



CARMEL RESTAURANT IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (CRID)

COMMITTEE MEETING

Sunset Center and via Video Conference

Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 10 am

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: April Montgomery, Links Club; Gian Pepe, Pepe Int'l; Greg Ahn, 7&D; Alyssa Ross; Il Fornaio (virtual).

Committee Members Absent: Ashley Wolff, Jeju Kitchen; Sunny Shour, Marc + Rose; Monique Black, Chez Noir; Lorena Chaarani, Grill on Ocean Ave; Janet Elarmo, Aubergine.

Also in Attendance: Amy Herzog and Jeff Burghardt, Visit Carmel; Sophia Stewart, Taryn Rosenblum, Annika Berg, and Marrissa Mallory from J/PR; Nadeem, new GM at 7&D; Raul Lopez and Lauren Schaub (virtual) from Good Roots.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER: April Montgomery, chair called the meeting to order at 10:05 am.

Public Comment: Opened the meeting in honor of Kenny Spilfogel. Announced his memorial service on April 23. Ken was integral to the formation of the RID and Culinary Week.

Minutes:

There was not a quorum so vote to approve the minutes from February 10, 2025 was not taken.

Marketing Report:

Jeff provided a brief report on the latest marketing

- Locale Magazine – incl JSX sweepstakes
- Updated the Dining Guide – these are distributed throughout Carmel esp via the hotels
- Paid digital sizzle reels on Meta and Google run in Tri county and Bay area

PR/Social Media Report:

Annika reviewed some of social ongoing campaigns

- Best Seat in the House campaign
- Stay and Seek – build itineraries for different types of travelers
- By the Sea, By the Plate – hoping to work with locals
- Q&As in the Broadcast Channel
- Ongoing partner story reshares – daily basis

Also reviewed content highlights since February

- Incl W Mag "Insider's Guide to Carmel" press highlight
- CCW

- Round up of tours and experiences
- PBF&W – featured Carmel chefs
- Best Seat in the House featured Brophy's

Taryn reviewed earned media highlights

- Town & Country mag
- Observer – hosted Allie Lebos
- Eater SF – hosted Matt Kang resulting in steady stream of coverage
- SF Gate – highlights Stationaery
- T+L – spotlights CCW

Carmel Culinary Week:

J/PR discussed the social side. Ramping up cadence of posting with 2-3 pre-promo per month. This will continue ramping up as we get closer. Gave example of the “Stay and Seek” social campaign. We have requested input from stakeholders.

Marrissa confirmed that seven media journalists and content creators, including representatives from Elle Magazine and other publications, are confirmed to attend various events throughout the week, with accommodations still being arranged. The team discussed managing media access to the sold-out La Dolce Vita event, deciding to allocate two journalist spots at the table while redirecting other media and influencers to alternative experiences. Discussion about the possibility of expanding attendees at La Dolce Vita.

Amy provided an update on the marketing and promotional efforts for Carmel's Culinary Week, scheduled for June 5-13. She reported strong ticket sales across various events, with 437 tickets sold so far, including 33 all-access passes at \$575. Far ahead of last year.

Jeff discussed ongoing paid advertising initiatives, including print ads in Sunset Magazine, Edible, TV spots, paid digital on Meta, and e-blasts, as well as new promotional materials being distributed to hotels and restaurants. Way ahead of last year with great assets collected from last year. Played the updated TV ad.

Created instructional flyer for all restaurants to input offers. Printed promotional materials being produced include posters, check stuffers, flyers and postcards. Also have created a social media tool kit.

He also announced a new food tour called "Art of the Plate" being organized by Staci of Carmel Food Tours.

Ashley Wolff of Jeju popped in to announce she will have her Banju Before Dark on Monday, June 8.

Culinary Event Partnership Outreach Strategy

The team discussed outreach efforts to restaurants and wineries for upcoming culinary events, with Lauren from Good Roots reporting they are at approximately 70% completion for event partnerships. The team also discussed website content updates and event planning details, including specific offerings like a Master Maker Dinner and a coin flip happy hour concept.

The team discussed updates on Culinary Week, including enhancements to events, a new art installation at Boho, and entertainment additions to La Dolce. Working to secure as many restaurants as possible to maximize participants.

They set a May 1 deadline for inclusion in printed materials and emphasized the importance of tagging/collaborating social media content with JPR for amplification.

Good Roots appreciated that April/Links will provide mocktails. That was a critique from last year – needing non-alcoholic drinks.

Carmel Tourism Funding Challenges

All are welcome to attend the Visit Carmel board meeting on Thursday to learn about strategy and direction for overall destination planning.

Amy explained that the City Council plans to reduce funding for Visit Carmel by pulling out of their partnership and potentially cutting the \$120,000 city investment. The council is also proposing a 2% increase in transient occupancy tax, which would increase from 10% to 12%. Despite these funding cuts, Amy noted that the restaurant community is thriving with three new restaurants planned to open in 2026, and the group discussed potential farmer's market initiatives to promote the local food scene during Culinary Week.

Agenda Items for Next Meeting: A non-staff meeting on May 12 to discuss the future of the restaurant industry and culinary events.

Meeting adjourned at 11:05 am.