



Minutes

Visit San Luis Obispo County Marketing Committee

Visit San Luis Obispo County Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 10, 2016

8:30am

Embassy Suites

333 Madonna Road, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Becky Singh

PRESENT: Ashlee Akers, Jim Allen, Terrie Banish, Molly Cano, Cheryl Cuming, Christen Goldie, Brent Haugen, Gordon Jackson, Lori Keller, Heather Muran, Jennifer Porter, John Sorgenfrei

ABSENT: Judith Bean, Amanda Diefenderfer

STAFF PRESENT: Becky Singh, Michael Wambolt, Brendan Pringle, Kylee Jepsen

Call to Order at 8:51am.

2. **PUBLIC COMMENT (On Non-Agenda Items)**

None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Singh reported on the San Luis Obispo County 2016 Tourism Exchange, and requested feedback from the Marketing Committee on how to improve it. Cuming said she appreciated the speakers, but found the research presentation difficult to follow. She asked if there was a way to make it more engaging. Porter noted that the research presentation style was a bit repetitive. Cuming noted that Beteta's content was excellent and market-specific. Banish noted that the Exchange was too long and said that it should probably have been about 30 minutes shorter. Muran said the venue may have been too large for the event, while Haugen and Allen both noted that the uniqueness of the Fremont made it a great venue. Cano and Akers said midweek would have been better timing, as hotels are very busy on Fridays. The Committee as a whole agreed that parking was an issue. Jackson said that a hotel with plenty of parking may have been a better venue. Porter offered Ancient Peaks' space and the Oyster Ridge Barn as alternative venue options. Haugen said VSLOC should think about putting the event venue out for RFP.

Merrill Research will be presenting the results of Project 1 (Demographic and Share-of-Wallet Study) on June 6 at 9:30am-12pm at the Embassy Suites. Merrill will also be presenting the results of Project 2 (Feeder Market Awareness Study), for those who were unable to attend the Tourism Exchange.

Singh provided the Committee with an update on Chuck Davison's travel schedule for the months ahead.

Haugen warned the Committee that an individual is filing lawsuits against hotels offering girlfriend getaway packages on the grounds of discrimination.

Sorgenfrei noted that *Sunset* is working with Visit California to put together some international guides, and asked if it was an opportunity VSLOC might be interested in. He noted that the media buy is \$19,000/page. Cano noted that the Central Coast Tourism Council might be interested in pursuing this. Cuming stated that there should be a "discussion"

item at future meetings for these kinds of opportunities to be addressed, noting that this would give members the ability to share them with their boards and reduce potential duplication.

CONSENT AGENDA

3. Approval of April 12, 2016 Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes

Committee Discussion. Cano clarified that during the budget planning conversation, she recalled that the consensus among the Committee was that an expectation of dollars to be used for VSLOC opportunities in the range of \$50-\$100k was concerning.

Public Comment – None.

ACTION: Moved by Jackson/Cano to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, with Cano's edit.

Motion carried: 12:0

BUSINESS ITEMS

4. Update on Board Action

At the April Board Meeting, the Board agreed to continue the Booking.com partnership for a minimum of 6 months and to review the metrics at the end of that period to determine results.

VSLOC has received 4 countywide conference center feasibility proposals. The Board agreed to hold the proposals until the Strategic Plan is finalized by Coraggio before determining next steps.

The Board approved contract negotiations with BCF as VSLOC's Marketing Agency-of-Record. BCF agreed to a 60-day immersion plan (funded by BCF), and they produced VSLOC's Year End video for free in one week. During their immersion period, both principals will be in market for a minimum of one week in the first 30 days. The Board was impressed with their creative and willingness to immerse themselves in the market.

Committee Discussion – Porter asked if the agency visits conducted by Davison and Singh influenced the decision of the Board. Singh noted that BCF clearly demonstrated their ability to focus on the client and that their team was fully aligned, whereas Saatchi made it more about themselves, and showed some disconnect within their team.

Public Comment – None.

5. Marketing Agency Update

The VSLOC contract with Catalyst was terminated on April 30, 2015. Remaining deliverables will be completed mid-month. VSLOC has begun the on-boarding process with BCF. They attended both the Advisory Committee Meeting on May 5, 2016 and the Tourism Exchange on May 6, 2016.

BCF will be in market in May, and will be scheduling stakeholder meetings in the coming weeks. Singh provided their tentative on-boarding schedule. Singh asked the Marketing Committee members to let her know if they would like to be involved in stakeholder interviews, and to let her know of potential "intercept" locations.

Singh played the "Year in Review" video for the Committee.

Committee Discussion – Haugen noted that he would be happy to help BCF find discounted lodging in Morro Bay. Porter also offered three desks at the PRWCA office for them to use while they are in North County. Cuming asked if the Marketing Committee will have additional meetings while BCF is in town, and Singh replied that they would not.

Akers and Haugen both noted that the Year in Review video was very high energy.

Cano and Porter noted that it's important for BCF to know they are expected to meet all of the Marketing Committee members. Porter recalled that Catalyst never met with her last time around.

