



CARMEL HOSPITALITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CHID)
VISIT CARMEL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING
Sunset Center, Chapman Room and on Zoom
Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921
Thursday, October 12, 2023
2:00 PM

MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Pam Sheppard, Horizon Inn; Mark Watson, Inns-by-the-Sea; Chip Rerig, City of Carmel; Carrie Theis, Hofsas House; Amy Herzog, Executive Director; Candace Fecteau, Tradewinds Inn/Stilwell Hotel, Chris Whitman, Pali Society; Mary Crowe, La Playa; Greg Ahn, Seventh and Dolores/Folktale.

Also in Attendance:

Jeff Burghardt & Nicole Dore, Visit Carmel; Dani Hannah, Abbi Whitaker, Ty Whitaker, The Abbi Agency; Tim Twomey, CRA; Lance Wills, Chamber of Commerce; Dale Byrne, Carmel Cares (virtual); Annelise Nussbacher, Sunset Center; Hella Rothwell, Carmel Art Festival; Amrish Patel, chair of See Monterey.

Board Members Absent: Michael La Pier; Monterey Airport; Rich Pepe, Pepe International.

Pam Sheppard called the Meeting to order at 2:03 pm.

Brand Research Report:

Comprehensive report of the data collected and analyzed during the Brand Research efforts.

- 3,409 Visitor Surveys
- 3,200 Visitor Credit Card Transaction Data
- 460 Brand Awareness Surveys in SF, LA, Dallas & Seattle
- 81 Resident Surveys
- 37 Stakeholder Surveys
- 12 Travel, Consumer & Technology Trends
- 6 Compset Audits
- 2+ Years IP Data

Overarching Objective

- Ensure the brand platform for Visit Carmel sets it apart from the competition and resonates with the primary target audience.

Components of Analysis

- Travel, Consumer & Technology Trends & Data
- Target Visitor Surveys & Data
- DMO Purpose & Compset Audits

Travel Trends

- Off the grid travel
- Unique and personalized experiences
- Nostalgic Travel
- Wellness/mindfulness
- Bucket List Trips

Culture - Technology Trends

- Mobile First 65.6%
- Vertical Video
- AI written stories

Follow the money – From Outlook Conference

- Baby boomers - 50% of the wealth
- Generation X – 25%
- Millennials 6%
- X and Boomers have large majority of wealth traveling
- Facebook still dominating the SM
 - 65 + mostly engaged in FB
 - 63% of consumers trust influencers more than the brand

Culture Takeaways

- Carmel delivers off-the-grid, personalized experiences and provides nostalgia (e.g. anniversaries), wellness/mindfulness, and purpose-driven travel.
- Continue a mobile-first strategy and expand “Boomer” promotions to increase off-season and midweek overnight stays and in-market spend.
- Focus on higher performing social media and leverage new influencers.

Data Sources:

- Visitor Survey 3409
- Brand Awareness Survey 460
- Visit Carmel Stakeholder Survey 37
- Madden Voyage IP data Source (2 years)
- Epsilon 93921 Transaction Data 3200 total spend \$581K

Primary Questions:

- How do our visitors perceive Carmel-by-the-Sea?
- What do they like most about Carmel?
- Where do they stay and how do they book lodging?
- Where do our visitors live and how do they spend?
- What are the highest valued visitors and markets?
- What type of Vacation best fits:
 - Charming relaxing beautiful -
 - Relaxing - 87.44%
 - Romantic – 67.22%
 - Food and Wine - 56.44%
 - Outdoor - 53.13 %
 - Friends 40%
- Top reasons to Visit
 - Explore Village
 - Sightseeing
 - Restaurants
 - Beach

Top Marketing lines:

- Hidden Gem
- Get inspired, be in love and reconnect with life in Carmel by the Sea.

Top Markets

CA, TX, NV, AZ, WA

In CA:

SF-Oak-San Jose 32.3%

Sacramento 15.4%

LA – 8.9%

Fresno – 7.2% (unexpected)

Website visitors

SF - 19.3%

LA - 13.43%

Sac - 5.34%

Overall Visitors

30% Out of State

68% from in state

74% stayed overnight.

Average Length of Stay 2.0 nights (Rounded)

Discussion of High Value Markets and capitalizing on those areas with ad spend.

Discussion of Epsilon Campaign Summary using visitor spend from an 83-day period.

Discussion of Company Analysis and Insights and compset analysis along with Key Takeaways using the acquired data

Public Comment:

Dale Byrne –Announcing Town Hall October 23rd

Hella Rothwell – Looking for Hotels to provide a discount for incoming artists for next year’s event with stay dates between May 13 – 20

Dale Byrne informed Board of installation of new Butt collectors around town. If any properties want one please reach out to Dale or Carmel Cares. Carmelcares1@gmail.com

Minutes:

Mary Crowe motion for approval of minutes from August 10, Chip Rerig seconded, none opposed, no abstain, minutes accepted

Nominations:

3 Board Member terms coming up for renewal in November. Additional advisory member also suggested.

Motion to accept the new nomination of Lance Wills from Carmel Chamber from Chip Rerig, seconded by Pam. Chip Rerig commented that he is very happy to see the Chamber becoming involved in the Visit Carmel Board once again. He feels the benefits are great to both.

