

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

September 8, 2021 – Video Conference due to COVID-19 Pandemic

Board Members Present:

Dean Hutton, Sycamore Mineral Springs Resort & Spa
Ken Kelly, Coastal Vacation Rentals

Others Present:

John Sorgenfrei, TJA Advertising
Claudia Torkelson, TJA Advertising
Rick Turton, TJA Advertising
Stephanie Rowe, ABTA administrator

Board Members Absent:

Golda Escalante, Avila Lighthouse Suites (excused)

CBID: Cheryl Cuming

1. **Call to Order:** by Chair Dean Hutton at 10:00 am.
2. **Roll Call:** by Stephanie Rowe
3. **Public Comment:** None
4. **Consent Items:** A motion was made by Ken Kelly and seconded by Dean Hutton to approve the August 19, 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. Will be launching the Hidden Secrets campaign mid-September – 25 spots identified in H1DR. The wonderful Secret Garden at Sycamore will be included. Will be creating a toolkit for campaign.
 - b. Doing a modified promotion for summer – only Search Engine Marketing (SEM)
 - c. Website traffic up - users 57,726/+12% Y/Y; sessions 68,006/+23% Y/Y
 - d. TOT/Assessment comparing 2019/2020/2021: Avila showing significant increases Y/Y
 - e. CBID having a Board meeting on September 22 at Cambria Pines Lodge
 - f. Created 5 new wine videos for social media; goal to create 5 new videos a month on different topic
 - g. SLO County instituted new mask mandate indoors for public businesses as of September 1st
 - h. Great PR coverage from Trip Savvy, Road Trippers, The Beet and Travelgirl
 - i. Avila Beach's assessment collections were 29.26% of total contributions
6. **Budget Update:** Stephanie Rowe confirmed that collections in July totaled \$52,107. Available funds (including the 2020-2021 carry-forward) total \$283,717. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed are \$48,642.
7. **Committee Reports:**
 - a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Claudia Torkelson and Rick Turton:** John Sorgenfrei reported that they tested not doing paid social media ads during August and compared it to July and our numbers decreased significantly. He suggested doing paid ads throughout the year to keep the momentum and the Board agreed. John noted that there was not much engagement with YouTube ads, so Stephanie Rowe suggested moving the current YouTube advertising budget to the Facebook/Instagram advertising budget. She will work with TJA on this.

Claudia Torkelson reported on social media activity in the last month. As John reported, paid ads were stopped during August and there was a significant drop in numbers with just organic. Facebook fans decreased by 37 fans to 78,928. Impressions down to 138,307/-91.8% and engagements down to 6,752/-35%. Video views (not to completion) at 137/-58% and video views (100%) at 12/-74%. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained 250 new followers for a total of 32,914, with impressions down to 238,119/-75% and engagements down to 11,343/-12.7%. She noted the top posts for Instagram. YouTube has 459,000 lifetime video views, 134 monthly video views and 1.4 average monthly hours watched. The next e-newsletter about Hidden Secrets will be sent out mid-September.

Rick Turton reported on the website stats from the last month. The website numbers were not bad given that there were no paid social media ads running. The total unique visitors for August were 20,212 vs 14,000 for last August. Search was 65% of all of our traffic sources which translated into an additional 3,400 visitor sessions that came in through Google and Yahoo. We did have 6.94% of paid search which drew in 2,787 visitor sessions for 4.92 paid search pages/visit. Without the paid social media ads, we still saw top views of 6,976 for Hotels, 2,226 for Vacation Rentals and 4,300 for Bob Jones Trail. Rick recently separated Activities from Attractions on our website so there were 1,059 views for Attractions and 1,400 visitors to our Secret Garden page which was just launched. We had 71% visitors on mobile devices so Rick is working on revamping our website for mobile visitors. For outbound link tracking, we had a 5.52% increase Y/Y. Rick noted that we are doing very well with CrowdRiff galleries, and he will be encouraging users to post their photos using our hashtags. Top download links were the Loop Map at 234 and the Hiking Trail Map at 25.

8. Action/Discussion Items:

- a. **Discuss Decision from SLO Coast Wine Regarding Harvest on the Coast:** Stephanie Rowe confirmed that SLO Coast Wine made the decision not to have the event due to the Covid surge. Cheryl Cuming reported that the SLO Coast Wine members were surveyed, and a majority felt it was best not to move forward. They also didn't think they were going to replace it with anything because they weren't sure it would be successful. The SLO Coast Wine Board is looking at pushing the event potentially to the spring. Kathleen will be coming to our October meeting to discuss an alternate promotion. Cheryl encouraged SLO Coast Wine to get on board with our Hidden Secrets campaign and develop some social media messaging around it. Stephanie will coordinate a meeting with Cheryl, John Sorgenfrei and Kathleen to discuss ideas in preparation for presentation to the board.

9. Future Agenda Items/New Business:

- a. Discuss Additional Partnership Opportunities with SLO Coast Wine Collective (Oct)
- b. Discuss Potential Destination Stewardship Program and Messaging

10. Closing Comments: Cheryl Cuming noted that our Stewardship Travel for Good program won a Sea Star award from the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.

11. Next ABTA Local Fund Advisory Board Meeting:

Dates: **October 13, 2021**
Time: **10:00 am – 12:00 pm**
Location: **TBD**

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:33 am.