



CARMEL HOSPITALITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CHID)

VISIT CARMEL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Via zoom

Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921

Thursday, January 13, 2021

2:30 PM

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Rich Pepe, Chip Rerig, Mark Watson, Candace Fecteau, John Lloyd, Mary Crowe, Greg Ahn, Michael LaPier, Carrie Theis

Board Members Absent: Chris Whitman, Pamela Sheppard

Also in Attendance: Amy Herzog, Visit Carmel Executive Director; Tim Twomey, CRA; Ashlee Wright, City of CBTS; Trevor Birba, Angela Rudolph and Dani Hannah, Abbi Agency; Jeff Burghardt, Nicole Dore, Gregory Carson and Bryan Tracey, 62Above; Suzanne Gravelle, CARS; Lindsey Stevens, MCCVB; Graeme Robertson, CRA; Janine Chicourrat, CRA.

Rich Pepe called the Meeting to order 2:33pm

Public Comment: None

Minutes: **John Lloyd made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 16, 2021 regular meeting. Chip Rerig seconded the motion.** Motion passes unanimously. **Candace Fecteau made a motion to approve the Closed Session minutes from December 16, 2021. Chip Rerig seconded the motion.** Motion passes unanimously.

Brown Act Discussion: Amy Herzog reviewed the updates to the Brown Act with the Board. Visit Carmel and CRID must have a discussion every 30 days regarding the format for upcoming meetings and whether they will be held virtually, in-person or a hybrid version. A vote must be taken each time. **Chip Rerig made a motion to adopt the updated procedures and approve the voting process. Mark Watson seconded the motion.** Motion passes unanimously.

MCCVB Update: Lindsey Stevens reported

- On the highlights from July through December 2021 which included the performance of the Now is the Moment Campaign. Lindsey gave the Board a brief overview of the SMARI Study which measured the marketing impact of the campaign. Three highlights included: an excellent rating on the creative aspect, a huge return on long haul markets and the campaign generated 1/3 of the leisure room demand in the County.
- On the highlights of the Social Media campaigns which featured Carmel Culinary Week. 8 Blog posts featured CBTS in 2021. Earned media had 485 placements with good coverage of CBTS.
- A review of the Spring Campaign includes: All-In Group; a return of Now is the Moment Campaign with a focus on the drive and regional markets; launch of the New Luxury Campaign

and ARPA County funding will help expand existing programs but will focus on 6 pillars – County advertising, Wine Country Promotion, Agritourism/ Heritage Promotion, Meetings/Conferences, Sustainable/Responsible Tourism and Air Service Promotion.

- Virtual Visitor Center will launch February 1, 2021

Chip Rerig asked about feedback from the MCCVB regarding the hiring of 62Above. Feedback has been positive overall. MCCVB will remain vigilant that there remains account separation while creating a cohesive and aligned marketing approach.

Executive Director's Report: Amy reported

- Old business – two board members are missing forms for the new fiscal year. She is still working on finalizing the agreements with both agencies.
- On Stakeholder Communication for January
- Culinary Week launch party has been cancelled. Amy has reduced the marketing and promotion staff coming to support the event. To date 850 mobile downloads. Amy and Jeff will intercept any Launch patrons. Everything but the Children's event is still on schedule. Focus will be on both visitors and locals with a focus on local publicity.
- Airport Update – holiday traffic was the busiest in 7 years. The airport expects to announce a new carrier in Spring. There are issues with the flight to Phoenix. Carriers are struggling with staffing due to the pandemic.
- Survey of Occupancy and Rate Forecast – 51% Occupancy January / ADR \$262 – February was higher. 16% increase over last year in occupancy and 33% increase in ADR.
- Upcoming important dates: Feb 10th – Open nominations of Officer positions. March 10th – Close nominations of Officer Positions. April 14th – Election of Board Officers.

Marketing and Advertising: Jeff Burghardt and Nicole Dore reported:

- Announced the addition of Bryan Tracey to the 62Above team
- Review of the 2021 Digital Campaign showed a 23.5% increase in traffic to the Direct Bookings and an estimated \$4Million ROI. Google had a .60% CTR (6X higher than industry avg) and FB had 1.52% CTR (2X higher than industry avg). 41% increase in Web traffic.
- A photography brand refresh on the website is scheduled for February.
- Fly Market Campaign had a .94% CTR (9X the industry avg) with Phoenix, Las Vegas and Dallas as the top three markets respectively. Seattle and Denver had the highest growth between 2020 and 2022. Monterey Airport has not decided on their contribution level for the new fiscal year. Currently, VC is funding the campaign 100% while they wait for the airport funds. The campaign has reduced the funds proportionately and removed Las Vegas for the time being. After some discussion about the funding contribution going forward, both agencies reported the strategy is sound and the Board agreed.
- Review of Culinary Week marketing strategy which includes banners down Ocean Ave; free mobile passport; ads in the Pine Cone; brochures, posters and signage distribution to Stakeholders; eblast and newsletter in Edibles; and Google display ads on FB and IG.

Public Relations and Social Media: Dani Hannah reported

- Review of December 2021 activity- focus was on the holiday experience and Carmel Culinary Week. CBTS had 9 media placements. Key hostings included: Jennifer Chan for T&L and Lonely Planet; Amanda Kuehn for Newsweek and 7x7 and a Visit CA influencer from Mexico.
- Culinary Week strategy shift to local and regional media with a large focus on local outlets and food writers including Edible Monterey and Monterey Herald.

Angela Rudolph recapped social media activity for December. SM saw lower engagement rate but increased followers across all channels.

Financial Report: Mark Watson reported VC has \$956K in working capital. December results were a bit off budget projections and Mark is attributing that to the closure of several properties for renovation in

CBTS, \$300K in income vs \$314K. PR spending was on track and is \$2K ahead YTD. Marketing spending came close and is \$1500 ahead YTD. Sales was way under projections due to the lack of spending for the Steward Destination program. Admin was on target. YTD overall expenses are under by \$8900 and Cash flow is under by \$9800. At the end of the year cash in the bank was \$956K.

Parting comments included: Mark Watson requested some updated images be accessible on the VC online gallery. Michael LaPier stated leisure travel is the #1 driver of business and is projected to be the case for the next 5 years.

Additions to the Agenda: None

Meeting Adjourned at 4:18pm