

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley February 12, 2015

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on February 12, 2015 at SYV Marriott, 555 McMurray Road, Buellton. The meeting was called to order by President Mike Hendrick at 9:00 a.m. Board members present included Mike Hendrick, President, Jessy Osehan, Secretary, Bion Rice, Treasurer, Christine Forsyth, Kady Fleckenstein, and new board member, Cammy Pinoli. Shelby Sim, Executive Director, and Danielle Laudon, Marketing & Communications Manager, were present. Dr. Kenneth Harwood, Tracy Farhad, Executive Director of Solvang Conference & Visitors Bureau, and Bob Fields were present for public comment.

Public comment was made by Dr. Harwood with an economic report; Tracy Farhad provided an update regarding Solvang CVB's stance on the TBID renewal and declared VisitSYV has her Board of Directors' support. Bob Fields provided public comment and stated his concerns over the TBID renewal, the public notices issued, and the renewal's inclusion of Vacation Rentals.

Minutes of the January 8, 2015 board meeting were approved (Jessy Osehan made a motion, Christine Forsyth seconded, all in favor except Cammy Pinoli, who abstained).

Shelby Sim presented his Director's Report, and covered the following, which includes additional public comment:

- Welcomed Cammy Pinoli as new member of the board, representing the Unincorporated.
- TBID update: After the petition drive, VisitSYV came in with 78.5% support. The Solvang City Council vote was 3 to 1 to proceed with the renewal process. Mr. Skytt had to recuse himself. Bob Fields, representing himself, and CJ Jackson, representing Alisal Guest Ranch & Resort, shared their concerns in public comment. Sue Moualim, Director of the Solvang Chamber, Kathy Vreeland, Director of Buellton Chamber & Visitors Bureau, Mike Hendrick, and Linda Johansen all spoke in favor of VisitSYV's renewal. Shelby presented in front of Santa Barbara County Supervisors on Tuesday, February 10th. Doreen Farr brought up several concerns. One concern was lack of reporting in years prior. Doreen was not able to understand the new boundaries as opposed to the prior approved boundaries. She also had questions about how VisitSYV membership works as opposed to the assessed hotels. There was also concern with the vacation rentals, and whether they will be represented fairly. Shelby is going to propose VisitSYV changes terms to 6 years instead of 10 years. Shelby will also propose we do not include vacation rentals in this term. Vacation rentals are a new breed. They've come up, they're growing, and cities are still trying to figure out how to cope with them. Laws are being changed and passed frequently. Shelby is confident that after 6 years, we will be able to reassess and expand our boundaries if that's the right thing to do. Mike Hendrick interrupted to ask Bob Fields if he'd like to comment, and reminded the board and public that this is not an action item. Mr. Fields stated he has not had a single word with the County Board of Supervisors. Fields suggests that we may have a Brown Act issue to resolve, and agrees that VisitSYV should pull back the new boundaries to the existing boundaries. Mr. Fields also doesn't know if the built in price increase was an issue. Mr. Fields states that he is looking to solve a problem and is satisfied so long as VisitSYV does not include vacation rentals or expand boundaries. Shelby reminds the public and board that he is going to make these changes to the renewal, and it is not something the board is voting on today. Mr. Fields and Shelby agree to resolve any outstanding questions and records requests.
- Shelby announces we will be attending Buellton's City Council Meeting tonight, then the next step will be a public meeting on February 26th in which VisitSYV will invite the public and hoteliers to attend to understand the TBID renewal process. Mr. Fields provides additional comment and reminds the board that Solvang City Councilman Zimmerman and CJ Jackson have requested the option to opt out, and states this would be a more popular option. Shelby notes that he has spoken with Doreen Farr and she is very happy with the changes we plan to make due to their concerns.

