

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley February 16, 2017

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on February 16, 2017 at The Landsby, 1576 Mission Drive, Solvang. President Linda Johansen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Board members present included Linda Johansen, President, Bion Rice, Treasurer, Cammy Pinoli, Sherrie FitzGerald, and Randy Pace. Shelby Sim, Executive Director, Danielle Laudon, Director of Marketing, and Marisa Yott, Member Services, were present. Members of the public present included Dr. Kenneth Harwood, Dean Palius, Erica Valdes, Vincent Solario, Lisa Walter, Tracy Farhad, Anna Ferguson-Sparks, and Juliet Kingston.

Public comment was made by Dr. Harwood and Tracy Farhad. Dr. Harwood presented an economic report. Tracy Farhad provided an update on the upcoming Taste of Solvang promotion.

Randy made a motion to approve the January 12th, 2017 minutes as presented; Cammy seconded; all in favor, except Linda who abstained due to her absence at the prior meeting. The January 12th, 2017 minutes were approved.

The board reviewed a grant request for the Polo Classic presented by People Helping People, June 24, 2017; the requested amount is \$4,000. VisitSYV staff processed the grant, and the recommended amount came out to \$2,000. Dean Palius spoke on behalf of the event and thanked the board for last year's support. A number of attendees last year came from south of Ventura and Dean believes it's because of the advertising they did in Thousand Oaks and Malibu. Last year they offered a bus from Westlake. They'd like to create packages with VisitSYV hotels this year. Linda likes the idea of the bus driving visitors to our area, but understands that it goes back at the end of the day, and our mission is overnight stays. Dean says that it's possible the bus could drop people off at hotels. Shelby suggested Dean speak to Juliet Kingston with Grapeline about transportation. Sherrie made the motion to approve the recommended amount of \$2,000; Randy seconded, all in favor. A \$2,000 grant was approved.

Bion Rice presented the current financials.

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

- SBIFF recap: Shelby provided a PowerPoint presentation on the success of SBIFF. We had a strong presence from our board members in the lounge and at the festival. Highlights included our sponsorship of the world cinema series where our thirty second commercial played before each film, a gobo spotlight displayed our logo, and our pop ups were on display at the entrance of the theaters. Linda appreciates the effort Shelby and Danielle put into promoting SYV's presence at the show. Shelby would like to sponsor SBIFF for one more year to really reap all the benefits.
- Bay Area Travel & Adventure Show: Danielle executed the Bay Area Travel & Adventure Show with Randy Pace, who worked the show with her on Saturday and Sunday. Randy found it very educational, and believes VisitSYV should have some simplified, printed collateral listing all the things visitors can do in the valley. Up next is the LA Travel & Adventure Show which Danielle and Shelby will execute together.
- World of Pinot Noir (WOPN) Update: WOPN wanted to have one night of activities at El Capitan Ranch, but since it flooded, it has moved to Flying Flags. They'll be doing a wine tasting at the conference room of Sideways Inn. At the last meeting, Jim Rice suggested we get our destination guides into WOPN, and WOPN accepted this request.
- Santa Ynez Vacation Rental Proposal: The County is considering eliminating vacation rentals in anything less than 20 acres. We only have 1,550 rooms in the valley which is not enough for the visitation we currently receive. Leanne Schlinger, who owns Santa Ynez Vacation Rentals, pays for a single basic membership with VisitSYV every year; she would like to have all her properties join individually. If vacation rentals are eliminated, we will see large groups like families and bachelor/bachelorette parties reduce visitation. Linda asked whether they can be added to our TBID; vacation rentals are not currently eligible to pay into the TBID, and would have to be

considered at our next renewal. Linda asked if we could add this as an action item on the next board meeting agenda.

- Hotelier networking event update: Shelby has proposed we host this reception on March 14, 2017 from 5-7pm. This will be for hoteliers only.
- Activity Report for month of January

Danielle Laudon presented the Website, DVA, and Marketing Update which included updates on the DVA ad campaign, status of SEO, and recent PR successes.

Board comments: Sherrie noted that Alisal Guest Ranch & Resort is taking a new direction when hosting media; under new management, they will now include activities outside the ranch, including wine tasting; Alisal is moving forward with their new annual SYV Golf Tournament and they are looking for a non-profit organization to benefit; it will take place September 2017. Cammy shared that Fess Parker is busy with the new restaurant, slated to open in April; the new chef did a fam tour with the Parker family through the state of Texas and in competition they took first in chicken, third in brisket, and third overall; they had a blast and received excellent coverage; Cammy wants to talk to other hoteliers about occupancy separate from group sales and looking at leisure, as there has been some down traffic; weather has dictated occupancy. Randy said it's been a slow month. Sherrie also confirmed February has been down; our feeder market is LA and when it's raining, they're not going to drive to wine country, they'll either stay home or go to the snow. Linda had the same difficulties. Bion shared that the wine industry is down by about 15% in traffic, but average spend is up, so they're up about 5% in January so far; Valentine's Day traffic was down, and now with rain in the forecast for President's Day, we're looking at another slow weekend; Sunstone has been in the wedding industry for many years, and looking at the economic impact they've had on the valley, they estimate they've generated \$20-30 million in revenue for all vendors included; it's an incredible number of people it takes for these events; the county is challenging Sunstone now; it will be a year of great debate; Sunstone is looking at luxury high end tastings and will also concentrate on corporate groups. Cammy suggested VisitSYV pitch to large corporate companies like UGG and ask for meetings to showcase all the great activities and accommodations for groups; the board agreed this is an excellent idea. Shelby thanked Danielle who has been doing an excellent job, and thanked the board for helping to promote her; she's taken that seriously and is thriving; Shelby's head is a lot clearer and he is able to take on a lot more; tonight is the Solvang Community Awards, and as sponsors we have a table and now have two open seats. Bion has agreed to attend and take one of those seats. Linda shared that it's a great event scheduled tonight; this year the chamber members and community at-large voted on the winners, and Linda encourages all to attend. Randy shared that Sideways Inn has a tight deadline to accomplish their remodel; they're almost done with the exterior of the bar with a fireplace and glass panels; May 23rd is their grand event and he reminded all to mark their calendars. Danielle shared that she pitched at Sunset's office in Oakland recently and met with their wine editor; Danielle is excited for the marketing committee to meet and flesh out ideas for new photo assets. Linda thanked Shelby and Danielle for doing an amazing job and also getting us to collaborate often and well with Santa Barbara; Shelby gave a presentation at the SYV Rotary, and Linda noted how engaged and interested attendees were; Shelby has grown in his public speaking. Linda recommended Sherrie get her benefitting non-profit for the golf tournament named ASAP as that will help sell the event tremendously. With that said, Linda is amazed at this organization and our efforts and couldn't be prouder. Linda also thanked the public for attending our meetings and staying engaged in VisitSYV's efforts.

Randy made a motion to adjourn. Cammy seconded. All in favor. The meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m. to the meeting of March 9, 2017, 9:00 a.m., The Landsby.

Prepared by Danielle Laudon,
Director of Marketing

Approved by Bion Rice,
Treasurer