



CARMEL HOSPITALITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CHID)

VISIT CARMEL

BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING

Sunset Center and on Zoom

Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921

Thursday, February 20, 2025

2:30 PM

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Pam Sheppard, Horizon Inn and OVL; Mark Watson, Inns-by-the-Sea; Carrie Theis, Hofsas House; Amy Herzog, Executive Director; Candace Fecteau, Stilwell Hotels; Mary Crowe, La Playa; Rich Pepe, Pepe International (virtual); Greg Ahn (virtual); Folktale, Mark Stilwell (virtual) Stilwell Hotels; Tim Twomey, CRA; Kati Enea, Carmel Chamber.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Jeff Burghardt, Visit Carmel, Nicole Dore, Brittany Bober, Dani Hannah, Ty Whitaker, The Abbi Agency (virtual); Suzanne Gravelle, CARS; Bob Delves, City Council; Annelise, Sunset Center; Raoul Lopez, Good Roots Events, Graeme Robertson, Ken Spilfogel, Flaherty's; Nile Estep, Good Roots; Chris Mitchell and Ryan Aeschliman, Esperanza; Hella Rothwell, Carmel Art Festival; Monica Munoz, L'Auberge (virtual).

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Chip Rerig, City of Carmel.

Pam Sheppard, Chairperson, called the Meeting to order at 2:30 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Intros made around the room. Sunset Center announcement of upcoming events. Hella updated Carmel Art Festival.

MINUTES:

Mark Watson made a motion to accept the minutes from December 19, 2024, with two non-substantive changes. Carrie Theis seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF CLOSED SESSION

During the closed session it was determined that Jeff Burghardt will be contracted to continue as Marketing and Media Director of Visit Carmel. Nicole Dore will continue to act in support of this effort on a project/hourly basis.

CULINARY WEEK

5TH Annual Culinary week this year. Brief history of Culinary Week offered by Amy Herzog. Reasoning for move to June discussed. Mission for this year and future discussed by Jeff Burghardt.

Ticket sales starting earlier. Collateral being provided to hotels earlier in the process in order to assist with promotions. This year we are using Good Roots to assist in the Culinary Week event.

Good Roots offered basic outline of plans for this year's Carmel Culinary Week.

- Friday, May 30 – Party on the Plaza – Kick off
- Tuesday, June 3 – The Spice of Life
- Wednesday, June 4 – Fresh from the Sea – LA Playa
- Thursday, June 5 – Culinary Showdown at Farmers Market
- Friday, June 6 - A world of Flavors – Dolores North

Soft launch of tickets sales and marketing on March 3rd – hotels

Main Launch - Week of March 10

Naming of events opened to discussion.

The Spice of Life - La Festa Bella/ Pasta, Vino & Amore/ Festa de Dolores

Fresh from the Sea – Soiree by the Sea/Land & Sea Soiree / Tide to Table

A World of Flavors – Boho Bites & Beats/ Bites & Delights / Sizzle and Swirl

Advertising

Sunset Magazine

Carmel Magazine

Edible Monterey Bay

PR & Social

CCW press release

Pitching to regional media

Sourcing influencers

Short form Video Content – live footage of previous

Live footage of event

Discussion of pre-selling the event through hotel websites and restaurants.

Culinary Showdown event outlined.

Flyers posters and hand out being prepared for hotels and other outlets.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Highlights from Annual Meeting

A lot of new attendees to annual meeting

Topics:

- **Visit Carmel Updates**
 - New advisory board members rep CRA and CCC
 - Staying competitive/Self-sustaining funding
 - Enhanced efficiency, effectiveness, and cohesion.
- **Marketing**
 - 2024 review of record-breaking results
 - 2025 Campaign components and media mix
 - Fly market and restaurant campaigns
 - Events and experiences

- **Destination Stewardship**
 - Outreach with community partners
 - Retail program @ Chamber VC
 - Ambassador Program
- **Public Relations and Social Media**
 - Overview of Top Tier results
 - FAMs, esp Fly Market and Skip Gen
 - Social Media process incl
- **Focus for 2025**
 - More hotels under renovation
 - Balance of drive and fly markets
 - Culinary scene/Carmel Culinary Week
 - strengthening collabs w/community orgs

2025 Focus and updates

Destination Marketing

Hotels – increasing push for longer stays

Art – heritage, galleries and artists better defined

Experiences – new itineraries, new web content

Love Carmel Swag – Agreement between Visit Carmel and Carmel Chamber for consignment sales.
Setting aside 10% of profit to be donated to community organization

