



CARMEL HOSPITALITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CHID)

VISIT CARMEL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

Sunset Center, Babcock Room and on Zoom

Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921

Thursday, May 16, 2024

2:30 PM

MINUTES

Board Members Present:

Mark Watson, Inns-by-the-Sea; Chip Rerig, City of Carmel; Amy Herzog, Executive Director; Greg Ahn, Folktale; Pam Sheppard, Horizon Inn; Mary Crowe, Marc+Rose; Michael La Pier; Monterey Airport.

Also in Attendance:

Jeff Burghardt, Visit Carmel; Nicole Dore, Visit Carmel; Abbi Whitaker, Dani Hannah, Brittany Bober (virtual), The Abbi Agency; Tim Twomey, CRA; Ashlee Wright, City of Carmel (virtual); Randy Tunnell, photographer; Kenneth Spilfogel, Flaherty's Seafood; Kati Enea, Carmel Chamber; April Montgomery, Links Club.

Board Members Absent: Carrie Theis, Hofsas House; Rich Pepe, Pepe International; Candace Fecteau, Tradewinds Inn/Stilwell Hotel.

Pam Sheppard, Chair, called the Meeting to order at 2:33 pm.

Public Comment:

Annalise with the Sunset Center announced some pre-programming going on. Also the Friday night Terrace Hour is going on. Member Party to announce next season.

Randy Tunnell, local photographer, showed his coffee table book featuring artists of Carmel and Big Sur, and announced some upcoming signing events. Feels it is a great asset for Visit Carmel to use to promote the artistic heritage.

Minutes:

Mark Watson motioned to accept minutes from April 11, 2024, seconded by Mary Crowe. Passed unanimously.

Nomination Committee:

Amy asked for two board members to volunteer to be on an Ad Hoc Nominating Committee. Greg Ahn volunteered. Mark stepped up as an alternate if no one else is available to serve. Need to replace Chris Whitman as a hotel rep board member, plus handling board member renewals or term outs.

Executive Director Report:

Amy and possibly Jeff to present at City Council budget workshop to secure the City investment. Also the contract between City and Visit Carmel is up for renewal at end of June.

Annual insurance policies renewed.

Chamber has started monthly billing to support Visit Center operations.

Signed a service agreement with a temp agency in the case that we have small projects with which we need help.

Carmel Culinary Week - Shaping up nicely. 40 participating restaurants (30 last year). More events, menus and offers than last year as well. Free Farmer's Market event. Pub Crawl. NBC CA Live will be in town. Kick Off Party looking really good as well with 18 participating restaurants.

Visit California paying good attention to us. Visits to collect content for digital campaigns and social media. Encouraged Visit Carmel to apply to be the location for the next Sundance Film Festival, but didn't make it to RFP round.

Upcoming Info and Meetings:

June 20

- Refined Marketing plan
- Present Final FY 24 – 25 Budget – Approve

July 18 - At Stilwell Hotel!

Marketing Update:

Jeff Burghardt presented the marketing update for April/Q3.

Recap of the elements affecting 2024 results

- Extensive Consumer Research & Surveys
- New "Storybook Kind of Place" Campaign
- Added Mountain CTV and KQED Check Please Media
- Optimized Digital Media with Madden Media
- New Website Launch with Quicker Access to Content
- New Hotel Offers & Packages Landing Page (i.e. Book Direct)
- New Culinary Week Microsite
- Added Sunset Magazine as Culinary Week Sponsor

Q3 Results/Metrics

Paid digital ads results in more than 53% of traffic to our website. Most of the rest is organic search.

April was another record month of web traffic with 107K users – a 14% increase YOY.

Traffic for Q3 (Jan – Apr) is up 13% in views, 8% in users and 28% in engagement time YOY.

Here are the top 5 landing pages in growth:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------|
| 1. Homepage | +38.19% |
| 2. Restaurant Page | +97.06% |
| 3. Hotels & Inns Page | -22.52% |
| 4. Things to Do Page | +41.10% |
| 5. Hotel Offers & Rates Page | +708.88% |

Also hitting records in hotel referrals/hand offs via our website.

Focus for summer: We Need Summer Longer Stay Offers & Packages!

Quick discussion of the KQED event. Was really well done and successful. Will continue ads on that show in Fall.

Culinary Week Marketing – presented the paid media mix for Culinary Week, which is mostly Bay area, regional and local.

New 30 sec TV spot.

New responsive website performing very well – top landing page for May 1-12.

Rounded out by digital social media ads and eblasts to our consumer list as well as Edible Monterey Bay.

IP Data – touched on info from Placer AI. Need a workshop or ad hoc committee to really dig in to this.

Public Relations Update:

Dani Hannah presented April Public Relations update.

Brief discussion of the Taylor Swift visit which resulted in an incredible amount of media attention and social engagement: 886 media placements, 628 national placements, 258 international placements - reaching 20.6 billion.

In April, TAA's PR messaging included the following media outreach themes:

- Spring Road Trips
- Nostalgic Travel: A fairytale Escape
- Carmel Culinary Week

The Abbi Agency had 34 media placements this month, with great features in T+L, AAA, and Sunset Mag. Media fam in April with Melinda Fulmer who writes for Publications: LATimes, AFAR, Robb Report. And also James Barrett (a result of IMM) who writes for Elle Decor, Redbook, Harper's Bazaar, Men's Health, And Country Living. And there are at least 6 upcoming fams scheduled for the next two months.

Best Kept Carmel multi media series - In April, Greg and Madigan Ahn of 7th & Dolores, the Annex and Folktale were highlighted in the second feature of the series. June will highlight Yulanda Santos of Aubergine.

Social Media is up across the board. April saw more than 6.5M impressions (13.5% increase over previous month); 42K engagements; net audience growth of 5K (55% increase over last month).

Impressions for Visit Carmel fluctuate throughout April, due to the success of video content on the platform. Engagements for Visit Carmel are highest on Instagram, due to the success of video content on the platform and users on Instagram wanting to engage with video content more. Video content is crucial for Visit Carmel's social media channels because it provides an engaging and immersive way for potential visitors to experience the beauty and charm of Carmel-by-the-Sea. Video content for Visit Carmel has proved to be very successful month over month and will be continued in the coming months.

Financial and Comp Set Report:

Mark reported that we had \$1.277M in the bank at end of April. TOT bringing in more revenue than projected. Playing catch up on PR and Marketing spending.

On the comp set report for Jan-Feb, Carmel fared quite well. Only Carmel and Santa Barbara were up in RevPar YOY, with Carmel up 15% and Santa Barbara up 8%. Also in Occupancy, Carmel was up 10%, Monterey and SLO down 2% by comparison. Calistoga down 14%! Trend on 12-month moving average,

every comp set looks lower than what it was in 2019. All are fractionally down. Average rate was up 4%, Monterey up 1%, everyone else was down. Overall Carmel had very nice gain in market share.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Pam suggests we add the creation of an Ad Hoc Comm to look at managed parking. Also suggested we have a hotel stakeholder dinner. Perhaps even have some speakers to discuss trends and what might be coming down the road. Mary volunteered La Playa as a location for the dinner.

Pam adjourned the regular meeting at 3:26 pm and suggested a brief break before resuming in a CLOSED session.