



CARMEL HOSPITALITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CHID)

VISIT CARMEL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Sunset Center - Chapman Room

San Carlos and 9th

Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921

Thursday, March 1, 2018

2:30 PM

.

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Kevin Krueger, Pamela Sheppard, Mary Crowe, Mark Watson, Rich Pepe, Jenny MacMurdo

Board Members Absent: Christine Sandin, Amrish Patel, Amy Johnson

Also in Attendance: Amy Herzog, Visit Carmel Exec Director; Abbi Whitaker and Ashley Brune, The Abbi Agency; Tammy Blount and April Locke from MCCVB; Bobby Richards, Carmel City Council and Lamplighter Inn; Chip Rerig, City Administrator for Carmel; Hella Rothwell and Michele Wilkinson, Carmel Art Festival; Nicole Dore, Burghardt + Dore Advertising; Pam Marino, Monterey County Weekly; Ken Spilfogel, Flaherty's and Village Corner.

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MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Mark Watson, Acting Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:35 PM

Public Comment: Hella Rothwell representing the Carmel Art Festival (May 18-21, 2018) asked for non-financial assistance with marketing again. A grant application has already been submitted asking for help to reduce permit fees. Hella reported good feedback from patrons of last years' venue and felt Visit Carmel's efforts to get the word out were extremely helpful. Nicole Dore called Carmel Art Festival a Carmel core event and last year's event was professional photographed and videotaped by Visit Carmel for marketing purposes. Amy Herzog offered to send a reminder out to hotels to create Art Festival packages on the website.

Approval of Minutes: ***Rich Pepe made a motion to approve the minutes from February 1, 2018. Jenny MacMurdo seconded the motion. Minutes approved.***

Executive Director's Report: Amy Herzog reported:

- The federal grant decision has been delayed until April. At this point, Denver/United are likely to be more interested in utilizing the grant than Dallas/American. Though most of the community would prefer Dallas, MRY also doesn't want to lose Denver and end up with nothing. The airport has decided to begin talks with American Airlines (Dallas) setting up a meeting to begin relationship building before the grant decision has been finalized. Amy reiterated the importance of the Dallas flight to Carmel market share noting the upward trend on the website for Dallas was up 13% over last year.
- Allegiant is looking into adding a flight from Monterey to Mesa, AZ hoping to capture the Tucson market from March through October. If so, Allegiant would be interested in creating packages with local hotels to promote Mesa during the shoulder seasons.
- Wine walk passports are no longer being sold at the Carmel Chamber. The fate of the passports is currently in limbo. The only place to purchase the passes currently is at Caraccioli Cellars and they only accept checks. For Visit Carmel media purposes the decision was made to visit individual tasting rooms to pick up complimentary passes for the interim.
- Annual report to the City is due by April 30, 2018. Amy asked for Board member volunteers to help prepare the draft. Mary Crowe and Bobby Richards volunteered.
- Amy touched briefly on Visit Carmel's event support. Stating Visit Carmel is integral to getting the word out and cross promotion. GourmetFest reports that ticket sales are up 100% and will account for 625 room nights.
- Visit Carmel recently added LinkedIn to its list of platforms and the MCCVB has been amplifying the posts.
- Update on Bonotel which reported 148% increase in room nights for December YOY, as a result of a special promo implemented by the MCCVB. Bonotel is very interested in working with more Carmel properties.
- Visit CA's Canadian representatives will be in Carmel to meet with Amy on Friday, March 2.
- Amy attended the Visit CA Outlook Forum this year. Notable information included: a drop in International tourism, however CA fares better than the rest of the country, due, in part, to major marketing efforts pushing the message that international travelers are welcome in CA. Also, there is new organic content about Carmel on the Visit CA website.
- Carmel was awarded the "Hidden Gem" spot on the CCTC visitor's map for 2018.

Marketing and Advertising Report:

- Nicole Dore announced that the winter campaign has wrapped up and that they are launching the spring campaign. There will continue to be a mix of news (larger audience), online and print media. We saw double digit website growth from the Winter Media campaign. January was up 13% and February saw new users up 18%, almost double from 2016. Our biggest marketing dollars are being spent in TV/Print, followed by PPC campaigns, eblasts, and Facebook.
- The Winter Sweepstakes wrapped with a total of 3,210 official entries increasing our opt-in list by that same number. The Sweepstakes saw 11,386 visits to its webpage.
- There are a series of new snackable videos being launched. Nicole provided the board with a series of examples. There are also plans to run an extended 10-15 minute video loop at the Carmel Visitors Center and anyone else that would like to request a copy.
- The in-flight video for United/Alaska Airlines, touting our "World Class Destination" and why Carmel is the most awarded small city, is in production. It will be aired across the fleet in August and September 2018. The in-flight TV reportedly reaches up to 3.4 million travelers a month;

2.1 million passengers and 17,000 flights via United, 1.3 million passengers and 11,000 flights via Alaska.

