

## Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley November 10, 2016

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on November 10, 2016 at The Landsby, 1576 Mission Drive, Solvang. The meeting was called to order by President Jessy Osehan at 9:00 a.m. Board members present included Jessy Osehan, President, Linda Johansen, Vice President, Barry Prescott, James Colvin, Cammy Pinoli, and Bob Oswaks. Shelby Sim, Executive Director, and Danielle Laudon, Marketing & Communications Manager, were present. Members of the public present include Mayor Jim Richardson, Dr. Kenneth Harwood, Tracy Farhad of Solvang Conference & Visitors Bureau, Anna Ferguson-Sparks of Stiletto Marketing, and Juliet Kingston of Grapeline Wine Tours.

Public comment was made by Dr. Harwood, Mayor Richardson and Tracy Farhad. Dr. Harwood presented an economic report. Mayor Richardson thanked VisitSYV for the increase in tourism and called attention to Solvang Park which is in need of rehabilitation; Mayor Richardson would like VisitSYV to consider donating to the cause; Shelby Sim has also spoken to Mayor Richardson and Solvang City Manager Brad Vidro about the matter and will look into how VisitSYV can be of assistance; Linda Johansen agrees that the park is a focal point in Solvang and needs more care and attention. Tracy Farhad invited all to attend the Solvang CVB's upcoming marketing reception that will be held at Hotel Corque on Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>. Board member Jim Rice and Board Treasurer Bion Rice entered the meeting during public comment.

Bob Oswaks made a motion to approve the October 13, 2016 minutes as presented; Barry seconded; all in favor except Linda, who abstained due to absence at the October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. The October 13, 2016 minutes were approved.

The board reviewed a grant request for Julefest presented by the Solvang CVB, Dec. 1, 2016 –Jan. 6, 2017; the requested amount is \$4,000. VisitSYV staff processed the grant, and the recommended amount came out to \$4,000. Linda made a recommendation that the board approve a \$4,000 grant; James Colvin seconded. Shelby shared that this event is what he is most excited about that takes place in Solvang, as it's an event that still has room for even more growth. All in favor. The \$4,000 Julefest grant was approved. Tracy Farhad thanked the board for their support and shared posters and postcards that feature VisitSYV's logo on it. They will be adding a new 4,500 LED-lit Christmas tree to the park this year, made entirely of lights, and larger than anything Solvang has ever had. They will also be adding "selfie" locations throughout the park to enhance "Santa's Village."

Shelby Sim provided the Director Report, which included updates on the following:

- Review of Board of Supervisors meeting on the Winery Ordinance: This event was well attended by members and supporters of the wine industry; there will be a special ordinance meeting on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and attendance and participation via written letters and public comment is encouraged.
- Fall Reception recap: the reception was well attended and brought together many people serving tourism. Barry, Bob and James all shared their compliments of the event.
- Buellton City Council update: VisitSYV's 2015/16 fiscal report was well received by the council. Solvang, Buellton and the county will all receive our third quarter report this week.
- Destination Guide Launch update: Our destination guide launch will be held Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at Santa Ynez Inn; Cecco Ristorante will be catering.
- Activity report

Bion stepped out to print the financials for review.

Shelby presented the need to form a new Education Committee for 2017 to update the current Spirit of the Valley program and timeline and assist with planning the annual meeting. Linda, Cammy, Bion and Jim Rice all would like to serve. Linda made a motion to create a 2017 education subcommittee served by Linda, Cammy, Bion, and Jim Rice; Cammy seconded. The committee will serve until July 2017; all in favor; the committee was approved.

Danielle presented the need for a Crisis Management Committee for 2017. Cammy, Jim Rice and Barry volunteered to serve. Cammy made a motion to create a Crisis Management team consisting of Cammy, Jim and Barry starting in January 2017 and ending in March 2017; Barry seconded; all in favor. The committee was approved.

Shelby presented the need for a new campaign creative and marketing committee. This is to help us come up with the creative and provide input on the DVA marketing efforts. Bob, Linda and James Colvin would like to be on this committee, which would serve for a full year. Linda made a motion to have Bob, Linda and James serve on the creative/marketing committee for 2017; Bob seconded; all in favor; the committee was approved.

Shelby presented answers received by Jackrabbit to VisitSYV's remaining questions about the booking service. Shelby was verbally told by Stephen Meade that the price will not increase for at least three years, as they would not want to lose our business via an increase. Shelby was also told that data is scraped from hotel websites at the industry standard which is twice a day for rates and availability 7 days out, and once a day for rates and availability on 30 days out. Shelby's recommendation is to proceed with Jackrabbit and leave after a year if VisitSYV is not satisfied with the service. Jim Rice made a motion to proceed with Jackrabbit as our booking engine on VisitSYV.com; James Colvin seconded; all in favor. VisitSYV will proceed with Jackrabbit.

Danielle Laudon presented the Website, DVA, and Marketing Update which included updates on the DVA ad campaign, status of SEO, recent PR successes, and an update on future fam tours; highlights included new VisitSYV photography by Kevin Steele and an advertorial two page spread in Gentry Destinations magazine.

Bion presented the financial report, which included review of the October financials and projections for the remainder of 2016.

