

**Visit Huntington Beach  
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, Feb 25, 2016

3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort & Spa

Heron Boardroom

21500 Pacific Coast Highway

Huntington Beach, CA 92648

*Public Notice Information: In accordance with the Ralph M. Brown Act, VHB agendas are available for public review outside the City of Huntington Beach Council Chambers at 2000 Main Street at least 72 hours prior to each meeting. The agendas are also posted on the VHB website at [surfcityusa.com](http://surfcityusa.com). Questions on agenda items may be directed to Kelly Miller, VHB President/CEO, at (714) 969-3492 or [Kelly@surfcityusa.com](mailto:Kelly@surfcityusa.com).*

VHB Mission: To position Surf City USA® as the preferred California beach destination in order to maximize **overnight visitor** spending, **destination development** and **quality of life** for all residents.

**AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order and Antitrust Reminder (*see reverse*) by Chair Peter Rice at 3:35 PM.
- II. Roll Call:  
Present: Fischer (The Waterfront Beach Resort, a Hilton Hotel), Barnes (Duke's Huntington Beach), Thompson (First Bank) Present at first, but had to leave for family emergency, Patel (Best Western Harbour Inn & Suites), Rice (The Hyatt Regency Resort & Spa), Blakeslee (Pasea Hotel and Spa). Not Present: McNally (Kimpton Shorebreak Hotel).
- III. Announcement of Late Communications: None
- IV. Public Comments — Chairperson (limited to 3 minutes/person): None  
*VHB welcomes public comments on all items on this agenda or of community interest. We respectfully request that this public forum be utilized in a positive and constructive manner. Please focus your comments on the issue or concern that you would like to bring to the attention of the Executive Committee.*
- V. Consent Agenda – Kelly Miller: Motion by Rice, seconded by Patel to accept the consent agenda:
  - a. Latest TOT / TBID Reports: TOT/TBID revenues for December 2016 were up 8%. Hotels with over 151 rooms were up 7% and hotels under 150 were up 13.5% for the month. YTD revenues for both TOT/TBID for the first three months of the FY (Oct-Nov-Dec) are now up 4.4% over FY 14-15.
  - b. Financials: The financials should be ready for the full Tuesday, March 1 VHB board meeting. If not, we will approve two sets of financials at March meeting.
- VI. Chairman's Report (Rice): There a couple of major cancellations at a couple of HB hotels in Feb and March, which will likely impact overall TOT/TBID numbers for winter/early spring. Certainly, the recent good weather is helping drive HB hotel transient bookings, many of which occur within a shorter booking cycle than group business. Pasea is still

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shooting for May 1 opening. The Waterfront Hilton expansion is a go for their 2<sup>nd</sup> tower. Springhill Suites by Marriott is scheduled for a November 2016 opening.

VII. Department Updates (Miller)  
a. **MARKETING & PR:**

**HSMIA's ADRIAN AWARDS:** The Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International awarded five prestigious Adrian Awards to Visit Huntington Beach and its PR firm DCI for public relations and promotional work with the GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS Big Board campaign at its annual awards gala in New York in February. The awards included a Best of Show for PR Adrian, a platinum Adrian, and three gold Adrian Awards. We were competing with entries by major international travel industry brands, large and small DMOs, as well as state and country tourism offices from around the world. The recognition truly places our community's destination branding efforts among the best of the best in the global travel marketplace.

**VISIT CALIFORNIA POPPY AWARD:** VHB was awarded a prestigious Poppy Award (Best Public Relations Campaign for the Epic Big Board) at last week's Visit California's Annual Marketing Outlook Forum dinner. KUDOS to City staff, VHB Board members and the hard working crew at Team VHB. It was a magical night with many incredible nominations in a variety of Poppy categories. This marks two Poppy Awards in the past three years for VHB. The 2014 Poppy was received for Best Public Relations Campaign for the fire pits

**BRAND RESEARCH UPDATE:** Destination Analysts and the Atkins Group are wrapping up the quantitative analysis phase of our brand perception study for Huntington Beach this month, and will immediately move into phase two qualitative research in March/April. The latter phase will include consumer testing in both the leisure and meetings market on the brand positioning and potential new brand mark creative. We plan to schedule Atkins to share the results of this in-depth research with the board and marketing committee in the spring, and with the greater HB community at our annual meeting on June 28, along with the brand refresh launch.

