

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

June 9, 2021 – Video Conference due to COVID-19 Pandemic

Board Members Present:

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

Others Present:

John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising
Claudia Torkelson, TJA Advertising
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA administrator
Kathleen Naughton, SLO Coast Wine
Mike Sinor, SLO Coast Wine
Jessica Blanchfield, Cycle Central Coast/
Archer & Hound

Board Members Absent: None

CBID: Cheryl Cuming

1. **Call to Order:** by Chair Dean Hutton at 10:04 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 May 12, 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. The CBID Board has approved \$1.2m in marketing for the new fiscal year. The strategic plan will be presented at the All Agency/LFA meeting in July. The CBID Board approved the renewal of 19 BID Bunch contractors.
 - b. TOT May Y/Y: CBID +20%
 - c. Year-end Report posted on H1DR member's site. 1,328 CBID constituents with 80% of revenue coming from 20% of constituents.
 - d. Completed educational video about butterfly grove
 - e. Currently in yellow tier so looking forward to all of California opening up on June 15
 - f. Continuing to work with business owners, County Parks and State Parks on claiming their business and sites through Google My Business in order to drive viewership and content ranking.
 - g. Avila Beach's assessment collections were 20.04% of total contributions.
6. **Budget Update:** Stephanie Rowe confirmed that collections in April totaled \$20,164.36. Available funds (including the 2019-2020 carry-forward) total \$228,117.12. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed are \$164,621.59.
7. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Claudia Torkelson and Rick Turton:** John Sorgenfrei reviewed the new Avila Beach ad created for the California 101 Travel Guide. The full page color ad will appear in the July edition for a cost of \$1,100. Ken

Kelly asked that the ad be edited to say “lodging” or “accommodations” instead of just “hotels”.

Claudia Torkelson reported on social media activity in the last month. We had a solid month with increases in impressions and engagements. Facebook fans stagnant at 78,861 which is normal. Impressions up to 62,557/+35% and engagements up to 3,346/+24%. Video views (not to completion) at 1,824/+16% and video views (100%) at 280/+35%. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained 231 new followers for total of 31,632, with impressions up 21% and engagements up 35%. Showed top posts for Instagram. Currently running a paid Facebook/Instagram video ad. Will have analytics for campaign next month. YouTube has 458,100 lifetime video views, 196 monthly video views and 1.6 monthly hours watched. The next E-newsletter will be sent in June to our 26,000 subscribers.

Rick Turton reported on the website stats from the last month. The website numbers were very good. The total visits for May were 15,907/+17% vs 13,541 for last May. Paid search from H1DR helped us for 3,019 visits and 4.49 paid search pages/visit. Viewers looking at hotel, vacation rental and events pages. Outbound linking jumped 33% from last May.

8. Action/Discussion Items:

- a. **Discuss SLO Coast Wine Collective Sponsorship Opportunity:** Kathleen Naughton provided feedback from her members regarding options for a potential Stay in Avila VIP program in place of Harvest on the Coast this year. She noted that because of the current staffing issues, they recommended bringing special pourings by SLO Coast wineries to Avila Beach each weekend. The Board agreed that this was a good idea. Ken Kelly encouraged driving multiple night stays. Cheryl Cuming suggested getting the Central Coast Aquarium’s outdoor venue for the wineries who do not have tasting rooms. She noted that this could be a key selling point for lodging guests to experience something unique that they can’t experience elsewhere. As an added feature, she suggested that guests staying in Avila could be offered club member pricing. Kathleen summarized what she will present to her members: For guests showing proof of staying in Avila, she will work on a program offering special tastings at either the Avila Golf Resort or the Central Coast Aquarium on a Friday or Saturday evening, with a secondary layer offering wine club benefits at participating wineries, perhaps during weekdays. The timeframe would be to start in mid to late October through the end of December, excluding Thanksgiving, with the option to continue into January and February. For the funding, Cheryl suggested having a sponsorship portion for SLO Coast Wine, in addition to allocating marketing funds through TJA to assist with promoting the program. She also noted that a tracking mechanism would need to be implemented for reporting. Kathleen thanked the Board for their support and flexibility and will get back to Stephanie after discussing with her members.
- b. **Review of TJA 2020-2021 Cycle Central Coast Recap / Review of TJA 2021-2022 Cycle Central Coast Partnership Proposal:** Jessica Blanchfield noted that cycling is a sub-brand in their overall marketing program for Visit Cambria. She noted that during Covid, cycling became the sport that many people became interested in because there were fewer cars on the road, it allowed for social distancing, and it provided a full body workout.

Jessica presented a recap of the 2020-2021 partnership. A landing page for Stay in Avila Beach was created in addition to three cycling routes. The Stay in Avila page received over 1,000 page views and the routes received between 1,000 and 2,400 page views. Avila specific blogs were published in August 2020 and March 2021 as well as social media postings during those months. The August blog received over 2,200 page views and the March blog received almost 3,000 page views. Avila specific e-blasts went out in September 2020 and April 2021. There were 14 Avila specific posts on Instagram with over 1,000 likes/views/comments and 22 Avila specific posts on Facebook with over 2,500 like/views/comments. An additional platform, Strava, was added which allowed four Avila

routes to be created and a virtual ride event in April 2021. Avila Beach hosted two cycling influencers, Tyler Pearce (The Vegan Cyclist) who visited in October 2020 and pro-cyclist Alison Tetrick who visited in November 2020.

Jessica reviewed the 2021-2022 partnership proposal. They have decided to extend their season to 8 months (July-October and March-June) from 6 months. They saw that many people are still cycling during these times, so they decided to take advantage of that. The partnership includes social media, blogs, eblasts, Strava event routes and influencer visit (option 1). There are two options: 1) \$14,000 – 2 months specifically featuring Avila Beach in addition to influencer visit; 2) \$10,000 – 1 month specifically featuring Avila Beach with no influencer visit. Jessica noted that last year the cost for option 1 was \$15,000 due to the build out of the infrastructure of pages and routes, etc. Cheryl Cuming and John Sorgenfrei encouraged the Board to support the partnership for a second year. The Board agreed that there was much growth opportunity for cycling in our area, especially post-Covid.

A motion was made by Dean Hutton, and seconded by Ken Kelly, to continue the Cycle Central Coast Partnership-Option 1 to be funded through the TJA Marketing contingency budget for a total investment of \$14,000 effective July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022. With no further discussion, the partnership was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

- a. **Discuss Future In-person vs Zoom Board Meetings:** The Board agreed to start holding in-person meetings starting at the next meeting on July 14th. Dean Hutton confirmed that the meetings can be held at Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort going forward.

9. Future Agenda Items/New Business:

- a. Stewardship Travel for Good Update – Katie Sturtevant (July)
- b. Consideration of SLO Coast Wine VIP Program Fund Application (July)

10. Closing Comments: None

11. Next ABTA Local Fund Advisory Board Meeting:

Dates: **July 14, 2021**

Time: **10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

Location: **Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort**

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:16 am.