



CARMEL HOSPITALITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CHID)

VISIT CARMEL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

LA PLAYA HOTEL

Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921

Thursday, July 8, 2021

2:30 PM

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Mary Crowe, Rich Pepe, Ken Spilfogel (via video), John Lloyd (via video), Mark Watson, Pamela Sheppard, Chris Whitman (via video)

Board Members Absent: Chip Rerig

Also in Attendance: Amy Herzog, Visit Carmel Executive Director; Abbi Whitaker, Ashley Brune, Haley Gibbs, Dani Hannah, and Ben Engel, Abbi Agency; Jeff Burghardt, Nicole Dore (via video) and Brian Tracey, Madden Media; Lindsey Guinn, MCCVB; Carrie Theis, Hofsas House and Carmel City Council; Suzanne Gravelle (via video), CARS

Rich Pepe called the Meeting to order 2:32pm

Public Comment: Ashley Brune introduced the Abbi Agency PR team that is handling the Visit Carmel account. They include: Haley Gibbs, Lead Media; Dani Hannah, Assistant Media; and Ben Engel, Content Team.

Minutes: **Mary Crowe made a motion to approve the minutes from June 10, 2021. Mark Watson seconded the motion.** Motion passes unanimously.

Create Ad Hoc Nominating Committee: Amy Herzog announced the need to form a nominating committee to fill upcoming vacancies on the Board. 5 seats on the Board are up for renewal: 1 Restaurant, 1 City and 3 Inn. 2 of the Inn seats are up for renewal (Pam Sheppard and Mary Crowe) each for a 3-year term and the 3rd seat is currently vacant after the departure of Andrew Jay formerly of L'Auberge. That seat is only for a 1 year term. Mary Crowe and Pam Sheppard along with Amy Herzog volunteered to spearhead the committee.

MCCVB Update: Lindsey Guinn reported:

- Q4 Highlights
- "Now is the Moment" campaign is in full swing. Lindsey reported on the results of the 1st national TV campaign. Top 3 drive markets: SF, LA and Sacramento. Top 3 fly markets: NY,

Seattle and Dallas. 654K airings of the campaign. The plan is to run a second campaign based on optimizing the results from the 1st campaign. The CTV buy is more targeted with a 97.8% completion rate for viewing. Lindsey noted there was strong engagement in the Texas market. Paid social aspect showed SF was the top market while LA had the strongest engagement. To date the Drive Market has been the strongest performer. Earned media had a successful influencer campaign.

- Key Strategies looking ahead include: Big focus on return of group, continuing a national presence for leisure travel, return of events as a destination driver and keep watch on international travel but continue to compensate with domestic luxury traveler.
- MCCVB will continue to defer dues for 2022. This allows the MCCVB to capitalize on working without restrictions with “non-members”.
- MCCVB is reimagining the visitors center by putting services online. The plan is to keep El Estero Visitors Center closed. The idea is to create a virtual concierge service staffed by a live member of the MCCVB staff and to enhance the use of QR codes.

Executive Director Report: Amy Herzog reported:

- Lots of stakeholder material is in the works. The new material will be delivered to all stakeholders once it is ready.
- Art Walk is resuming on the 2nd Saturday of every month through the end of the year. Printed brochure will be available.
- Upcoming events include: Meet the Makers and Jazz Festival. Jazz Festival will only go till 7pm at the fairgrounds. The festival is planning a series of after-hours venues (7pm-10 or 11pm) around the Peninsula in various locations to compensate for the reduction in capacity (only 50%). Amy discussed possibly forming a committee to help find venues in CBTS and work with the City for permits.
- 295 mobile Wine Walk passes have been downloaded to date since its release. The Chamber helped the Wine Walk get an online presence on Yelp which began June 10. The Board brought up the validity of the “old passes”. It was discussed that because they were purchased they should be honored.
- US Travel is turning its attention to group business. Visit CA is supporting group travel. CA just announced it has adopted \$95m into its budget to support the travel industry. The focus for now is on gateway cities.
- CCTC will receive an increase of \$30K in matching funds from Visit CA. A fall retreat is scheduled in Carmel in October.
- Visit Carmel marketing team met in advance of today’s board meeting to review collaborative opportunities.
- The Board reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule including the decision to skip the meeting in August. The Board was also asked to consider a proposed change to fiscal budget that aligns with the City budget.