Cuming and Cano suggested that CCTC and Visit California should have the opportunity to participate as stakeholders as well. Cuming also noted that it is important that the unincorporated areas be properly represented. She suggested that Kathy Bonelli would be a good person to represent unincorporated Paso Robles. Porter added that the geography covered by the Paso Robles Wine Country Alliance is far bigger than just Paso Robles.

Public Comment – None.

6. Coraggio Strategic Planning

Singh invited the Marketing Committee to attend the stakeholder sessions of the two remaining 2-day workshops, happening May 18, and June 2, 2016 from 1pm-2pm at the Embassy Suites.

Committee Discussion – Haugen asked that Singh clarify that different content will be discussed. Haugen recalled that the workshops have been very productive, providing the stakeholder survey information as a foundation to generate VSLOC's mission, vision and values.

Haugen complimented VSLOC on waiting until now to start the strategic planning process so that they really have a solid foundation. Cuming noted that she's hoping to start a relationship with Coraggio for the CBID, and that she'd like to work with VSLOC or other DMOs if they are planning to bring Coraggio back in market in the future. Cano noted that SLOTBID will be working through a mid-plan refresh this summer/early fall.

Public Comment – None.

7. AMGEN Tour of California Update

The Stage 4 start of AMGEN Tour of California in Morro Bay will be May 18, 2016 at 10:10 am near the Morro Rock. The Committee viewed VSLOC's 30-second video spot on NBC Sports.

Committee Discussion – Sorgenfrei suggested having the logo and the website shown throughout the ad, instead of just in the last two seconds. He also asked if someone was shooting the event. Haugen responded that the sponsors will be able to get some of the b-roll and the media footage. Sorgenfrei noted that it was fairly inexpensive to shoot the race when it came through Pismo Beach and Avila Beach, and that some of the footage taken from Avila Beach was fairly dramatic. Singh requested recommendations on a videographer.

Public Comment – None.

8. Shoulder Season Campaign Update

Singh presented the April 2016 campaign metrics, and some of the ways VSLOC has increased social media engagement.

Committee Discussion – Cuming questioned if VSLOC was reaching the right audience based on the popular keywords. Banish inquired if VSLOC should be working directly with McClatchy on media purchases. Singh noted that this is a conversation that McClatchy has had with VSLOC.

Jepsen presented the PR highlights for April 2016, and noted that VSLOC has worked with Visit California on a couple of media tours. Jepsen also gave an update on the Visit California Texas Media Bootcamp she attended in April and the Vancouver and Calgary Media Events she attended through Visit California earlier in May.

Public Comment – None.

PRESENTATION

9. Travel Trade Update

Wambolt provided a month-by-month Travel Trade Update to the Committee. He noted that he organized a sales strategy back in November.

Committee Discussion – Sorgenfrei said it's a great strategy to pour wine all three days of IPW. Porter noted that she can research what Paso Robles wines are in Louisiana, and said that J. Lohr has a rep in just about every state. Muran added that she could connect with winery reps in Louisiana to pour wine.

Akers asked if the DMOs will have more notice moving forward on what VSLOC plans to do for sales so that they can plan ahead of time.

Wambolt responded that he's working on a 12 month and 24 month plan, with quarterly sales missions north and south. Akers noted that this would be good to have January/February, as this is when planning starts, while Cuming noted that she would have liked to see a plan by March.

Haugen asked if there was a meeting planner guide in the works, and Wambolt responded yes. Haugen noted that all guides need to be "in-hand" rather than digital. He also asked if NTA was worthwhile. Wambolt responded that it was good for relationship maintenance, but that GoWest was a much more impactful event. Haugen also asked if VSLOC was planning on hosting a meeting planners FAM. Wambolt responded that VSLOC is looking to bring them in late September or October, which gives them a start for the next 12 months.

Haugen recommended more communications on the impact of, and leads from, sales missions, and separate quarterly "sales" meetings. He noted that about 80% of our properties have no idea that this is happening and it would be a chance to educate them on the lead process.

Cuming commented that two areas were missing on the Press Kit (Edna Valley and San Luis Obispo), and that vacation rentals were missing from the list of accommodations on page 13. Porter noted that she's been invited to the Clean Energy Ministerial event on June 1, and only Napa, Sonoma and Paso Robles will be pouring. She said 400 guests will be in attendance, and asked if any DMOs would like to provide collateral.

Public Comment – None.

PRESENTATION

10. DMO Spotlight – Morro Bay

Haugen provided an update on plans for the AMGEN Tour of California race. He announced that Morro Bay will be hosting a "Progressive Dinner" as part of the festivities. He said it's been a great learning experience for Morro Bay with regard to planning events in the future. He thanked Jackson and Sorgenfrei for their advice, and noted that he hopes to sit down with all of the Marketing Committee after AMGEN to discuss future expectations for a SLO County start or finish and to discuss budgeting. Haugen noted that Morro Bay has produced an AMGEN spectator guide, and will be doing a food court at Coleman Park.

Committee Discussion – None.

Public Comment – None.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:22am.