



VISIT CARMEL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
Sunset Center – Chapman Room
San Carlos and 9th
Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921
Thursday, March 7, 2019
2:30 PM

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Jenny MacMurdo; Pamela Sheppard, Rich Pepe, Ken Spilfogel, Mark Watson, Mary Crowe, Chip Rerig

Board Members Absent: Kevin Krueger, Amrish Patel

Also in Attendance: Amy Herzog, Visit Carmel Exec Director; Ashley Brune, Dylan Anderson, Haley Gibbs and Steven Smith, Abbi Agency; April Locke, MCCVB; Jo Todd, Resident; Jeff Burghardt and Nicole Dore, Burghardt + Dore Advertising; Anthony Carnazzo, RID and Stationaery; Suzanne Gravelle, Carmel Area Reservation Service; Carrie Theis, Hofsas House and Carmel City Council; Hella Rothwell, Carmel Art Festival; Berit Keebler, Tradewinds Carmel; Gina Delli-Gatti, Sunset Center; Dale Byrne, CRA and Carmel Cares; Jeff Baron, Carmel City Council.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Rich Pepe called the meeting to order at 2:33 PM

Public Comments: Hella Rothwell reminded everyone about the upcoming Carmel Art Festival, May 17-19, 2019 and mentioned a change – the entire event will take place in Devendorf Park. Ashley Brune, The Abbi Agency, introduced two members of their team, Dylan Anderson and Haley Gibbs. Berit Keebler announced the 60th Anniversary Ribbon Cutting at Tradewinds Carmel on March 27th. Jenny MacMurdo will be attending a US Open Media Fair. The economic impacts will be posted on the Chambers' website. Denise Anderson, a former employee of the SF Visitors Bureau, wants to see CBTS have a more upscale identity, with an ecological focus. Some of her suggestions to the Board include: making the City smoke free, propane only on the beach, and emphasizing child-friendly, not pet-friendly for a cleaner environment. Jo Todd reminded everyone that the Carmel Art Walk is this coming Saturday. Also, the 3rd Thursday of this month, Jo will have an exhibit at the Monterey Museum of Art for Women's History month.

Approval of Minutes: **Mark Watson made a motion to approve the minutes from February 7, 2019. Pam Sheppard seconded the motion. Minutes approved.**

Officer Nominations: Rich Pepe opened the floor to officer nominations to be voted on at the April meeting. Positions include: Chairperson, Treasurer, and Secretary. There are no term limits. Officers can serve multiple terms. The Board, at the suggestion of Mark Watson, has decided to add a level of “checks and balances” to the Treasurer’s work by adding an independent bookkeeper. Pam nominated Mark Watson to stay on as treasurer, Mary Crowe seconded the nomination. Ken Spilfogel nominated Pam Sheppard to stay on as secretary, Jenny MacMurdo seconded the nomination, and Mark Watson nominated Rich Pepe to stay on as Chairperson, Ken Spilfogel seconded the nomination. Board vote will take place next meeting.

Executive Director Report: Amy Herzog reported:

- In the Community Relations report AA/UA are pleased with the flights. Advance bookings on Dallas flight are strong. MCCVB is putting \$100K in marketing and promoting the Dallas flight. On April 2, MRY is hosting an Inaugural Celebration at Del Monte Aviation. In addition, UA is very pleased with VC marketing efforts and wants us to push the connectivity to the East Coast. A joint campaign between Monterey and the MCVGA features “Wine Flies Free” (free shipping on flights to promote wineries) is being explored.
- VC is circulating a spreadsheet to gather available rooms for the US Open to help ensure that rooms don’t go unsold. PB Co requested a digital map of downtown Carmel to use in their promotional material distributed to their US Open guests. One side will be a map of Carmel and the other Monterey.
- VC Annual Report is due on April 15. Amy Herzog requested a couple of Board members to help serve as consultants. Mary Crowe and Jenny MacMurdo volunteered.
- February Eblast went out. It included GourmetFest info, winter ads and sweepstakes update, accolades and listicles.
- The CCTC will be hosting a retreat on April 17-18 in Carmel/Monterey area. The new PR Agency, DCI will be in attendance.
- MCCVB highlighted two projects that will involve CBTS. MCCVB will host a FAM of 8 Australian Luxury Travel writers and the Sunday before the US Open a FAM of International Travel Writers.
- Amy Herzog attended the 2019 Forum and came away proud of the States’ marketing efforts. Two additional areas of focus this year are Culinary and Road Trips with an emphasis on stewardship and sustainability, trying to push tourists off the main road. Visit CA crisis marketing efforts stated that the two biggest issues from the fires that had a negative economic impact were smoke and travelers’ perception. Sustainability will continue to be a focus in luxury travel. MCCVB continues to be a leader in sustainability, which is smart marketing since these ideals align with Millennials and Gen Z demographics. An interesting story that helps promote a unique brand will help build market share amongst an ever-increasing competitive environment. The newest Ad campaign “Spoiled” already has over 3 million views and Chinese travel has flattened due to tensions with US Trade war. The next Visit CA Outlook Forum will take place in San Diego in 2020.
- Upcoming Board meetings topics include: appointment of officers, re-file with the Secretary of State for our tax-exempt status, renew insurance policies, looking for a location to host the May 2 and June 6 meetings due to conflicts with Sunset Center. VC is looking at La Playa, Hofsas House or City Hall as possible alternatives.