Unanimous approval for additional of Lance Wills, Carmel Chamber of Commerce.

Monterey Regional Airport update:

Federal Grant of \$750K awarded to MRY in support of obtaining a Direct flight from Chicago Airport committing \$150K

Timing would be a launch in May of 2024 at the earliest.

Next step is a meeting with AA in Dallas. United is in discussions with MRY as well.

Board indicated its support in moving forward with securing this flight route.

Side note that October on pace to be a record setting month at MRY.

Executive Director Report: Amy Herzog reported:

Busy Two Months

- Car Week
- Annual Report and marketing plan
- Brand image concept and video/photoshoot
- TAA content gathering on site
- Taste of Carmel marketing support
- Fall destination campaign
- Meet the Makers event production and marketing
- New RID marketing ideas/shift
- Hired local Social Media creator – integrated into the current budget and team
 - Veronica (local person) who also has @carmelbytheseaca
- Best Kept Carmel Phase II concepts

Administrative

- 2021-22 Tax return filed
- 22-23 Annual report - Completed
- 23-24 Marketing plan - Completed

Community Relations - Upcoming Meetings and presentations

- Chamber Board Meeting – Nov 16
- CRA Board
- Carmel Rotary
- CRA led – “Carmel Quartet” roundtable

Stakeholders’ communications highlighted.

Food Wine and Art update includes Photo shoot at Annex coming up

Destination Stewardship

- Working with Visit California advisory committee on stewardship travel
- Providing at wholesale to Visitor Center new merch for sale with Love Carmel like a local
- Amy Herzog completed Sustainable Tourism course.

Cal Travel Summit – Brief outline of topics

Takeaway – CA is still #1 in travel in country (in spending).

Central Coast Tourism Council

\$60K matching grant for marketing was approved.

Meeting for October 22-23 will be attended by Amy Herzog

Upcoming Meetings

November 9 – Visit Carmel Board meeting – renew board members & See Monterey update
December meeting changed to Dec 7 (editor's note: since changed to Nov 30)

- Budget review
- Reappoint CRID committee.
- Closed session for performance review for marketing director

January meeting Jan 11 at La Playa

- Annual Meeting
- Year in review/winter campaign/integrated marketing

Marketing Report: Jeff Burghardt presented:

Web traffic

up 13% users

16% new users

Referrals

2023 outpacing 21 and 22 for referrals currently at 188K

Fall Advertising campaign

Monterey County premier Wine tasting getaway – Here's why -

Harvest season

Largest premium wine regions

Carmel by the Sea is the premier wine tasting jewel of the county.

Napa visitors "I had no idea about Carmel's wine tasting"

Sep - October 15 – TV adds

Promos on KTLA sweepstakes promotion

Digital 2.09 CTR

You Tube 50 .0CTR

Facebook Instagram 1.64 CTR

Brand Refresh

Americas most whimsical Town

Plan your fairytale getaway.

Top Anniversary Destination in the world

Plan your storybook anniversary!

New Meet the makers brochure shown with 17 art galleries this year

New digital adds

CTR 2.64 Drive market

CTR 4.62 Local market

RID Marketing

- 8-page magazine section handout and in Carmel magazine addition
- Every Restaurant is going to have their own vertical video shoot
- No additional funding as this is taking over previous digital campaign

Annual report marketing findings showing effectiveness of current direction of marketing showing increases over LY in many important metrics

Other projects

- New and renovated hotels

- Mastercard Priceless promotion
- Carmel Food and Wine Passport – Laguna Seca

Public Relations Report: Abbi and Dani Hannah reports:

Abbi presented that in September the agency sent 173 pitches

Themes included

- Hotels press release
- Secret Season
- Meet the makers invites
- Meet the makers media alert

Brief outline of FAMs in September

Updates from September immersion Trip for Abbi Agency

Placement highlights –

- Luxury Travel
- Visit California

Best Kept Carmel

“By highlighting key destination drivers (arts, culinary, wellness’) and telling a character driven story the series drives the viewers to explore each facet of the Carmel Experience”

Key players for next round – 4 videos and 6 blog posts planned

- Bohemian Nouveau
- Culinary Couples
- Michelin Stars by the sea

All SM engagement up for the month

YOY down in impressions and engagements but up in followers

Social Care highlights average response 1 day

Top Social media performers highlighted.

Financial Report:

Total in bank \$1.461M

Revenue – low down about \$12 K YTD

Expenses – down \$20K YTD

Marketing – over \$32K YTD

Sales – Under \$12.6K YTD

Admin – down \$1K

Net cash – \$10K YTD (\$48K for September)

Additions to Agenda:

Pam Sheppard adjourned Open Session meeting at 4:27