



CARMEL HOSPITALITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CHID)

VISIT CARMEL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921

Thursday, September 10, 2020

2:30 PM

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Mark Watson, Pamela Sheppard, Mary Crowe, Chip Rerig, Rich Pepe, Jenny MacMurdo, Berit Keeble, John Lloyd, Ken Spilfogel

Board Members Absent: Ramon Serrano

Also in Attendance: Amy Herzog, Visit Carmel Exec Director; Ashley Brune and Steven Smith, Abbi Agency; Jeff Burghardt, Bryan Tracey and Nicole Dore, Madden Media; Suzanne Gravelle, CARS; Carrie Theis, Hofsas House and Carmel City Council; Ashlee Wright City of CBTS; Chris Whitman, Hideaway and Getaway Inns; Kimber Tabscott and Rob O'Keefe, MCCVB; Scott Richards, Lark Hotels, Tradewinds Carmel and Carmel Lodge; Andrew Jay, L'Auberge Carmel.

Rich Pepe called the Meeting to order 2:35pm

Public Comment: Jenny MacMurdo announced that The Taste of Carmel tickets will go on sale Monday. There will be three levels to select from and the event will last the whole month of November. This is the biggest fund raiser for the Carmel Chamber and this year Carmel Gives will give 20% of each passport sold back to participating restaurants. Tickets can be picked up October 1st at the visitors center.

Minutes: Chip Rerig made a motion to approve the minutes from August 13, 2020. Mary Crowe seconded the motion. Motion passes unanimously.

Monterey County CVB Report: Rob O'Keefe and Kimber Tabscott Reported:

- Visitors center re-opened the weekend before Labor Day. They found that the Kiosk at the wharf was getting too crowded for social distancing. The center will remain open on a limited basis. They have not yet decided on a schedule. Both the Kiosk and Visitors center received a moderate number of visitors over the Labor Day weekend.
- Rob is currently working on getting a group together to reach out to Dr. Moreno promoting a meeting and events passport program with a goal to show safe protocol for allowing small groups and weddings of 50 or less. He is also reaching out to other counties including Napa and

Sonoma for support in this with the possibility of also sending it to the governor. There is a need for small events and the area needs business for the upcoming off season.

- MCCVB is currently working on hiring a VP of Business Development Status. Research shows that it will be about one year before business really starts to pick up and 2022 for the new normal to be in place.
- Jennifer Kocher, Director of Community Relations, is now a Destination Management Executive certified by Destinations International
- Kimber updated on paid media highlights featuring a social distancing activities guide, focused in LA with a 2% click through and a Road to Inspiration ad. Blog content includes 10 reasons to visit Monterey Peninsula this summer and Social Distancing Activities. Earned media July through September includes pieces in 7x7, Reader's Digest and USA Today.
- Working on Q2 Rob said that we actually did better than he thought we might do through the summer and that the summer travel season may be extended. Focus on is on staycations, extended drive market and possibly short haul flights. Also, they are continuing to be aware and working with the local residents' sentiments. Brand health is important to keep in mind.
- Kimber mentioned that we should not expect any large events until a vaccine is available. They will continue to work on staycations, Monterey Field Trips and let yourself go for the Fall campaign which is September through December.
- Jeff Burghardt offered content and photos to MCCVB.

Nomination Committee: Mary Crowe confirmed that there are two possible candidates that are interested in joining the board. Andrew Jay, new GM for L'Auberge, and Chris Whitman, GM for the Hideaway and Getaway. October 2 the nominations close and recommendations will be made by the committee. The Board will vote at the November meeting. Amy Herzog said there was no need for a motion at this time. This was confirmed by Carrie Theis.

