



CARMEL HOSPITALITY IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CHID)
VISIT CARMEL
BOARD OF DIRECTORS REGULAR MEETING
Stilwell Hotel and on Zoom
Carmel-by-the-Sea, CA 93921
Thursday, July 17, 2025
2:00 PM

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Carrie Theis, Hofsas House; Amy Herzog, Executive Director; Candace Fecteau, Stilwell Hotels; Pam Sheppard, Horizon Inn; Mark Stilwell, Stilwell Hotels; Mark Watson, Inns-by-the-Sea; Greg Ahn, Folktale; Kati Enea, Carmel Chamber; Chip Rerig, City of Carmel; Chris Morello, MRY; Tim Twomey, CRA, Susan Dampier, Marc + Rose.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Jeff Burghardt, Visit Carmel; Nicole Dore, Visit Carmel; Marrissa Mallory, Sophia Stewart, Marcella Thompson, Annika Plant, Jenna Greer, and Jordan Thomas, all of J/PR; Suzanne Gravelle, CARS (virtual); Ashlee Wright, City of Carmel; Ken Spilfogel, Flaherty's; Paige Viren, Cal State University Monterey Bay; Hans Buder, City Council; Scott Richards, Stilwell Hotels; Lindsay Stevens, See Monterey.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Rich Pepe, Pepe International

Carrie Theis, Chairperson, called the Meeting to order at 2:01 PM

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE:

Introductions of new social media and PR group J/PR. Each individual in attendance provided a brief introduction of their location and job description.

Each current board member in attendance introduced themselves including their position within the Board and property represented.

Guest attending provided a brief introduction.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Announcement of shuttle availability during Car week from Chamber of Commerce. \$40 Roundtrip. Further information to be provided. Information also available on website.

Innkeeper maps have been delivered.

Suzanne Gravelle asking for update on available rooms during Car Week.

MINUTES

Minutes from June 19 meeting were presented. Motion to Approve by Chip Rerig. Mark Watson, seconded. Approved unanimously

CARMEL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

Video played highlighting Carmel International Film Festival.

Speakers Annette Andersen and Lawrence Roeck provided highlights from upcoming festival for this year, emphasizing the festival is a celebration of the history of Carmel. Additionally, relaying that Carmel Film Festival is the oldest International Film Festival. The goal is to celebrate Carmel as well as the history of the festival. Mentions of sponsorships and inclusion of the community within the festival. Locations of theatres mentioned. Amy Herzog reiterated Visit Carmel's dedication to supporting promotion the Festival where and how it can.

SEE MONTEREY

Lindsay Stevens provided an update on See Monterey.

Three women on marketing team have been recognized in CAL Travel 30 and Under Emerging Leaders. Sandy Huerta, Marci Yeater, Hoku Young.

New Website won Hermes Award for Website Design. Up for U.S. Travel Award.

End of Year Social Media Highlights

- 206 Posts
- 125K Engagements

Owned Content

- 10 Blog Posts
- 9 Leisure E-newsletters

Public Relations

KPIs

- 75 Article Inclusions
- 16/20 Average Quality Score
- 1.4 B Impressions

Media Hosted

- 45 Media
- 10 Influences

Top Press Placements

- Travel and Leisure
- Wine Enthusiast
- The Points Guy

Leisure Campaign Results

- Generated 1.1 B in influenced spending
- Drove 546K influenced trips – up 26% YOY
- Reached 9M + households
- More than 4:1 ROI on campaign spend

Launched How 2 HWY 1

Goal to support long-term shift of messaging so HWY can be an asset regardless of Highway conditions.

Assets:

- Press release and talking points
- Flyer with map
- Landing page @ SeeMonterey.com/HOW2HWY1

Another Day in Monterey County

- April – June period
- 60K Sessions including 50K new users
- 7K partner referrals to hotels via booking links

Looking Ahead

Reach.

- Extend Reach into new and untapped markets
- Targeted Event Promotion and Development
- Reinforce Key content Pillars
- Drive Demand in International and Luxury Segments
 - Targeted UK, Mexico, Canada, Asia TBD

Luxury Strategy

- Business Development –
 - Hitting Luxury Travel Agent Associations
 - Luxury Network Partnerships
- Marketing –
 - Targeted Brand Partnerships
 - focused Media and Influencers
 - Seek and Find Advertising Campaign

Car Week Marketing - add campaign highlighted for 2025

See Monterey Annual Meeting – August 28th 3 – 5PM

REPORT OUT FROM CLOSED SESSION

Amy Herzog has been an independent Contractor for her tenure to date. After a thorough investigation with several board members, it was determined that employee was a better model for her position based specifically on State of California legal requirements.

Amy indicated appreciation of consideration but emphasized this was more about moving the organization into the future effectively.

After a Closed Board Meeting the resolution passed Unanimously to provide for Amy Herzog to become an employee of Visit Carmel.