Marketing and Advertising: Jeff reported:

- Hotel Web Referral traffic continues to be at an all-time high at 25.8K referrals to booking site in June. Jeff would like Inns, if possible, to supply Madden with city zip codes per quarter to see the demographics. 40% of web traffic is coming from paid media.
- “Pure Inspiration” Campaign is driving mid-week remarketing ads. “Love Carmel Like a Local” campaign is geo-targeting our drive market. Engagement is positive and immediate with a 2.61% CTR with is 2.5 times the industry average. New banners for Ocean Avenue which reflect the campaign will be installed August 11 during Car Week. Both the Carmel Chamber and

Carmel Residents Association donated \$1333 to the project. A press release is scheduled to promote this cooperative effort.

- JSX backed Sweepstakes will run from July 1-10 with an enter to win component. Traffic to VC site is the #1 page. So far there are 2700 entries.
- Additional Eblast content includes links to the website highlighting Carmel Tours and Experiences, Stay Longer and Explore, and Carmel Wine Walk.
- The Portland Flight digital campaign is seeing good traffic to the site. The Fly Market campaign has been finalized. The \$70K budget comprised of \$30K contribution from the Monterey Airport and \$40K from Visit Carmel will be broken down into \$17,400 per month for 4 months. Covered markets will include: Seattle, Denver, Phoenix, San Diego, and Dallas with a smaller contribution to Las Vegas. The campaign is scheduled to begin September 1, 2021 with a similar campaign slated to be included in the 2022 budget. Visit Carmel will co-brand with the Monterey Airport for this campaign. Mark Watson relayed to the Board that the VC airport committee is going to chip away at the Airport Board to get them to adjust their mindset on outbound and inbound flights. Residents are encouraged to vocalize their air transportation needs.
- Board members are encouraged to sign up for the Carmel Wine Walk pass. The mobile website should be saved to the home screen. New photography is now visible on the brochure. There is a plan to have a quarterly prize drawing.
- RID Marketing continues to show no ad fatigue with the digital slideshow campaign that has been running since April.
- Early planning has begun for a brand photography refresh. A photoshoot is planned for September 20-23 which will include mixed ethnicity, beach, sunsets and iconic shots.

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:

- CarmelCalifornia.com currently has an SEO score of 58 and a combined score of 70. June had two placements in the *SF Chronicle*. Carmel Walks received good coverage.
- A press release went out for the revamped Carmel Wine Walk. Also, included for PR is a blog post and media posts. Abbi Agency is currently working with the MCCVB. Coverage on the Wine Walk has included in the *Marin Independent*, *Carmel Pine Cone* and *Edible*.
- There is a fall push scheduled for the LA market to secure media hosting on JSX flights.
- In June, Abbi Agency was inadvertently locked out of CBTS Instagram/FB account for a two-week period and it affected the stats for June. The Abbi Agency plans to put the June budget into July. CBTS did see a .4% audience growth across all channels despite the disruption. However, overall impressions were down 38% from the previous month with engagement down 6.3%.
- Abbi Agency is currently in town gathering new owned content to use across all social media channels.

Market Share Report: Mark gave a quick update on the budget. March/April had a budgeted income of \$182K the actual income was reported at \$178K. May/June income is expected to be high. CBTS is currently seeing 17% more than its fair share of the market overall. Monterey has plummeted due to the lack of group bookings. Santa Barbara and Monterey are currently experiencing similar patterns. Calistoga continues to rank #1 in fair share. Calistoga has increased its gap over CBTS in ADR.

Additions to the Agenda: None

Meeting Adjourned at 4:53pm