



CARMEL HOSPITALITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CHID)

VISIT CARMEL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

VIA VIDEO CONFERENCE

Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921

Thursday, September 9, 2021

2:30 PM

MINUTES

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

Board Members Absent: Ken Spilfogel

Also in Attendance: Amy Herzog, Visit Carmel Executive Director; Ty Whitaker, Liz Bowling and Trevor Birba, Abbi Agency; Jeff Burghardt, Nicole Dore and Brian Tracey, Madden Media; Suzanne Gravelle, CARS; Michael La Pier, Monterey Regency Airport, Jenny MacMurdo, Carmel Chamber of Commerce; Dale Byrne, CRA, Carmel Cares and Carmel Gives; Paige Viren, Executive Director CSUMB Sustainability/Hospitality Mgmt Program; Tim Twomey, CRA; Scott Richards and Candance Fecteau, Carmel Tradewinds Inn and Carmel Lodge; Greg Ahn, 7th & Dolores and Rise and Roam; Ashlee Wright, City of CBTS; Jo Todd, Resident.

Rich Pepe called the Meeting to order 2:32pm

Public Comment: Chris Whitman announced his new venture Dutch Door Donuts is officially open as of Friday last week. Dale Byrne Carmel Cares dealing with issues regarding litter pickup in CBTS started Pickup Posse especially on Scenic and Downtown. Started the process to become an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful. Carmel Gives had Bill Hayward reach out to Dale to discuss improving the air quality in CBTS restaurants as described on the website: CarbonCleanRestaurantAir.com. Using funds from Carmel Gives to get 2-3 restaurants to use the technology in a pilot test. Ashlee Wright announced changes to Halloween Parade. Will start at 4pm as in years past and will end at Devendorf Park. Hopes to get businesses involved in supporting Halloween decorations and themed activities. Jenny MacMurdo reiterated that County did not get the required votes to institute the indoor mask mandate. Oct 1st is CHS Homecoming Parade, all businesses and residents are encouraged to support CHS with the color red.

Minutes: **Mark Watson made a motion to approve the minutes from July 8, 2021. Chris Whitman seconded the motion.** Motion passes unanimously.

Nominating Committee: Pam Sheppard recapped that the Nominating Committee which also included Mary Crowe and Amy Herzog met with 3 perspective new board members: Greg Ahn for the Restaurant seat (3-year term), Candance Fecteau for vacant 1-year term for the lodging seat and Michael La Pier Advisory position (non-voting). Each perspective member gave a brief introduction of themselves. Amy Herzog informed the Board that they can appoint non-voting members as advisors. Amy advised the Board that due to complexities of the Board structure a single vote to incorporate all the necessary actions would be the most effective.

Pam Sheppard made a motion to accept the nominations as follows for a November meeting vote: Greg Ahn to the restaurant seat for a 3-year term, Candace Fecteau to fill the vacant 1 year Lodging seat, Renew Chip Rerig for another 3-year seat for City of Carmel, Renew Mary Crowe and Pam Sheppard for another 3-year term for Lodging seat and accept Michael La Pier for Advisory (non-voting) Board seats. Chip Rerig seconded the motion. Motion passes unanimously. Amy also clarified that Carrie Theis will retain her board seat as liaison for the City of Carmel.

Proposal For Change To Fiscal Financial Calendar: The change has been requested to better align with the city's budget and financial reporting which would be July 1-June 30. Amy Herzog laid out the simple process the Board would have to undertake to make the change for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. A Resolution was outlined and the Board was asked to vote. **Mary Crowe made a motion to accept the Resolution, Rich Pepe seconded the motion. A roll call was taken at the time of the vote everyone voted "yes" except for Ken Spilfogel who was absent.** Motion passes unanimously.

Financial Report: Mark Watson reported July YTD we have \$793K in the bank. Liability for EIDL loan of \$149,900 is still on the books and payback has been extended for another year with no interest. Revenues have far exceeded what was budgeted with expenses for the most part in line with what was budgeted. PR is slightly over budget for August (\$7800) while Marketing was under budget by \$21K for August and 133K YTD. Mark is going to focus on the new budget for the new fiscal year July 2021-June 30, 2022. Mark is going to remain conservative due to the lingering effects of COVID. Budget is tracking to be ahead of the revised \$1.3Million budget.