Stakeholder updates

Kori Wines – closed

Tira Nanza – new **tasting** room in March

Vin-by-the-Sea opening in March

Chef Jonny Black – James Beard Finalist

Carmel Belle- new ownership

Forge and LA Balena closed

Hog's Breath under reno through May

Carmel International Film Festival Oct 2- 5

Board Member Update

Michael La Pier retiring - sent his letter updating status

PR and Social Media RFP

About 100 inquiries

5 companies chosen for further exploration by

Ad Hoc Committee of Amy Herzog, Mary Crowe, Jeff Burghardt and Candace Fecteau

Possible dates for presentations to full board

AT&T golf tournament radio interview

Stakeholder Newsletter

Group and Partnership Opportunity – CalPresenters bringing approximately 300 room nights with approx. ½ booking within village

See Monterey launched new Website

MCHA Membership Lunch outline presented. Mark Watson offered praise for organization.

Beginning of March – **California Outlook** Forum to be attended by Amy Herzog and Jeff Burghardt.

Upcoming:

March 2 & 3 Visit California Outlook Summit
March 11- 13 Closed Sessions for PR RFP presentations
March 20 – Regular Board Meeting
 Nominating officers
April 17 – Board Meeting
Draft FY 25 – 26 Budget
Elect Officers for one year Term

MARKETING UPDATE:

Jeff Burghardt presented the marketing update.

Storybook Campaign
TV Media 7,896 spots ran and 16+M impressions
Custom Segment NBC – 2 ½ minutes (video shown)

CTV Media (mntn)

- 1.7 M impressions
- 1.6M completed views
- 5.6 frequency
- 6.2K verified visits from CTV media

Digital Media

Google

- 9.5 M impressions
- 110K clicks
- 1.15% CTR (google benchmark .20%)

Meta

- 6.4 M impressions
- 114K clicks
- 1.79% CTR

Video and Carousel Ads 2.6 CTR – (1.0 benchmark)

- Eblasts
- Google Ads 300% increase YOY
- Meta 182% increase YOY
- Newsletter 286% increase YOY

Print Ads

- Sactown
- SF Chronicle

Fly Market - 3.1 M engagements

Co-op with See Monterey

Website Traffic

61% increase YOY Jan

105% increase YOY February

Exceeded **100,000** "New Users" per Month in 2024

Hotel Package results:

Huge increases YOY

Hotel Listings – Look at streamlining the User Experience

Try to map directly to offers – Best Practice for Hotels

New Photography for old images with some stakeholders being undertaken

Continued efforts to extend stays

Example from 3rd night free promotions from Santa Barbara highlighted

Possibilities for Carmel -

Discussion of potential and probability of participation

Restaurant Reel shots continuing – RID

New Dining Guide being distributed

Carmel Wine Walk Campaign

New app

Traffic showing over 400% increase YOY

Retail Sales

Destination Stewardship – Love Carmel like a Local stand – Swag at Chamber

Brand Marketing - 12 Minute Video -- can be used by any stakeholders

Art Walk – Brochure Update

Performance during AT&T Pro Am discussed – consensus that business was down village wide

PUBLIC RELATIONS UPDATE:

Dani Hannah and Brittany Bober presented:

Wall Street Journal - Inside Carmel -by-the-Sea – real estate article just published

Discussion of how narrative was controlled.

January

Wellness Focus

4 media placements – Hotels Above Par, The Observer, Punch

Domain Authority of 51

695K reach

IMM attendance in NYC overview

Follow-ups in progress – history, art focus. Collabs with See Monterey.
10+ FAM hosting leads in progress
30 + media members identified for target audiences
2 upcoming Fams – freelancer and Elle

Social Media

For January

16 M impressions
7.41 % engagement rate
24% increase YOY
2713 net audience growth
500% increase

Best performing stakeholder postings highlighted
Showing increases across the board for all outlets

Mention that Facebook is still our targeted Demographic more than other outlets. Great engagement on an historical post about Sunset Center.

Mark mentioned might be interesting to see ROI on impressions per dollar.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Presented by Mark Watson.

Balance Sheet

\$1.169 M total assets as of January

Revenue Budget YTD - \$117K ahead. Hotels are up by 9% and restaurants up by 6%.
PR expenses - \$21K under
Marketing - \$42K under
Sales and Promotion - on budget
Administration - \$3K under Budget

\$64K less in anticipated expenses for year

Comp Set

- Draft report (Calistoga not reporting)
- Carmel up 10% RevPAR vs Santa Barbara up 12%
- 57% occupancy - 2% decrease YOY in occupancy (Monterey up 2%)
- ADR \$347 up 8% YOY – new hotels coming back online (Monterey up 3%) – Yountville down 10%
- We have 15.1% share of comp set LY don't have YTD

General discussion regarding European Travel for coming year. Potential to sell Carmel as European Village.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions

Pam Sheppard adjourned the meeting at 4:20 PM.