**HB TOURISM ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY:** VHB staff will prepare an RFP in March for an economic impact study of our city's tourism industry, including a year-over-year trend analysis for the past three years. We expect to have the results of this study in the summer.

**NEW YORK MEDIA TRIP:** VHB staff will travel to New York March 21-24 for three levels of national media engagement: Visit California's annual New York media event, a new collaborative regional media event coordinated by VHB & DCI with Anaheim,

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Newport Beach, Laguna Beach and Huntington Beach as partners with a family travel theme, and one-on-one media appointments with targeted "most wanted" media outlets.

**RESPONSIVE WEBSITE UPDATE:** VHB staff is developing the work plan and site structure for the new responsive website using an open source platform for optimal options in dynamic content development, flexibility, personalization, and competitiveness.

**SPRING INTERNS**

Karina Bonoldi and Stephanie Pfingsten —

Karina will be starting on Monday, February 22 and specializing in website marketing (CRM, web content, listings, etc.) and visitor/partner services. Stephanie will be focused primarily on public relations (FAMS, press releases, etc.) and social media (daily posts, blog, e-newsletter, etc.)

**UPCOMING FAMS**

-Ron Johnson – February 5, 2016, Canadian Journalist (Toronto) -- outdoor adventure and family travel stories for Post City (372,000 print readers, 150,000 online) and Get Out There Magazine (150,000). Activities: Surf lesson, Banzai Bowls

-Carrie Anne Badov and Mannix – March 2-4, 2016, Canadian blogger and parenting expert. Travelling to California with her 10-year-old son Mannix from February 28 – March 5 for a series of blog posts, videos and social media content focused on travelling with a “tween.” Topics of focus on this trip will be outdoor adventure, arts/culture and culinary.

-EverythingMom (UVM 50,000; Twitter 31,200; FB 6,500; Instagram 2,000). Previously visited HB in 2012 and 2014

-Kylie McLaughlin – April 27-29, 2016, Fairfax Traveller (AUSTRALIA). Traveller has a 1,982,000 total readership across print and digital platforms including in The Sydney Morning Herald, The Sun-Herald and The Age, as well as traveller.com.au. Looking for authentic local, culinary and outdoor activities.

**SOCIAL MEDIA VIDEO CAMPAIGN TOPICS:** Three videos produced with Destination Think and featuring local influencers and brand ambassadors have been released as sponsored posts to their respective audiences on Facebook and Instagram. The first video spotlight on Nightlife featured restaurant, SeaLegs. It has over 15,000 views on Facebook. The remaining videos will be released periodically from now until late March. Here is a summary focus of the videos:

- Beach volleyball (Casey Patterson, AVP)
- Surfing (Jamie Heraver, local)
- Beach boardwalk (Hamboards, Pete Hamborg)

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- HB Sunset (Sam Bernal, local artist)
  - Pier Plaza (Dirty Heads musician)
  - Huntington Dog Beach (Corgi Beach Day)
  - Huntington Beach Central Park (HB local mom)
  - Nightlife (Jamie Heraver, local)
  - Huntington Harbour (Rocky McKinnon)
  - Family (OC Mom Blog writer)
  - New HB developments (Scott Blakeslee / Pacific City)
- b. SALES: February numbers: 39 leads were issued, representing 94,108 potential room nights. Total YTD room nights represented are 121,415. The total number of bookings for February was three, representing 360 room nights. Total YTD number of bookings are 15, representing 6,821 room nights. The sales team were traveling a fair amount in February and feel good about generating more leads and closing business.
- c. FILM, SPORTS AND TRAVEL TRADE: Susan and Sophia are attending GoWest Summit as of this writing: VHB had 37, 10-minute appointments with various tour operators, receptives, wholesalers, and others, like Brand USA. They were a mix of international and domestic, with significant presence by the Asian market. In Film, VHB had six serious inquiries in the past month for filming in Huntington Beach. One being a national commercial, and two films. The team continues to work with the City on the potential Air Show .
- d. VISITOR SERVICES & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: Good planning with City and Downtown BID on new Visitor Ambassador Specialist position. New partner services intern started last Monday (see marketing department notes). She will be updating partner information in the CRM and reaching out to new partners in HB. Working closely with Diana Dehm, the interim Executive Director at the ISM, about standard operation procedures and systems we had put into place when Bridget was working there. Offered to do a training in the next couple weeks. Big Board: All Big Board auction payments have been charged. Jodi is still collecting a few outstanding sponsorship payments. Website report for FY 14-15 is completed and will be shared with VHB board on March 1. Overall, [www.surftcityusa.com](http://www.surftcityusa.com) experienced incredible growth from the previous year.
- VIII. President's Report by Kelly Miller
- a. HBISM update including info on HBISM's new Executive Director Diana Dehm: Diana will be attending the March 1 VHB Board Meeting. Brett and the HBISM board is thrilled that Diana has taken the position. There are some interim "do-list" items she will be working on for the HBISM board. VHB set aside some dollars in the FY 15-16 budget to assist the Museum in personnel costs and other related expenses during this

