



CARMEL RESTAURANT IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CRID)

COMMITTEE MEETING

At Sunset Center and via Video Conference

Tuesday, Feb 8, 2021 at 2:30 pm

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: Anthony Carnazzo, Stationaery; Rich Pepe, Pepe Intl; Ken Spilfogel, Flaherty's; Greg Ahn, Folktale Group; Anna Bartolini, La Balena; Sarah Kabat-Marcy, Cultura

Committee Members Absent: Wendy Walker, ASB

Also in Attendance: Amy Herzog, Visit Carmel Exec Director; Jeff Burghardt and Nicole Dore, 62Above, Liz Bowling and Dani Hannah, The Abbi Agency; Dale Byrne, Carmel Cares; Gian Pepe, Pepe International; Caroline Singer, Foray.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: Anthony Carnazzo called the meeting to order at 2:34 PM

Public Comment: Pepe brought up that perhaps a different time of day would be a better time to have the meeting to increase attendance. Dale discussed his Verified Clean Air initiative. Have about 12 restaurants currently signed up, 5 are fully installed. Goal is to reach a critical mass so we can claim to be the first Clean Air Verified City for our restaurants. The WYND company has a national PR campaign.

Minutes: Anthony called for approval of the minutes from December 14, 2021. Greg made motion to approve, Pepe seconded. Approved unanimously.

Need for Virtual Meetings: Amy discussed the new AB361 Brown Act requirements to discuss if the group feels the need to maintain the option for virtual meetings, if in the best interest of the health and safety of the community. It was decided that for today's meeting we would continue the virtual set up. The we will call a 5-min meeting for end of March to address the topic again as it pertains to our April meeting date.

Nomination of Chairperson:

- Amy brought up the one-year term for the single Officer position for the Committee, which is Chairperson. Amy opened discussion or a motion for nominating a Chairperson. Pepe nominated Anthony for one more year, if he would agree. Greg seconded. Anthony accepted graciously.
- Amy again discussed a goal being to get more involvement from other restaurateurs.

Executive Director report:

- Amy informed group that our marketing team is now at a new agency called 62Above, and that Visit Carmel has signed new agreements with 62Above as well as The Abbi Agency.
- Amy had one-on-one meetings with new owners of Pangaea Grill and Chez Noir.
- GourmetFest postponed until 2023

Culinary Week Debrief:

- Reminder of our original objectives for the event.
- Reviewed metrics which were significantly lower than compared to 2020.
- Clearly the event was impacted by the COVID surge that hit at the exact same week as the event. There were 19% less passports downloaded, significantly less special events offered, thus many less special event tix sold (and some events cancelled).
- “Local” attendees made up 44% of the passport holders v. 58% from two years ago. 18% were from greater Bay area.
- **Committee feedback:** Sarah thought pins and posters helped open the conversation with the customer. But hard to gauge without requiring the check-ins. Anthony felt that a lot of attendees found out about it via his restaurant’s channels but then were excited to know about it. Greg felt a lot had heard about it, but weren’t here or out b/c of it. People knew of it but there was something lacking in terms of actionability. Also, navigating the deals was not easy on the passport. Anna reported they sold out of pies at their pop up but had lots of COVID cases amongst staff and basically couldn’t participate. Gian agreed the tech was too complicated and too much to do with such a small attendance. Greg wants to make it more robust and bigger and something that draws people out.
- **Amy and Ad/PR agencies feedback:** Propose moving it one week later in January in order to have more time after the holidays to pull it together, plus maybe netter to move away from MLK weekend. It’s the same week as Napa’s restaurant week, perhaps we can align our marketing? Agree that the tech is tricky. Jeff is going to explore if we can create our own custom interface via our current web company. We may have to make an initial investment but then we save later. Also the restaurants would prefer to sell their own tix so they don’t lose such a large % to Bandwango. Perhaps we can integrate with an EventBrite for the ticket sales. Greg suggested a way to have an alert pop up that tells you the offerings when you enter the restaurant. Kick off party is the right idea, but next year let’s simplify it more. Suggest continue to work with the Plaza but maybe not incorporate MCVGA. Also discussed if January is even the best month to have it, as the state is not putting as much behind CA Restaurant Month. Amy brought up the idea of sponsorship, and Anthony mentioned paying attention to brand alignment. Will look into airlines (also cars, alcohol, ag, credit card company) as possibility.
- **Surveys were sent to attendees, restaurants and hotels:** Need to push hotels harder to include the graphic in reservation email confirmations for instance. 74 attendee responses indicated that there were some who came from out of town, and all would def or maybe attend again (no “no’s”). What was liked the most was 1) prix fixe, 2) passport, 3) comp items. Trying new restaurants was liked but some feedback was that it wasn’t compelling enough of offers. Social media was the leading source of info. Making use of promotional materials was helpful. Sarah suggested perhaps we have two or three tiers of offers to make the easier to digest for the guest and possibly easier for the restaurant to choose and then be creative within the three choices. Jeff suggested if we had our own tech we can be more flexible with the offers. Each can just do what they want.

Marketing Update:

- Jeff reviewed stats comparing web visits from 7/21-2/22 against pre-COVID 7/19-2/20. Web traffic coming to home page increased 20%. But what's amazing is with ad dollars spent, the restaurants page has had an 86% growth.
- Jeff posed the question about the individual dynamic carousel ads (which we have been doing), because of the algorithms some restaurants have fared better than others. We can either rework the individual ads to have less in the carousel, change the order and possibly change out some photos, OR we can go to a more general "Dine in Carmel" type ad. The committee preferred to stick with the individual ad approach. They are targeting high zip codes for locals and visitors as well as core market out of area. Gian suggested we look at the photos to see if the lower performing ads could be more engaging. Plus we will remove the dynamic component to control the exposure in order to strive for more equity.

Public Relations/Social Media Update:

- Dani reviewed the Culinary Week outreach which included press releases, pitches, an op-ed and media visits.
- Nora Tart had to cancel her visit due to COVID, but food writer Alyssa Fitzgerald (Real Simple and Forbes) was on site and is currently pitching stories.
- Other CCW hits included stories in the Monterey Herald, Edible MB, 7x7, MC Weekly, and Visit Cal included Carmel as top wine destination.
- Coming up is Noel Burgess, an influencer and wine writer. Here Feb 18.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting:

Is there a better day or time to have the CRID meeting? Should we bring Sunset Center into our Carmel Culinary Week plans? Maybe there is a movie week (Big Night, Chef?) including family night showing of Ratatouille?

Meeting adjourned at 4:18 pm.