Executive Director's Report: Amy Herzog reported:

- Amy has received signed petitions from 7 hotels so far for the HID renewal. She hopes the renewal will be on the City Council October 6 Consent Agenda with a Resolution for Renewal. If all goes as planned by November 4 a notice of public hearing should be mailed, and in December and January, we should adopt a Resolution of Formation/Renewal. In February the bylaws and contract with the city should be updated. February 28, 2021 the current HID expires, and March 1, 2021 the new HID should be in place.
- Amy reached out to stakeholders and 13 hotels responded to questions regarding expectations for September and October occupancy. Most are expecting 68% occupancy for September and 65% occupancy for October. Amy will continue to correspond weekly with restaurants providing information to hotels on hours and any changes. Wine tasting room information has been updated on the website.
- The Carmel Shell mural is doing well on social media, Amy is adding a hashtag #Carmelshell and is working on getting it added as a landmark on Google and Yelp maps.
- Updates to the Visit Carmel website include making it a little more evergreen. "Know before you go" will include more than just COVID info. It will be a place to update information on fires, beach closures and other things that might have an effect on a visitors to the area. The City Site also made updates with links to Visit Carmel for people who land on the City site looking for information on visiting the area. Visit California is the number two referral site and the City of Carmel is the number three referral site.

- Visit California is doing a promotion called Calling all Californians, urging them to travel within the state, which will be followed by a push to western states to take drive vacations to California.
- Amy requested that we move the annual board meeting from November to May so that it better coincides with the completion of the annual report.

Marketing and Advertising: Jeff Burghardt reported:

- Jeff reviewed website traffic from June 1 to September 9 and we were just slightly below last year even with the pauses for July 4th and fires. The July eblast did exceptionally well. Jeff feels that due to the fires, COVID and everything else, people's attention was elsewhere. But, people are staying longer on the site, possibly due to the more detailed pages and know before you go pages.
- Paid ads are getting the best click through. Top website traffic sources include #3 Google cost per click, #4 Facebook prospecting ads, #5 Facebook remarketing, #8 Visit California and #9 City of Carmel. (#1 is Google organic and #2 is direct.)
- June, July and August the Book Direct clicks from Visit Carmel exceeded last year in clicks.
- The Tear pad maps are being reprinted with a scannable QR code added.
- The Fall eblast went out September 9 promoting outdoor activities.
- Jeff would welcome any new high-resolution photos that anyone has that they might use.
- Jeff is working on new carousel ads promoting mid-week Stay, Play and Work. Social and digital and banner ads promote mid-week, safe and responsible travel targeting Millennials. Mid-week is the big push after the July pause, and we need to let Jeff know when, or if, we need to shift to promoting any day of the week, including weekends.
- For the RID Jeff is targeting 50 miles or greater, San Francisco, Oakland and San Jose. For the in-market visitor the ads have been focusing on Tuesday through Thursday and will now expand to Monday through Thursday.
- Clicks on the restaurant pages are up over last year.

Public Relations and Social Media: Ashely Brune reported:

- The planned FAMs from Punch and San Joaquin Magazine were delayed from August to September due to the fires. They are looking into the possibility of more writers to come to the area, but many publications are not allowing travel or don't have budgets at this time.
- A new short ½ day photo shoot is being planned with places close to each other due to time constraint. This shoot will focus on showing COVID safety precautions. Most of the shoot will take place in the Dolores, Seventh and San Carlos street areas. I
- In October Visit California will have a virtual event for in-state media featuring responsible/safe travel, distance learning, and holiday travel.
- Visit California is also planning a future event called California Pavilion, a virtual event, TravMedia IMM USA 2021, for travel media in January 2021. Ashley is reaching out to MCCVB to see if they are attending.

Financial Report: Mark Watson reported that we did better than expected, and we received EIDL funding, so we have \$450,860 on the books vs. expected \$300,000. We collected almost double amount estimated from RID and HID, almost \$38,000 more than budgeted in the COVID-altered budget. The RID outperformed what was expected. Amy Herzog mentioned that part of that amount was due to some catch-up payments. Mark is not going to change any estimated numbers yet, but we should be able to

get through the rest of the year with a better start in January than expected. Mark stated that the financial health is pretty good all things considered.

Pepe thanked the Madden Agency, Jeff Burghardt, and Ashley and the Abbi Agency, for being very frugal and “getting the most bang for the bucks.”

Additions to the Agenda: – Pepe kindly offered to help individuals with plumbing problems should they need it.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:03pm