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- transition. VHB staff will work on a plan and pricing for possible private use “for hire” of the Big Board. There has been some interest expressed to Brett by private parties.
- b. Wayfinding and next visit by MERJE (March 29-30) for Phase Two: Final schedule is being planned for their next visit. John Bosio with MERJE will be here present to the full VHB board at the March 29 meeting, as well 5-6 other stakeholder groups including City Council members and City department heads.
  - c. Community relations and local advocacy: Staff will be sending out the first VHB newsletter highlighting key metrics, successes and year to date production numbers to help communicate the overall impact VHB is having on the HB economy. 2015 was a record breaking year on many fronts. A press release will be worth coming. Staff is planning a huge launch day on June 29 for many key initiatives including a brand refresh, new research numbers, new creative to support the brand relaunch, the framework for a new responsive [www.surfcityusa.com](http://www.surfcityusa.com) website, the mechanics of how partners can utilize the Extranet and much more. The VHB board meeting will start a little earlier on June 29, then flow into the very exciting launch of these initiative. Details are being worked out.
  - d. Ambassador program: Interviews are being held with an anticipated mid-March relaunch of the program.
  - e. CalTravel update on several legislative issues: There are a couple of items which CalTravel is carefully tracking in Sacramento. More and come cities are moving forward with their elected bodies developing vacation rental policies. There are an estimated 200-300 vacation rental units in HB; perhaps more. City staff has been working with VHB to hopefully schedule a Council work session on vacation rentals in the near future. Kelly to follow up.
  - f. Responsive website progress: The team is 99% sure that the new website will be built using WordPress. Staff working out the details.
  - g. Surf City USA licensing program: VHB staff met with Don and Ardelle regarding future partnerships. The team will look at other options for the licensing marketing functions, but may continue using their services for legal trademark work as needed.
- IX. New Business: Sunny Patel officially resigned from the VHB Exec Committee and full board due to the time commitment. He has been very successful recently with other business ventures and can't make the time commitment necessary to attend VHB meetings. His last meeting will be Tuesday, March 1.
- X. Next Executive Committee Meeting: Thursday, March 24, Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort & Spa at 3:30 p.m.
- XI. Adjournment at 4:43 PM.

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"Heads in Beds"

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*ANTITRUST COMPLIANCE POLICY*

*It is the policy of the Huntington Beach Marketing & Visitors Bureau to comply fully with the antitrust laws of the United States and the State of California. In order to assure full compliance, the following policies and procedures are to be followed by all employees and stakeholders of the Bureau and by representatives of any stakeholders of the Bureau.*

*At any meeting of the directors of the Bureau or any committees of the Bureau, or at any meeting where any employee of the Bureau is present or where the Bureau is in any way involved, there shall be no discussion of the following:*

- A. Prices or rates for hotel or motel rooms, food and beverage, transportation, sightseeing, or other services or facilities of stakeholders, including but not limited to prices or rates to be charged to convention groups, tour groups or tour operators, including off-season prices or discounts;*
- B. Changes or proposed changes in the prices or rates of hotel or motel rooms, food and beverage, transportation, sightseeing, or other services offered to customers of the hotel and motel industry;*
- C. Formulas, procedures, or means for the establishment and determination of prices, rates, discounts, terms, and conditions or rental;*
- D. Plans of individual stakeholders covering increases or reductions in distribution or marketing of particular products or services.*
- E. Restrictions on legal advertising or promotional activities.*
- F. Matters relating to actual or potential suppliers or customers that might have the effect of excluding them from any market or of influencing others not to deal with them.*