RESOLUTION TO CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT POSITION

Motion to Approve Mark Stilwell, Second from Mark Watson

Role Call – Unanimous for acceptance with Rich Pepe marked as abstain (absent)

FINANCIALS

Year end with \$966K in bank

End of fiscal year Revenues for June (March /April budgeted)

- Beat expectations by 12%
- YOY increase up 8.2% in TOT collections
- Restaurants up 6%
- Public Relations \$393K budgeted came in at \$340K (\$52K under)
- Marketing: \$1.818 M came in at \$1.817M
- Sales and Promotion \$122K came in at \$130K due to events production
- Admin \$228K Budgeted came in at \$218K
- Total Expenses came in \$22K under YTD

COMP SET

- Rev par up 11% Carmel and Monterey everyone else flat or down
- Occupancy Up 6% Everyone else Flat or down
- ADR rate pushed to \$339 over \$324
 - Up 5% - Monterey up 3% - everyone else down

FY 25-26 BUDGET

Review of 25 – 26 Draft Budget

- Funding less from cash reserve savings by approx. \$250 K
- Recommending \$2.6 M Expected Revenue
- 2% Revenue increase YOY projected
- YOY change for expenses 12.5%
- Administrative section new – showing approx. 10% YOY increase (employee addition resolution)

Motion to accept Pam Sheppard

Seconded by Mark Watson

Passed unanimously

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

Nomination Committee

Asking for Volunteers for Board Member Renewals

Susan and Carrie accepted appointment to committee

Administrative Updates

- Business License renewed
- Transition to Employment Position – Completed
- Annual Wine Walk Fee Completed

Culinary Week

- Potential Change to June 5 – 13
- Having a “Preview Showcase” at farmers market in lieu of the showdown
- Exploring sponsorship opportunities
- Keeping it Boutique and “Carmel”

Stakeholder Communications

- June E-blast highlighted
- John Lloyd Retiring
- KQED – “Check Please” – Featuring El Bistro by the Sea

Calendar of Events updated

3 restaurants open (re-open) by car week

- Hogs Breath
- Nora’s
- Vin-by-the-Sea

Art Galleries update – Next priority

New Agency Onboarding – Immersion Tour this week

13 hotels/10 Restaurants/wine walk/Art Tour/Mad Dogs/Mission/Beach/Sunset Center/Forest Theater/Visitors Center

Car Week

- Lots of community Coordination
- Brochures printed
- Website Updated
- Tracking occupancy availability

Upcoming

- No Board meeting August
- September 18 Regular Board Meeting
- Sept 15 – 18 – J/PR Content Collection

MARKETING UPDATE: Presented by Jeff Burghardt

Wrapping up summer campaign

- Cool Carmel

Website 1.6M New Users up 44%

- Growth through Meta, Google, MNTN – Paid
- Email Blasts
- International increasing regularly
- Drive market still driving increases

CTV (MNTN)

12 months of Connected TV 10.6M commercials aired

- Staying in front of Drive Market
- Seeing LA Increasing, as well as Dallas Phoenix and Seattle
- 1.2 M household Reached
- Frequency 8.9 times per year
- Total Visits 188K driven to website through advertisements

Increasing Occupancy Strategy

- Remarketing drives to Hotels Landing page
- 405% increase YOY – Hotel Leads

Length of Stay as expected fly market longer stays

- LA
 - San Diego
 - Phoenix
 - Dallas
-
- 6.42 Occupancy rate increase YOY
 - Receipts up 8.22%

Expedia results

- 11.3 ROAS. – 771K Revenue with a 0 – 6 day booking window
- Average 2 nights
- Total room nights 2057
- Most of these are conquering from other areas

New Projects

Best of Big Sur Brochure and APP –

- web based, but obviously no service on route
- Printed needed to supplement
- Available to all hotels
- Ties in with How2Hwy1

History and Heritage Section

Brought in Clint as Mayor – new supplemental information for guests

Video of interview

Hotel Reels

Working on each hotel with individual sizzle reels – coming soon

Brand Standards

Available on Website for usage on social media, etc.

PR AND SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATE J/PR presented

First 90 days

Laying the Foundation for PR and Social Success

July

- Finalized plan for earned media strategy
- Held Destination Immersion
- Delivered interim July Content Calendar
- Provide comprehensive Social Media Playbook
- Deliver August content calendar with approved SM playbook

August

- Develop annual PR and Social strategy
- Create annual editorial calendar with approved SM playback
- Launch creative Social Campaign – Timeless Charm Worth Protecting
- Alignments with regional tourism teams and existing partners for visiting media and events

September

- Present annual PR and Social Strategy Plan
- Execute 1 – 2 influencer hosting focus girlfriend getaway and sustainability storytelling
- Execute first content mission (September 15 – 18)

Key Content Pillars – to be represented in all SM and PR

- Beach and Natural Beauty
- Whimsical Village and Storybook Charm
- Culinary Destination with Unique Restaurants
- Wine tasting and gate to premium wine region
- Health and Wellness
- Boutique Shopping
- Arts and Culture

Carrie Theis mentioned that many of these represent the Village as whole, not specifically to Hotels/Restaurants

Initial Media Feedback

Internal press release from J/PR. Sent to 600+ publications: received positive feedback already from:

- Observer
- Glamour
- Travel and Leisure
- Food and Wine
- Dossier
- San Francisco Chronicle
- Haute Living
- LA Weekly
- Conde Nast Traveler
- Hollywood Reporter
- National Geographic
- Indagare

Looking at new Fresh Audience for Travelers to Carmel

Air mail
Oltre
Substacks
Yolo Journal
Dossier
Proir

Influencer and Content Creator Hostings

Drive Revenue
Support content innovations
Derive Brand Awareness
Quantify Deliverables

Local Event Awareness on Social Media

The Art of Carmel-by-the-Sea; Share, Save, Stay

The approach allows for creation of more inspiration, reusable and shareable content
Very campaignable items to be shared

Example: Best seat in the house

Effortless Coastal Luxury in its most charming form

Encouraging responsible, sustainably minded travel in a SM friendly package. Using Reels,
Community Connection, influencers

Timeless charm worth protecting overall message

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

Carrie Theis adjourned the meeting at 4:24PM to a closed session