

## Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley April 14, 2016

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on April 14, 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, Bion Rice, Treasurer, Christine Forsyth, Secretary, Barry Prescott, James Colvin, and Tonya Davis. Shelby Sim, Executive Director, and Danielle Laudon, Marketing & Communications Manager, were present. Members of the public present included Dr. Kenneth Harwood, Holly Cline of SYV Arts, Tracy Farhad of Solvang Conference & Visitors Bureau, Morgen McLaughlin of Santa Barbara County Vintners Association, Kris Kersten of SYV Rotary, and Jim of Los Olivos Rotary.

Public comment was made by Dr. Harwood, Holly Cline, and Tracy Farhad; Dr. Harwood presented an economic report; Holly Cline announced that the annual Quick Draw Arts Festival is being expanded to the entire Santa Ynez Valley and has a new off-season date of November 4-5, 2016. Tracy Farhad provided PR updates for Solvang and shared the successes of the Taste of Solvang event. Board member, Kady Fleckenstein, entered the meeting during public comment.

Jessy Osehan requested to amend the March 10<sup>th</sup> board meeting minutes to include that an electronic vote took place after the February 11<sup>th</sup> board meeting; the board electronically voted to increase staff's health stipend from \$250 per month to \$300 per month; this increase was made retroactive to January 1, 2016. Linda made a motion to approve the minutes with that amendment; Kady seconded; all in favor. The March 10<sup>th</sup> board meeting minutes were approved.

The board reviewed a grant request for Santa Barbara Vintners' Spring Weekend, April 21-24, 2016. VisitSYV staff processed the grant, and the recommended amount came out to \$4,000. Linda made a motion that we approve the recommended \$4,000 grant; Barry seconded. During discussion, Kady asked about the VisitSYV grant deadline requirement, and suggested VisitSYV keep a stronger stance on having applicants meet the requirement. Morgen McLaughlin spoke on behalf of Santa Barbara Vintners about the event. Danielle noted that VisitSYV's logo has been included in Vintners marketing materials. All in favor after no further discussion. A \$4,000 grant was approved for the Santa Barbara Vintners' Spring Weekend.

The board reviewed a grant request for Los Olivos Rotary's Jazz & Olive Festival, June 4, 2016. VisitSYV staff processed the grant, and the recommended amount came out to \$2,000. Jim of Los Olivos Rotary confirmed that many of the 650 attendees are from out of state, and it's generally a two night stay when they attend. Linda made a motion that we approve the recommended \$2,000 grant; Christine seconded. All in favor after no further discussion. A \$2,000 grant was approved for the Los Olivos Jazz & Olive Festival.

The board reviewed a grant request for SYV Rotary's 4<sup>th</sup> of July Fireworks Celebration, July 4, 2016. VisitSYV staff processed the grant, and the recommended amount came out to \$3,000. Linda shared that this is the second largest event in Solvang next to Danish Days, and people return year after year; Linda recommended providing a \$4,000 grant. Kris Kersten of SYV Rotary spoke on behalf of the event. Jim and Christine both noted they have return guests for this event. Jim seconded the motion to approve a \$4,000 grant. Kady asked whether we could set VisitSYV marketing funds to promote the event via VisitSYV's social media channels. Jessy recommended VisitSYV also encourage our members early on to participate in the promotion of this event since the holiday takes place on a Monday this year. Shelby reminded everyone that this is also a community event and does not advertise significantly outside of the county. Danielle confirmed that she can assist in running a VisitSYV campaign to target LA and Bay Area travelers on Facebook promoting the event. All in favor of providing a \$4,000 grant after no further discussion. A \$4,000 grant was approved for the SYV Rotary 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks.

Bion Rice provided the financial report, which included review of the March financials and projections for the remainder of 2016.

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

- Barbieri Spring Networking Reception recap: this event was a success and a great cross-section of the valley and our VisitSYV members.
- SYV Quick Draw update: While Holly Cline already shared the details during public comment, Shelby noted VisitSYV is excited by the updates to this annual event.
- VisitSYV is in talks of having a web present on Visit Santa Barbara's new website. Shelby will continue to discuss this with Visit Santa Barbara and update the board.
- Publication update: Griffin Publishing would like to renew a contract for 3 years with VisitSYV. This will be an action item at the next board meeting. Griffin is proposing reduced costs to VisitSYV in a staggered format for the next 3 guides.
- FSC Contract update: Shelby, Jessy and VisitSYV's attorney have all reviewed FSC's proposed new contract; VisitSYV is paying \$3,000 per month for website maintenance while the contract is still being revised per our attorney's recommendations.
- Activity report: Shelby shared that that VisitSYV has been approached to sponsor the 2017 Wine Tourism Conference here in the Santa Ynez Valley. The board recommended we look back at the Wine Bloggers conference and explore whether the benefits outweighed the costs. Jessy also asked Shelby to reach out to previous hosts and ask what the benefits were and if it matches what we would want for our region.

VisitSYV staff recommended partnering with the Solvang Conference & Visitors Bureau to bring the TAG (Travel Advocacy Group) presentation to the valley on Monday, May 23rd. VisitSYV would pay for first year of attending hoteliers' annual TAG certification dues, and hoteliers who wish to recertify will pay \$129 annually starting in year 2. Tracy Farhad spoke about the TAG program, which would help attendees understand and target the LGBT market. The SolvangCVB will cover the entire \$1,00 for the presentation; VisitSYV would advertise this to our hoteliers, as long as they show up, they can be certified. We'd like VisitSYV to pick up their first year at \$129. The rack rate is \$179 so we already have savings. The sessions will be open to the public and extend beyond hotels. The afternoon session would benefit the entire hospitality industry. Kady made a motion to approve VisitSYV's sponsorship of participating hoteliers for the first year of certification. Linda seconded, all in favor.

