



CARMEL HOSPITALITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CHID)

VISIT CARMEL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921

Thursday, January 14, 2021

2:30 PM

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Mark Watson, Andrew Jay, Mary Crowe, Rich Pepe, Chip Rerig, Ken Spilfogel, Chris Whitman

Board Members Absent: John Lloyd, Pamela Sheppard

Also in Attendance: Amy Herzog, Visit Carmel Executive Director; Ashley Brune and Dylan Anderson, Abbi Agency; Jeff Burghardt, Nicole Dore and Bryan Tracey, Madden Media; Suzanne Gravelle, CARS; Carrie Theis, Hofsas House and Carmel City Council; Janine Chicourrat, Carmel Residents Association and MCHA; Tim Twomey, CRA; Staci Giovino, Carmel Food Tours; Jo Todd, Resident; Scott Richards, Tradewinds and Carmel Lodge; Jenny MacMurdo, Carmel Chamber; Rob O'Keefe and Lindsey Guinn, MCCVB; Ashlee Wright, City of Carmel.

Rich Pepe called the Meeting to order 2:32pm

Public Comment: Janine (as new chair of MCHA) announced that Monterey County is wanting help spreading the word to employees about vaccinations. Jenny from the Chamber has a graphic that Amy can use in next eblast. Also has a team working on mass vaccination sites. Laguna Seca also has been mentioned as a possible vaccine site. Chip announced that there will be a special City Council meeting coming next week on picnicking. Jenny announced that the Chamber will host a "state of the City/County" on Feb 5 at 8:30 am.

Minutes: **Ken Spilfogel made a motion to approve the minutes from December 21, 2020. Chip seconded the motion.** Motion passes unanimously.

Monterey County Convention & Visitors Bureau Report:

- Rob made the report during which he introduced new hire Lindsey Guinn who comes from Visit California most recently.
- Employment report showed a 19% decline in the hospitality in Nov YOY. Specific to Carmel, march and April 2020 took a big occupancy hit, then recovered better than projected. Then Dec

Jan took another big hit. Leisure travel is what will fuel the recovery (projected to normal in 2022), followed much later by business travel (2024 until recovery). These, of course, are just projections!

- The MCCVB has allocated \$40-\$50,000 in marketing to support the new Seattle flight. There also is a new route scheduled from Portland on Allegiant to launch in the Spring.
- Discussed the winter campaign – Grab Your Moments. Many of the SeeMonterey social posts show very high engagements posts, particularly with CBTS as the subject. Supported by great earned media coverage.
- Rob explained the CVB is creating a 3-year approach to recovery. He would like the entire destination to be coordinated with the trigger, around April 30 or so. The goal is to not just get to normal but to *surpass* normal, and not to forget the lessons learned. Looking for better travel, not more travel, which will continue to strengthen the community. The Comeback Campaign involved new agency search, influencers, co-op opps, etc. Major initiatives that will be national in scope.
- The demographics and reasons for travel will change. Feeding the soul will become increasingly important and reconnecting with family and friends.

Executive Director's Report: Amy Herzog reported:

- Contracts with Abbi Agency and Madden Media for 2021 have been signed or are in the process. Still working on contract with the City. And Amy needs signed conflict of interest and electronic transmissions forms from a few board members still.
- Amy is keeping the Travel Advisory page of the CarmelCalifornia.com page updated with the latest travel restrictions. Stakeholders are welcome to link there.
- Stakeholder Communication continue to go out. In weekly contact with all restaurants and hotels. Promoting Carmel Delivers and integrating that into the Take Out Guide, and we are promoting it locally and especially via other orgs such as Chamber, City, CRA and local media.
- Working on cross promotion with Alaska Airlines to support the Feb launch of the Seattle flight.
- At one point months ago, it was suggested that the Airport consider a name change to the Carmel/Monterey Airport. Mike from the Airport suggests this might be the right time to propose that, though it is a long shot. Board reaffirmed interest in pursuing, and Mary and Chris volunteered to consult with Amy on the project.
- Encouraged all to attend Visit California Outlook Forum next month if possible.
- Recommend a Brown Act training update since there have been some new items. Chip mentioned that the City Council and staff just did one and it was recorded for YouTube. Amy to confirm if this recording would suffice for the VC Board and Committee training.

Marketing/ Advertising Report: Madden Media provided a report:

- Quick look at website traffic YOY showed a decrease of only about 15% in 2020 vs 2019, which is not much considering the shut downs. And page sessions and time on site was actually higher, meaning possibly more qualified visitors.
- Also compared traffic that was referred to the hotels (Book Direct from Jack Rabbit), showed about the same (15% down YOY). However there were several months where we exceeded 2019.
- Most traffic is from Google organic, but paid digital media show high traffic to site and referrals to hotels. People are coming from drive markets, San Jose, Santa Clara, Oakland were up, as were Ontario and Vegas. Might explain the shift in demographics.
- Though stats into website don't really show a huge shift in age. 25-34 is the strongest age range in both years. Skewing female which is typical.

- Jeff highlighted a new product from Madden Media which is very researched based and analytical – Madden Voyage Plus. Also can create reports that show economic impact.
- Shifted to the Dream Now/Accolades campaigns, Bryan reported on the performance of the digital ads. More focus has been paid to the accolades campaign, which also has a Save now. Stay Later message. Accompanying short video has been cut for social media paid and organic posts.
- Staying top of mind so that when travel loosens up that core audience thinks of Carmel. Monitoring comments and they are all positive (no backlash).
- Take Out Campaign continues with a comprehensive local media mix and printed pieces. Bryan also discussed the metrics from that campaign and we also viewed the dedicated eblast and the 30 sec spot on KSBW.
- Reminder about rebound campaign and that comprehensive media mix. Also will entail a new landing page that showcases the brand pillars and pushing the stay longer, explore more idea.

PR and Social Media report:

- Ashley reported on coverage in the Pine Cone and Edible Monterey Bay from an earned media standpoint.
- Big focus on Take Out Campaign on social media, including a new Instagram feature called a “guide.” Posts are geared toward special offers.
- Paired with local influencer and cook book author Caroline Chambers. Ordered Take Out and made Instagram stories about it. Might do one more staycation story once travel opens.
- Also coordinating with CVB/SeeMonterey.
- YOY shows that total earned media placements were down by about 20% this year vs last, but the focus on in state saw an increase which was the plan.
- Impressions, engagements and audience all saw healthy growth this year.
- Ashley will attend International Media Marketplace at the end of the month via a Visit California opp. Will have 24 media interviews one-on-one.

Additions to the Agenda: next meeting February 11. Perhaps we will know more about vaccinations and opening dates by then.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:09pm