



CARMEL HOSPITALITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CHID)

VISIT CARMEL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921

Thursday, May 13, 2021

2:30 PM

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Pamela Sheppard, Mary Crowe, Chip Rerig, Rich Pepe, Ken Spilfogel, Chris Whitman, John Lloyd

Board Members Absent: Mark Watson

Also in Attendance: Amy Herzog, Visit Carmel Executive Director; Ashley Brune, Abbi Agency; Jeff Burghardt and Bryan Tracey, Madden Media; Lindsey Guinn and Rob O'Keefe, MCCVB; Suzanne Gravelle, CARS; Carrie Theis, Hofsas House and Carmel City Council; Nancy Twomey, Carmel Residents Asso. (CRA); Ashlee Wright, City of CBTS; Francesca Ruiz, Carmel Plaza

Rich Pepe called the Meeting to order 2:31pm

Public Comment: None

Minutes: **Ken Spilfogel made a motion to approve the minutes from April 8, 2021. Chip Rerig seconded the motion.** Motion passes unanimously.

Elect Officers: Since the Board was only asked to nominate Board members for Officer positions at the last meeting, Amy H requested the Board reconfirm the Officer appointments in case there were any issues. **Chip Rerig made a motion to confirm Rich Pepe, President; Mark Watson, Treasurer; and Pam Sheppard, Secretary for another one year term. John Lloyd seconded the motion.** Motion passes unanimously.

August Board of Directors Meeting: The August Board Meeting this year falls during Car Week. Amy recommended postponing or cancelling the meeting. She noted that in years past the Board elected not to have a meeting during August since it was such a busy month. The Board supports cancelling the August meeting. Meeting is officially cancelled.

MCCVB Update: Rob and Lindsey gave the following report: Rob opened the report telling the Board that we still have a lot of work to do to get back to where we were pre-pandemic. Lindsey took over

- recapping the Q3 highlights. The “Grab Your Moment” campaign has wrapped. Five California Live segments were created. The CBTS segment aired two times in SF, San Diego and LA. The Seattle flight campaign has ended and a similar campaign is planned around the new Portland, OR flight. Press highlights include: Conde Nast, Forbes and 7x7. CBTS continues to be a high performer on social media with 8.7K clicks directly to CBTS businesses.
- Recovery Campaign is now running. The national campaign “Now is the Moment” began April 26. These segments put MCCVB, Monterey County including all destinations on the national stage.
- Influencer “Side of Sweet” visited Carmel for the 3rd time at the end of April.
- Local Campaign focusing on “Responsible Travel” continues to be a focus.
- Luxury Initiative has launched – 12 properties have been identified including 2 from CBTS: La Playa Hotel and L’Auberge.

Chip interjected that the City Managers are planning a joint release. The message, which is slated for release next week, will let the visiting public know that everything is open with more limited restrictions. At the Council Retreat, Chip reported that the communities are working together to keep the message consistent for the destination across all channels. This news was very well received.

Executive Director’s Report: Amy Herzog reported:

- The insurance policies have been renewed for the same amounts as the previous policies.
- We currently have (3) contracts (HID, RID and Administration of the Marketing Plan) between VC and the City. The Admin Marketing Contract ends in June. The proposed renewal is for a 3-year term for \$100,800 for 2021-2022. Pre-pandemic was \$120K, however, during the pandemic the budget was reduced to \$96,000.
- Wine Walk Update – Carmel Chamber currently owns the licensing trademark for the “Carmel Wine Walk”. Visit Carmel is proposing to license the name for \$500 per year for 2 years with the ability to own the trademark outright for \$5K following the two year term. Carrie Theis asked about the reason behind paying to obtain the trademark. Amy responded by saying the Chamber originally invested significant funds to obtain and maintain the trademark. Amy commented that many of the photos submitted by the tasting rooms for marketing purposes were not appropriate quality. VC is going to undertake a quick photoshoot to enhance VC creative assets for the wine rooms, and a few remaining restaurants and hotels.
- VC website continues to be updated to reflect the changing conditions highlighting “Love Carmel Like a Local”.
- Airport Update-Name change proposal when to the committee yesterday. It will go back to the Board on May 19. JSX, the semi-private airline, will start 4 day a week flights from Monterey to Orange County and Burbank on June 11, 2021.
- CCTC is getting free ad with Visit CA.
- 94% of domestic travelers are expected to return to pre-pandemic levels in 2022. The Governor of CA has proposed a \$95million stimulus campaign for travel marketing funds to compete with other States who have proposed similar stimulus programs.

Marketing and Advertising: Jeff reported:

- Media Mix is fully running. Marketing campaign consists of a creative mix of digital ads including prospecting on Expedia and segments on CA Live
- Pure Inspiration for extended stays has its own landing page on the website.

- Traffic to the website was up 40% in March. March saw the highest number of book direct referrals to the website in 5 years and April beat March.
- Seattle Digital Campaign has ended. 4.7 million impressions with a .7% CTR (industry avg is .1) VC is planning to co-invest with the Monterey Airport on a Portland Campaign geo-targeting the Portland area. Alaska Air Sweepstakes is number 12 on the search results.
- New proposed Fly Market Strategy focuses on mid-week, longer stays, increasing visitor spending, expand customer base and promote Carmel as a top domestic destination. 6 fly markets have been designated with a \$3K investment per destination per month including: Seattle, Denver, Phoenix, San Diego, and Dallas. The only exception is Las Vegas with a \$750 per month budget. LA would use current advertising and Portland would have a standalone campaign. Total Budget for a 6-month campaign would be a total cost of \$111,180 which includes a management fee of \$2780/month. The airport had previously indicated they could fund at least a \$30K investment in this campaign bringing VC portion down to \$81,180. Option #2 would see an overall monthly reduction in the advertising budget but maintaining the Airport contribution of \$30K. Option #2 shows VC portion at \$45,888. Discussion amongst the Board ensued. The Board does not recommend shifting existing media budget but using additional funds to participate in this campaign. Chip and Pam both recommended approaching the airport board to commit to a larger budget contribution. Chip suggested 50/50 and Madden agreed to start with a 50/50 split approach.
- Madden is preparing to launch a JSX Luxury Carmel Sweepstakes. Exclusive offers on the VC Website will be available for Inns to promote special offers around this new flight.
- RID "Pack Your Appetite" Digital campaign is underway.
- Carmel-by-the-Sea Wine Walk is progressing.

Public Relations and Social Media: Ashely Brune sent the PR report out in advance of today's meeting for Board Review. Ashley gave the following highlights:

- Articles appeared in *Napa Valley Life*, *Travel +Leisure*, and *Fodor's Travel*.
- VC had two partnerships with Influencers in April. Eager Traveler brought VC 244 new followers. There are more deliverables to come. Allison Anderson who flew in from Seattle on May 5th. Her deliverables are yet to come.
- PR Daily, a national industry PR Leader, has presented Ashley with Communicator of the Year award.

Financial Report: The report was sent in advance of the meeting. Mark Watson was unable to be in attendance. The Board was asked if they had any questions or concerns about the report. The Board had none.

Additions to the Agenda: None

Open Session Meeting Adjourned at 3:50pm and moved to Closed session.