Carmel Restaurant Improvement District Update: Anthony Carnazzo reported the last meeting was to review the Financial Budget for the RID. He said some of the restaurants were still confused about the RID and its mission. The RID will continue to have conversations, formulate plans, provide visual content and provide an equity of coverage. Banner Ads were discussed to help gain equity. The RID budget breaks down as follows:

- \$192,393 projected revenue for 2019 (3 QTRS)
- \$38,601 reimbursement for RID formation
- \$120,500 Marketing: Branding, Advertising, and Social Media
- \$12,194 Administrative Expenses
- \$19,239 Reserve Budget

The Survey that was collected when the RID was formed highlighted the need to promote restaurants in a unique, diverse destination; increase restaurant revenue, and develop a unique brand message. Q1 and Q4 will see the biggest push. The target market will be CA and the Tri-County. Food Tourism is on the rise and the need for professional photography is key to use for digital media including Google, FB and Instagram. Other marketing includes: dining maps and innkeeper programs. Jeff Burghardt will concentrate on Food and Ambiance photography for each restaurant stakeholder. A copy writer will interview each restaurant for content. From this Jeff will create carousel ads for Social Media with a link to VC or the restaurant on the VC website and remarketing ads. These ads will focus on “instant experiences” and Gmail Ads. From a PR and SM angle, Abbi Agency talked about highlighting a restaurant per week, inclusion in Listicles and utilizing a Social Media Influencer campaign. Influencers could include: Side of Sweet and Auriela (both in the Bay Area). The RID will consider participation in January Restaurant month. Promotion discussions include placing banners down Ocean Ave, highlighting a “Livin’ Like a Local” feel. Dale mentioned that the CRA is getting more restaurants involved. Perhaps this can be a coordinated push with locals and VC.

Public Relations and Social Media: Ashley Brune reported:

- PR Recap included 19 pieces of coverage, 4.29 billion online readerships, 4.44 million coverage views, 825 social media shares.
- Inns, Culinary and Art dominated the messaging in February with Art and Beach showing a large increase in February.
- VC saw a decrease in SEO impact in February with a score of 59. Our organic rank is solid. Abbi Agency continues to work on securing back links from strong websites.
- Key Media placements included Brit + Co, Inspirations/Celebrations and Elite Daily. The recent FAMs produced several articles highlighting Carmel including Roseville Today, Alameda/Oakland Magazine and Marie Claire. A highlight this month was making Forbes Travel Guide’s 14 Top Destinations of 2019.
- Upcoming placements include: KRON 4, Los Gatos Magazine, AFAR and Marie Claire-Brazil. Upcoming FAMs include influencer, Emma Krasov, and Organic Authority (both in March), Modern Luxury / Las Vegas Magazine (May) and Forbes Travel Guide (Fall/Winter).
- Social Media saw a 2.5% increase in followers. Instagram impressions increased by 24% with Facebook seeing the biggest increase at 36%. Social engagements are down 15% from the previous month. That was expected since January saw the highest level of engagement because of the Khloe Kardashian’s CBTS post. CBTS had the highest fan grown amongst our competitors with a .83% increase on FB and 5.2% increase on Instagram. SM audience is predominately female with LA as the top city across all channels.

Marketing and Advertising: Jeff reported that the seasonal campaign “Pure Inspiration” will be starting a little earlier. The sweepstakes ended in February. TV Media campaign will focus on Bay Area stations. Online Media will continue campaigns on Google, FB, Instagram, and SF Gate.

- Website Traffic is slightly down from 2018 but up over 10% from 2017.
- AA will be releasing an Eblast to over 13 million on their mailing list and it will include a small insert highlighting the “Fly Direct to CBTS.” VC Digital Ads continue to highlight the Dallas and Denver direct flights with links to the VC Hotel Special offers page.
- B+D have begun enhancing the email marketing, design and elist. In preparation for the US Open, B+D is repurposing information and creating a “Top Things To Do” and itineraries web content. Content development on the site will focus on data-driven SEO itineraries using high-ranking keywords and data sources from Google and MOZ. It was suggested these updated itineraries be shared with the hotels for use with guests.
- To stay on top of the technology-driven DM, B+D has decided to merge with Madden. This merger is expected to bring VC greater resources, better value, and increased results. Jeff assured the Board that the Madden merger will have a seamless account management and a team of 90 DMO marketing strategists to work on VC’s behalf. VC will continue to work directly with Jeff and Nicole. Madden’s CEO and account director will attend the April meeting.

Financial Report: Mark Watson reported that VC has \$130K in the bank. Not a lot of activity in February. VC is still waiting on an \$83K check from the City. Billing from B+D has been delayed. In looking at the YOY, Carmel has outperformed Monterey 2 out of 3 periods. MCCVB reported that they are happy with the booking pace for the Conference Center. For larger programs at the Conference Center, the marketing team is considering marketing more to “Bleisure.” Santa Barbara and Calistoga have both had a good recovery from their respective natural disasters. Calistoga saw a 10.76% increase while Carmel saw a 6.7% increase.

Additions to the Agenda/Future Agenda Items: Some members of the Board expressed concern over Board Members repeatedly missing the monthly meeting. The Bylaws state that Board members who miss two monthly meetings in a row may be removed by vote of the remaining directors. The Board would like to revisit future attendance especially with 1 seat currently vacant and a possible second seat at the end of the current term. Further discussion was also requested regarding the news of the merger between B+D and Madden. The Board wants to be assured that the current marketing contract between VC and B+D will not be adversely affected. Ken Spifogel requested that a discussion about IPW be added to the next agenda.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20pm

Closed Session

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Rich Pepe called the closed session to order at 4:27pm

The Board held this meeting to specifically discuss the independent contractor agreement for the Executive Director, Amy Herzog. After discussion, it was proposed to increase her fee beginning June 1,

2019, based on an additional Closed Session in April at which measurable goals will be set and a draft contract presented.

Chip Rerig made a motion to accept the afore mentioned proposal, to amend the contract to begin June 1, 2019 for a 24-month term. Mary Crowe seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously passed.

Closed Session was adjourned at 4:55pm