

Draft Until Approved
Avila Beach Tourism Alliance
Board Meeting Minutes

October 13, 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 Collective
Dan Fredman, DF Public Relations

Board Members Absent:

CBID: Cheryl Cuming

1. **Call to Order:** by Chair Dean Hutton at 10:02 am.
 - a. Dean welcomed Kathleen Naughton and Dan Fredman, who manages Public Relations for SLO Coast Wine.
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 September 8, 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 first Agricultural Visitor Center in California to be opened by FARMstead Ed and SLO County Farm Trail at previous Apple Farm retail space. Visit SLO CAL also working on certifying SLO County products for SLO CAL Crafted program that will be represented at the Agricultural Visitor Center. Cheryl making sure that H1DR is well represented at the Visitor Center. Avila Valley Barn and Gopher Glen Apple Farm will be on the Farm Trail map.
 - b. Hidden Secrets campaign launched in mid-September and doing very well. Created a Hidden Secrets map that was distributed along with the Coastal Hiking Trails map to all constituents. Have collected 4,000 new email addresses from the Hidden Secrets map in less than 3 weeks.
 - c. Website traffic up - users 69,500/+103% Y/Y; sessions 84,00/+106% Y/Y
 - d. Just launched the LFA Imperative Co-op and matching fund program that Avila invested in.
 - e. TOT/Assessment comparing 2019/2020/2021: Avila slightly lower in August Y/Y but overall we are ahead of our projected budget because July was so strong.
 - f. Google Maps Lists have helped drive better ranking and traffic through Google. Lists available on Member page.
 - g. Our Stewardship Travel for Good program was recently recognized by the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary with their annual Business and Tourism Sea Star Award.
 - h. Avila Beach's assessment collections were 24.14% of total contributions vs the 18% that we generally represent.

6. **Budget Update:** Stephanie Rowe confirmed that collections in August totaled \$32,555. Available funds (including the 2020-2021 carry-forward) total \$310,244. Funds after approved applications and anticipated expenses removed are \$85,197.

7. **Committee Reports:**

a. **TJA Activity Report/Website Analytics Update – John Sorgenfrei, Claudia Torkelson and Rick Turton:** John Sorgenfrei reported that they are in the midst of launching the co-op campaign with CBID that the Board approved several months ago. The goal is to push our target audience over to our lodging URL.

Claudia Torkelson reported on social media activity in the last month. September was a strong month due to social media ads starting back up. Facebook fans decreased slightly by 50 fans to 78,878. Impressions up to 1,400,000/+914% and engagements down to 6,188/-8%. Video views (not to completion) at 175/+27% and video views (100%) at 41/+241%. She noted the top posts. Instagram gained 224 new followers for a total of 33,138, with impressions up to 923,348/+287% and engagements up to 13,468/+18%. She noted the top posts for Instagram. YouTube increased last month to 459,402 lifetime video views, 411 monthly video views and 5.3 average monthly hours watched. Our paid ad campaign was about California Wine Month with a reach of 800,000, impressions of 1,290,422 and link clicks of 1,024. Facebook has a new thing called Quality Ranking and we did above average which is how our ad's perceived quality compared to ads competing for the same audience. The e-newsletter that went out to our 23,262 subscribers was about Avila's Hidden Gems with a 23% open rate and 3.1% click rate.

Rick Turton reported on the website stats from the last month. The website numbers were good. The total unique visitors for September were 20,257 vs 16,944 last September for a 20% increase year-over-year. Search was 59.23% of all of our traffic sources. We saw top views of 5,819 for Hotels, 3,738 for Bob Jones Trail, 2,154 for Farmers' Market and 2,009 for Dining. The Secret Garden also has a lot of views. Social media was a little flat as a referral source with only 184 from Facebook. We had 67% visitors on mobile devices which is a little low for us. We had .95% of paid search which drew in 1,437 visitor sessions for 3.80 paid search pages/visit. Outbound link tracking was flat. Top download links were the Loop Map which has been downloaded 2,368 and the Hiking Trail Map 461 times for the year. CrowdRiff is doing really well with 107,500 interactions for the year. Lodging referrals were down 4.81% for September compared to last year probably due to the Delta variant impacting the numbers this year.

8. **Action/Discussion Items:**

a. **Review of SLO Coast Wine Collective "SLO Coast Wine VIP" Promotion Fund Application:** Kathleen Naughton gave an overview of the fund application. The amount requested was \$7,500 with the option for an additional \$2,500 to fund a winery communication toolbox for a total of \$10,000. The timeframe would be either three weeks in November or January where they will invite guests to stay two or more nights in Avila Beach for access to exclusive offerings from participating wineries. Kathleen is estimating that the promotion will generate 50 room nights. Kathleen reviewed the marketing plan targeting adults in the following areas: Fresno/Bakersfield, San Jose, LA/OC, and Santa Barbara and showed the landing page and Eventbrite page for activating the VIP pass. The elements of the marketing plan include their social media, news blog and public relations. She also reviewed the option to build a toolkit for member wineries to use for the promotion for an additional \$2,500. Kathleen noted that most wineries have distribution lists that include many more people than their wine club members so there would be a wider audience. The Board agreed that the toolkit would be beneficial and that starting the promotion in January would be best to give everyone time to put all the promotional elements together.

A motion was made by Ken Kelly, and seconded by Golda Escalante, to approve a total amount of \$10,000 to sponsor the SLO Coast Wine VIP Promotion to run January 7 - January 28, 2022. With no further discussion, the sponsorship was approved by unanimous voice vote of the local Advisory Board.

9. Future Agenda Items/New Business:

- a. Follow-up Report from "SLO Coast Wine VIP" Promotion (March or April)

10. Closing Comments: The Board agreed to cancel the December meeting.

11. Next ABTA Local Fund Advisory Board Meeting:

Dates: **November 10, 2021**
Time: **10:00 am – 12:00 pm**
Location: **Zoom**

12. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 11:03 am.