instagram catalog. It is a fun way for people to promote Cambria on our behalf. We are creating additional crowd riff galleries, some of them will be going on CBIDs websites, these will then point people to our website, our brand, allowing us to re-market to them. As a reminder all of this is available on the constituent page, you can download this information for yourself. We have additional content and itinerary pages that we built out for our March, April, and May campaign, dubbed "the outside is calling, get out there". We are really leaning into how people are changing their behaviors and their wants and needs after being cooped up for a long time because of COVID-19. We are giving them all the itineraries and things that they need to come out to Cambria. There is an LFA imperative CBID is running, a social media campaign, essentially what that means is it is casting a wide net out into a large audience that we have helped define so that money is being spent on the CBID side, trying to capture those

people. The message was safe travels and now we are moving into this new outdoor space concept, hopefully to get people to Cambria. That is a brief overview. Karen shared that the Marketing Committee had discussed and is recommending continuing the booking engine. A decision is necessary by April 1st. It would be within the committee budget. Jessica confirmed that in the last year the income was \$24,000. There is definitely benefit. Greg pointed out that the amount is not recouped in assessment income. Cheryl agreed that many hours have been invested in bringing the booking engine up to speed. Jim said he is in favor, but feels the company needs to make it easier for small companies to load inventory. Jessica said that a training, that would have helped, was planned prior to Covid. Greg said that the CTB would not meet prior to the due date. Jill explained that if the board needed to discuss it further, a special board meeting could be called prior to April 1. No one had any further questions. Greg said that if anyone has any concerns, we want to make sure Jessica's informed and there's communication prior to the auto renewal date. Another reminder, Jill is sending wedding venue requests. As you know small gatherings are starting and restrictions are starting to lift, and these folks are asking to have destination weddings. Please take advantage of those leads that are coming in. Jill shared that a total of 34 have been collected since we started.

4.2 CBID Update

Local Update – March 2021

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

4.3 CBID Presentation

CBID CAO Cheryl Cuming started by saying she would keep her report brief as well. She said that they had a glitch in Google Analytics halfway through February, so the sessions stayed around 28,000. It is probably twice that. We are focusing on 2122; I know Archer & Hound is doing that as well for Cambria. We are going to start presenting thoughts on that at the March 24th CBID meeting. Revenue projections are interesting, we are going to try to figure out to scientifically approach it for next fiscal year. The LFA imperative program has really been embraced, we continue to launch new programs and content, and Cambria's been a great partner for us to test some of these. We want to continue to fund those things. One of the things we are focusing on in the short term is just continuing with content curation. I realize I talk about this every month and it is because it is highly important for our search engine optimization program. All of this content feeds the engine that allows us to rank within the top couple of searches on Google. We have done an excellent job with the Bid Bunch in getting on almost every search you can think of for Hwy 1. We are up in the top 2,3, or 4 on some of the most important keywords. We are excited to be seen as the authority on content around Hwy 1. The spring campaign that is getting ready to launch is focusing specifically on beaches. We know that is what folks are going to be looking for, spring and then through the summer. Key phrases like hidden gems of the coast, open beaches, wide open beaches, it is time, discover are all keywords based on post coded research. Cheryl continued, I found it interesting that one of the reasons why folks said that they are going to hesitate to travel is because they feel guilty, so we are saying you know you want to go, so we are trying to get the guilt out of there and get some making decisions on a trip. January was soft, we did slightly miss the reforecast. We are still doing well though. As soon as we know February numbers, I will share with you. Jessica mentioned the CrowdRiff Galleries. Since we have been working with the marketing folks for each LFA on search engine optimization keywords that folks look for all the time, so we are curating content on fishing, biking, surfing, sea life, best places to eat and shop, and best parks. The social test that we are doing with Cambria, we are anxious to see what the results are. We just completed some beautiful videos not only on fishing along Hwy 1, but we generated quite a few assets on Hiking along Hwy 1. Kaori was featured in a beautiful 3 1/2-minute video all about biking on the North Coast. From that we created several assets that we shared with Jessica specifically focused on the Cycle Central Coast brand identification. That covers it for now, thank you.

4.4 Cambria Chamber of Commerce

Mary Ann Carson reported that they too are getting more calls about weddings. She said they were very busy, but now it has been quiet the last couple of weeks. She has personally been working on this new website. It is not easy to get that populated and up and running, but it is within days. We are really glad we are back to the red tier now. Mel is keeping on top of the County to make sure that the outside dining will be retained until we have full dining. People are very interested in going back to some inside dining, there were quite a few calls from people about it. Mary Ann said that she applied and got a second PPP, so that will last for two months.

4.5 Budget Reports – January 2021

Revenue and Expenses

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.

4.6 Committee Meeting Minutes

Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes – February 9, 2021

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 2:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill Jackson
Managing Assistant