- SBCAG update: Clean Air Express is a pilot program that would shuttle people back and forth between the Santa Ynez Valley and Santa Barbara on the weekend, and will run for a year. We've worked with Solvang and Buellton along with Clean Air, and this program will be free the first two weeks.
- Kady Fleckenstein asked another question regarding the revised TBID structure, and whether there is room to make changes within 6 years of the TBID. Shelby explains that would not be possible and VisitSYV would be locked in. Jessy Osehan comments that Shelby has paid careful attention to the needs of the valley and been a good guiding force during the renewal process.

Bion Rice provided the financial report and reviewed in detail the proposed 2015 Budget. Jessy made a motion to approve the 2015 budget as it stands. Christine seconded. Roll call vote: Cammy Pinoli: Yes. Kady Fleckenstein: Yes. Bion Rice: Yes. Christine Forsyth: Yes. Jessy Osehan: Yes. Mike Hendrick: Yes. Linda Johansen by Proxy: Yes. Sandra Hallman by Proxy: Yes. All in favor (except James Colvin, not present, no proxy).

The board reviewed the grant application submitted for Garagiste Festival: Southern Exposure. Doug Minnick provided supporting comment and noted that the support of SYVHA and Santa Barbara Vintners brought them here to the valley. They promote the event year-round, have a great publicist on staff, and focus on editorial coverage, stating that editorial destroys advertising in its ability to sell and promote events. Jessy made a motion to approve a \$3,500 grant. Kady seconded. Mike commented that he would like VisitSYV to provide more. Jessy amended her motion to give \$4,000. Kady seconded. All in favor.

Bion Rice provided the Education Subcommittee Presentation. The subcommittee is recommending an educational program which would include 6 seminars per year, with one in each Santa Ynez Valley township. The focus would be both on hospitality training and local education (i.e. nightlife, historical facts, itinerary-building, and teaching users how to use VisitSYV.com to plan their trips). Mike commented that the philosophy of Marriott is attitude over aptitude, and would prefer seminars feature 2 hours hospitality, 1 hour local content. Solvang Chamber of Commerce is also going to bring educational seminars to the valley, and will be coming to VisitSYV for support. Certification will also be provided for attending VisitSYV Educational Seminars. Bion requested the board send feedback over the next 30 days in order to refine the program overview and present a proposal at the March board meeting.

Danielle Laudon presented the Restaurant Week recap and a website, analytics and DVA update. The 5th Annual Restaurant Week promotion was the greatest success to date in terms of web traffic, with over 18k Pageviews during the promotion. Social media buzz was also a major factor and the success of the campaign can also be seen in posts using the #dinesyv hashtag.

Shelby requested the board nominate a 2016 Destination Guide Subcommittee. Jessy made a motion to form the 2016 Destination Guide subcommittee consisting of Christine, Jessy, Mike and Cammy. Bion seconded. All in favor.

Board comments: Kady commented that it would be good to look at Craft Beer Month and SYV Wine Month and figure out what's reasonable for size of the promotion, and what's feasible and beneficial for our members, also noting that we do not want to duplicate efforts. Bion Rice thanked the board for allowing him to proceed with the education subcommittee, stating it will be a great asset for VisitSYV. Christine Forsyth welcomed Cammy Pinoli to the board. Jessy welcomed Cammy and thanked Danielle and Shelby for work on TBID and Restaurant Week. Mike Hendrick thanked Shelby and Danielle for their work on the TBID. Mike also stated that looking at our events in the valley, and who are we trying to attract here, we still need a competition in the valley for wines. We have food events, wine events, beer events, but not a big running athletic event. Mike would like to see something new and inventive, and used Sunset's SAVOR as an example of something we should strive for eventually (3-4 years out). Regarding the TBID renewal, Mike will check with Civitas on how to make changes before the March 3rd County meeting.

Jessy made a motion to adjourn at 11:15am. Christine seconded. All in favor. Adjournment to meeting of March 12, 2015, 9:00 a.m., SYV Marriott

Prepared by Danielle Laudon,
Marketing & Communications Manager

Approved by Jessy Osehan,
Secretary