Executive Director Report: Amy Herzog reported:

- Stakeholder correspondence continues to go out.
- Monterey Airport update include Alaska Airlines is adding a second daily flight to Seattle at the end of October. Avelo's Burbank to Monterey flight has been postponed till 1st Qtr 2022 due to downturn in bookings. UA has changed its reservation system to ID Monterey/Carmel and Alaska Airlines will be following suit. MCCVB fly market visitor research reported that visitors spend an average of \$1400 each per visit. Monterey airport is working on an RFP to accept an air carrier serving both Chicago and possibly NY. Each marketing organization has pledged \$75K in marketing support for this potential new market including Visit Carmel.
- Meet the Makers has been postponed till Spring or next October. Too much involved to pull off this year.
- Taste of Carmel reimagined. Visit Carmel is helping to promote the event.
- Carmel Mission is kicking off their 250th Anniversary and Visit Carmel has offered to help with promotion.
- City sponsored events have been updated on the VC calendar.
- Carmel Culinary Week planning with be the focus at the next RID meeting.

- Lots of movement from high-profile chefs moving into CBTS. Talking to marketing teams to see how we can help restaurants to promote this news.
- To date there has been 766 downloads of the mobile wine walk app. Scheid has offered up the first prize in the Wine Walk drawing available on the app. Oct 8th will be the first meeting with the Wine rooms to get feedback on the Wine Walk since the new app launched.
- MCCVB update next month. They have been very active over the past 2 months in PR.
- CCTC is getting \$30K in matching grant money from Visit CA for marketing in rural regions. The organization is coming to Carmel for a 30-person gathering.
- Visit CA continues to be the top referring site into Visit Carmel. They have two new programs: Destination Stewardship and Research on Wildfire impacts.
- Amy went over the newest overview in marketing trends with current climate. Carmel has been somewhat immune to some travel trends.
- Amy briefly addressed Community Relations around “too many visitors” and “concerns around over-marketing/ too much advertising”. Meetings are planned with City council members and marketing agencies to demonstrate our focus is in the off-season.
- Next month our planned October meeting will include closing nominations for new and renewing Board members, review draft of 21-22 budget, strategic planning and a closed session to hear agency presentations and discuss contract negotiations. November 11th is Veteran’s Day. Amy will look at options for rescheduling.

Public Relations: New faces at the Abbi Agency which includes the team that supports CBTS account. Ty Whitaker reported:

- Liz Bowling, VP of Public Relations for Abbi Agency has returned to the Abbi Agency who was part of the original pitch for the CBTS account. Trevor Birba joins the team as the digital media specialist. Dani Hannah will be assisting as the PR account executive as well as Angela Rudolph, digital content manager, who starts October 13.
- Liz reported that CarmelCalifornia.com has an SEO score of 58 and a combined score of 70. Abbi Agency is securing placements in both regional and national publications to cover our market share demographics completely. Liz reviewed the key placements and listicles from the past couple of months. Two upcoming FAMs in October. The first is 7X7 targeting the Bay area market. The second, Seattle Maven, is an influencer from Seattle in collaboration with MCCVB.
- Trevor reported on the July/August SM performance. Increase in followers over all channels. Heavily favors female audience. Followers geography favors our drive market. Impressions across all channels at 5M with a 30% increase in August over the previous month. Engagements shows strong improvements. Average engagement is 6.2% which is like an influencer. Trevor recapped the most popular posts for the Board. He noted over 10% of our followers engage with our posts. Abbi Agency’s data analysis will continue to optimize their strategy and content to continue to build on the follower base and reach.

Marketing and Advertising: Jeff reported:

- Underspent marketing dollars reported by Mark is due to moving around/delay of projects including the photoshoot and fly market campaign. Everything is now online.
- Hotel referral traffic has broken all records since March 2021. Jeff estimates \$3M ROI.
- A review of website analytics and current Campaigns. The Fly Market campaign is ready to go and waiting for the Board to give the OK to launch. Following Board discussion, it was decided the fly campaign should begin.

- Brian Tracey noted that we are geo-targeting the “Love Carmel Like a Local” campaign inside 50 miles. 8.22% CTR (1% industry average). The Board would like to see the budget increased so that we can share the sustainable message with both visitor and local.
- “Love Carmel Like a Local” banners are up on Ocean Ave. September Eblast went out.
- Photography and Video investment in the Brand is scheduled for the end of the month. CA Live will produce a segment on CBTS on September 23.

Additions to the Agenda: None

Meeting Adjourned at 4:36pm