Shelby has been invited to be a celebrity contestant in the Teddy Bear Foundation's Annual Dancing Under the Stars fundraiser event on June 10, 2016, produced by Arthur Murray Dance Studio. A VisitSYV sponsorship would include a table for 10 representatives on behalf of VisitSYV. Linda made a motion to sponsor Shelby for \$1,500 to participate in this event; Tonya seconded it. Christine noted that this sounds like a community outreach event, which the board agreed is not VisitSYV's main focus; Shelby sees this as a branding opportunity. All in favor. VisitSYV will sponsor Shelby Sim to represent the organization in the Dancing Under the Stars event on June 10th.

VisitSYV would like to co-op with Visit Santa Barbara and the Santa Barbara Vintners for a Cultural Salon event in Santa Monica, in which we host approximately 50 media and influencers to promote our region and encourage future fam tours and PR coverage. The cost of this co-op is \$3,000. Morgen, Shelby and Danielle spoke on behalf of the event; this event will be a media salon, where SB Vintners, VisitSB and VisitSYV would be equal partners. Linda made a motion to support this event and have VisitSYV buy in at \$3,000. Bion seconded. Kady asked what VisitSYV's presence would be. Danielle & Shelby shared some of the SYV experiences VisitSYV would like to present at the event which would reaffirm the Santa Ynez Valley's presence. Danielle, Shelby, and other SYV participating partners would be present at the event. All in favor after no further discussion. The \$3,000 co-op for the Cultural Salon event was approved.

Danielle Laudon presented the Website, DVA, and Marketing Update which included updates on the DVA ad campaign, status of SEO, CCTC & the upcoming IPW tradeshow. Christine noted that she liked the new ad creative used in the DVA ad campaign and suggested sharing the digital assets with VisitSYV members to assist in the promotional efforts via social media. Danielle will ask DVA to provide a folder with the high res images to share. Danielle also shared during her report that she will be putting her name in the ring for a position on the Central Coast Tourism Council's board.

Board comments:

Bion shared upcoming events that Sunstone will be hosting, including Painting in the Vineyard with Gypsy Studios for Mother's Day, and an expanded Summer Solstice event. Bion also shared that he's been thinking about his role with VisitSYV and is very pleased with the evolution of VisitSYV, including the success of the new Spirit of the Valley education program; Bion shared that he doesn't feel like it's urgent for him to be Treasurer anymore, and would be happy to step down from that duty if another board member is interested in the responsibility and experience. Bion is also happy to continue to hold this role if no one else is interested. Linda thanked Danielle for her technological expertise and shared that she has DVA on track and keeps the DVA Committee so informed. Linda is thrilled Danielle is throwing her hat in the ring for CCTC. Linda also shared that the VisitSYV Networking Reception at Barbieri was a really nice event, and had no idea the winemaker and owner was a master sommelier. Last, Linda wanted to share how appreciative she is for what this organization does, and attributes her own increase in business to our organization and the destination awareness VisitSYV is creating. Jessy shared that along the lines of officers, we have an annual meeting coming up; all officer positions are up for re-election or new positions. We had a wonderful board retreat that went really well. One result from the retreat was a few people during Shelby's evaluation thought that the evaluation process needed tweaking. Jessy would like to redo Shelby's evaluation as Executive Director, and would like to have an action-item on the next board meeting to create an ad-hoc committee to recreate the board evaluation. Shelby forgot to add data project to this board meeting, which will be another recommended ad-hoc committee on next agenda. Morgen McLaughlin shared that the Winery Ordinance will be coming to planning and development on May 11, and going to the ag advisory committee early on May 4th. We need to show P&D that tourism wants to see a thriving wine industry. Michael Lerner is going forward with his project on Monday at 9:30am. Jessy asked if Shelby could send important dates to the board to attend these meetings if their time is permitting. Kady gave credit and thanks to Bion for all that he does for VisitSYV. Christine shared that the board retreat was a success, and we've done a lot and made great changes for this organization. Jim noted that we were worried in the beginning of the year because of the threat of El Nino, and yet the April numbers at Hotel Corque were off the charts. Barry announced The Landsby will be hosting the Solvang Chamber mixer event this evening and everyone is invited to attend. The Santa Ynez Inn closes on Sunday for renovation, and will be out for a week then done over time. Barry thanked Dr. Harwood for his reports every month. Tonya shared her excitement for Shelby participating in Dancing Under the Stars and thinks it's great that the board supports him in that. Tonya also shared that Flying Flags acquired the hotel next door, and the new manager is Randy Pace. The new name for the Days Inn will be Sideways Inn; Flying Flags also received their final sign off and permitting on the safari tents. Danielle shared details for upcoming Spirit of the Valley seminar, to be held Tuesday, May 17th at the Santa Ynez Valley Carriage Museum.

Linda made a motion to adjourn. Tonya seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:47am. The meeting adjourned at 10:47 am to the meeting of May 12, 2016, 9:00 a.m., The Landsby.

Prepared by Danielle Laudon,  
Marketing & Communications Manager

Approved by Christine Forsyth,  
Secretary