Board comments: Jessy Osehan believes the organization has done an amazing job, and she has been honored to serve as long as she has; Jessy presented a resignation letter, noting the December meeting will be her last; the board will have to elect a new VisitSYV board president at the end of the December meeting, and she recommends Linda Johansen for the role. Linda would be happy to serve as board president, and would like to recommend Barry Prescott for Vice President; Linda thanked Jessy for being an amazing leader for VisitSYV; Linda also congratulated Tracy Farhad as the Solvang CVB recently won an award for their web design; Linda spoke with Danielle recently about collateral pieces that would be good for our organization, and Danielle already has some great ideas for that; Linda shared Solvang CVB's new collateral piece that shows the impact that Solvang CVB has on travel and our related industries, noting VisitSYV should be looking at similar pieces of collateral for the Santa Ynez Valley; regarding DVA, Linda is very happy to see where they've taken us; it's surprising to Linda that the men are ahead of women in terms of clickthrough rates, and Linda recommended creating a "Guys Weekend Getaway" piece, focusing on assets like golf and craft beer. Jim Rice thanked Jessy for her services and shared news from Santa Ynez, noting the recent Halloween event that went well; Jim congratulated VisitSYV on the Vincent event, which his colleagues and staff saw as a great networking opportunity; the Vaquero Show & Sale is happening this weekend; The Santa Ynez Inn had great occupancy in September and October and they've had a lot of midweek business. Bob is getting ready for the holidays, which is a busy time for Bob's Well Bread Bakery; they received the 2016 "Worth the Drive" Foodie Award from the Santa Barbara Independent and the bakery has already surpassed their 5 year goals; Bob shared a story KCOY recently did on the bakery, noting their willingness and advocacy for hiring all people, including LGBTQ; Bob shared that gender identification has no impact on whether or not he would hire potential employees, it's about their ability to do their job; after running the story with KCOY, Univision wanted to do a Spanish version of the interview; one of Bob's Spanish speaking LGBT employees did the interview. Danielle shared that she is overwhelmed with gratitude that businesses in the valley like Bob's Well Bread Bakery are so welcoming to all, which increases the strength of our destination as a whole; Danielle also pointed out the "all welcoming" message on the Solvang CVB's Julefest posters and shared that she is grateful our entire valley and cooperative partners are willing to spread the message of all-inclusiveness; Danielle addressed Jessy and thanked her for leading the way for the organization, and creating an environment that VisitSYV and its staff has been able to thrive in. Barry thanked Jessy for her hard work over the years on behalf of VisitSYV; regarding Board of Supervisor meetings, Barry tries to attend to support collaborative industries (i.e. the current Winery Ordinance), but it's difficult to get out the door to support these important causes when in the hotel management business; Mad & Vin will be bringing back family dining; as buffets are not very sociable, they've tested family dining which has proven to be successful and a

welcome change for groups. James Colvin started by giving Jessy a hug and thanking her for helping the organization in a very difficult time when we had growing pains; Jessy has invested in Solvang and the Santa Ynez Valley, and James is so impressed with what she has done; in James' own words, "There's something special about this community. Thank you, Jessy, for being a part of that." Bion started by thanking Mayor Richardson for being so open and cordial sitting with his son for an interview; Mayor Richardson expressed honesty and truth about politics with Bion's son and that meant a lot; Bion thanked fellow budget committee members, Barry, Randy, Shelby and Danielle, for working together to create the 2017 draft budget; sales at Sunstone have been up consistently every month, but November is down so far and Bion is attributing that to political instability; Bion thanked Shelby, Danielle and Tracy for all speaking at the winery ordinance BOS meeting; Bion will miss Jessy, who has taken on so many things, one of the first he remembers is the website redesign; Jessy has been crucial to VisitSYV's brand and identity. Bion is excited and hopes Linda and Barry will fulfill new officer roles to help VisitSYV reach our goals. Cammy shared that while attending local fundraisers this week, she has seen the sense of community we have and is very grateful; Cammy thanked Jessy for her strength and poise as VisitSYV president; Cammy noted that the TOT in the unincorporated was increased; Fess Parker's new chef is working on the restaurant at the inn, and they have exciting things in the works. Shelby addressed Jessy, stating that no one was better suited to take over from Mike Hendrick through VisitSYV's transition; Jessy did an amazing job, we will miss her, and Shelby looks forward to seeing her more often in the future; last night, Shelby went to a networking event and as he was departing he was called over by Joan Hartmann; Hartmann gave him a big hug and told him she's looking forward to working with him and VisitSYV. Jessy noted that before the board adjourns, they must nail down a date and time for a closed session for Executive Review; Linda made a motion to start the December 8th board meeting at 8:30 a.m. for a closed session, and have the regular board meeting begin at 9:15 a.m.; Barry seconded, all in favor. Mayor Richardson made a final public comment. Richardson thanked Jessy for leading the board, stating she's done a good job because revenue has gone up; a constituent asked Mayor Richardson to share a comment about our visitors, and asked if there is a way we can help educate international visitors about walking into the middle of traffic and standing in the middle of the street; there's a problem with visitors stopping in the middle of crosswalks to take pictures in Solvang. Mayor Richardson also spoke about law enforcement, which across the state is getting a bad rap; our law enforcement is made up of good people and they are doing a good job; local chambers are honoring law enforcement with proclamations during the month of November, and Mayor Richardson noted that local law enforcement is important to the way we run our towns.

Linda made a motion to adjourn. Bob seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:06 a.m. to the meeting of December 8, 2016, 9:00 a.m., The Landsby.

Prepared by Danielle Laudon,  
Marketing & Communications Manager

Approved by Barry Prescott,  
Secretary