Carmel Restaurant Improvement District (CRID): Rich Pepe reported that the CRID had reached an agreement with the City, Visit Carmel and the Restaurants for funding. A steering committee is being formed and the City will be providing Nichole, the representative from CIVITAS, with data to help establish an estimated budget on the amount of funds that the CRID will be contributing to the Visit Carmel annual budget. CIVITAS has the timeline for the process going forward and Kenny Spilfogel has been named the official spokesperson for the restaurants.

Public Relations Report: Abbi Whitaker and Ashley Brune presented a joint update on the PR efforts for Visit Carmel.

- Busy promoting Gourmetfest and looking for Carmel Lodging for A List attendees and providing monthly content submission for Visit Carmel.
- Abbi Agency will be attending Visit CA's LA Media reception on April 24 and also will conduct "deskside visits."
- Working on Brand Building listicles to include in Social Media campaigns
- Future tracking reports are being honed to show SEO impact.
- Sending out strategic monthly pitches, one example was to use the "Mindful-by-the-Sea" with a goal to move it to #1 in CA if not the entire US. Specifically pitching Bay Area business writers on the Mindful program.
- Creating Giveaway opportunities working with the Bay Area News Group, 7x7 and Diablo. \$30K of free advertising in exchange for Carmel Package.
- Increased Instagram stories. Developing a campaign around the #DearCarmel which asks the question "What do you love most about Carmel?" The goal is to solicit engagement and insight from the audience. A Package will be created and awarded to the photo that gets the most engagement.
- Working on numerous individual fam visits. Discussion about influencers such as recent visitor "JennExplores" who in their opinion focuses on the target visitor for Carmel.

MCCVB Update: April Locke reported:

- Winter Campaign has ended. Over 100K sweepstakes entries. The Spring Campaign, "Make the Most of Every Moment" has started using "sequential messaging" to reach their target market.
- Showed new itinerary format geared towards Influencers. Purpose is to try to get the most out of their visits. Carmel area is being included in a variety of ways through the MCCVB marketing efforts, for instance with AZ Foothills mag at La Playa this week and influencer @sugarandcharm at Hofsas House next week.
- The new "Live Chat" service at the Visitors Center has been very well received. It has enhanced services and reached a broader audience. The Visitors Center has reduced their hours of operation to 10-4pm which has been getting some pushback. There will be a discussion on either March 13 or 14 to provide feedback on the new hours of operation.

MCCVB CEO Tammy Blount gave a report on the proposed changes to the TID in Monterey County, from the 89 to the 94 Law, which would give better control of the funds to the lodging committee if the

proposed changes are adapted. Visit Carmel reps will be speaking on behalf of the cooperation between the two bodies (CHID and the MCCVB) and the need to continue funding. The general message being conveyed is “that working together provides a very comprehensive effort to Tourism Management on the Peninsula”.

CBTS Chamber of Commerce: Jenny MacMurdo reported:

- September 10, 2018 the Chamber will host the Disney Institute.
- Visitors Center saw 1791 Walk-ins in January 2018 and 2487 in February 2018. About the same as last year.
- March 1, 2018 a Go Fund Me Campaign was started by the Chamber to purchase “Pepper the Robot” a fun, interactive, concierge robot that works off a self-service IPAD. The campaign is to raise \$25K to purchase the robot which is fully customizable.
- Pro-Am Shuttle provided 2097 riders during the tournament but was not enough to re-coop all the associated costs.
- There will be a progressive mixer on March 29, 2018 with Village Corner and Flaherty’s.
- There were 3 business walks in the past month, which visited a total of 30 Carmel businesses.

Financial Report: Mark Watson went over the most current operating statement and balance sheet.

- We currently have \$65K in an equity balance.
- The City funding of \$50K was received today. TOT receipts for Nov/Dec was approximately \$9K over targeted projections.
- We are on budget with PR and slightly under spending with marketing.
- Currently \$81K in the bank is forecasted so we may not need to be concerned with negative cash flow as earlier projected in March.

Mark reviewed the current market share vs the comp set, citing the fires in September in Northern CA and in December in Southern CA saw Carmel surpassing our competition over the last two periods. Carmel has seen the most growth over the past 12 month period but noted Monterey is catching up with the opening of their new conference center. Carmel saw a 5.5% increase in revenue during the past 12 months, which translates to an increase “in market share” of more than \$500K.

Additions to the Agenda: Next month the Board needs to discuss a possible change to the date for the May Meeting. Burghardt + Dore cannot attend and Sunset Center cannot accommodate our usual meeting space.

General Meeting Adjourned at 4:35 PM