

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley February 13, 2020

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on February 13, 2020 at The Chumash Casino, 3400 CA-246, Santa Ynez. Chairman Linda Johansen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Board members present included Linda Johansen, Chairman, Sherrie FitzGerald, Secretary, Jonathan Rosenson, Treasurer, Karla Azahar, Budi Kazali, Will Henry, Kimberly Walker and Louise Smith. Shelby Sim, President & CEO, and Danielle Laudon Ruse, Vice President of Marketing, were present. Members of the public present included Stormie Strickland, Dr. Harwood, Phil Carpenter, Anna Ferguson-Sparks, Jim Flagg, Brenda Ball, Debra Eagle, Scott Gold, Jamie Baker, Raelynn Zenzius, Angie Aguirre, Correna Moreno, Andrew Moore, Anjie Park, and George Rose.

Before opening the meeting to public comment, Linda Johansen took a moment to honor community member and PR expert Laura Kath, who recently passed.

Dr. Harwood, Phil Carpenter, George Rose, and Brenda Ball provided public comment. Dr. Harwood provided an economic report. Phil Carpenter presented on behalf of Santa Barbara Vintners regarding their spring festival and their BID process. George Rose presented on behalf of Wildling Museum about their upcoming 20th anniversary, which they are seeking funds to promote. Brenda Ball provided tourism and visitor updates on behalf of the Solvang Visitors Center.

Sherrie made a motion to ratify Stormie Strickland of Hotel Corque & Hadsten House as a board member representing a Solvang Hotelier. Jonathan seconded, all in favor. Stormie joined the board as an active member.

Karla motioned to approve the December 12, 2019 minutes as presented; Will seconded. All in favor. The December 12, 2019 minutes were approved.

Jonathan Rosenson presented the current financials.

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

- Discover SYV television series update
- Grants approved through email vote (Buellton Wine & Chili Festival, \$4,000, and NatureTrack Film Festival, \$3,500)
- Sip & Savor recap (Dec. 28, 29, 30 event)
- Restaurant Weeks recap
- Visit CA Outlook Forum recap (San Diego 2/9-12)
- Denver Travel and Adventure Consumer show coming up (2/21-24)
- Los Alamos Theater Group \$1,000 donation to support Los Alamos Library
- Sim stepped down from Santa Barbara Courthouse Legacy Foundation Board and Santa Barbara Vintners Foundation Board
- Sim joined the Santa Ynez Chamber board
- Activity Report for month of December & January

Shelby presented two ancillary marketing proposals provided by both Madden Media and DVA; staff recommends running both campaigns to test new creative concepts, markets and new vendor. Sherrie asked for further clarification on what each marketing campaign would include. After further discussion, Jonathan made a motion to approve the recommendation of running each \$15k ancillary campaign. Sherrie seconded, all in favor. Shelby and Danielle will begin working with Madden Media and DVA to execute the campaigns.

Shelby presented the FirstStreet Creative contract which would extend our web maintenance services through 2021. Will made a motion to extend the contract; Louise seconded. All in favor. Staff will review additional vendors for bids (including DMO-specific vendors) in the future.

Danielle presented the monthly report on VisitSYV.com web trends, DVA PR and marketing efforts, and a final report on the successes of 2020 SYV Restaurant Weeks.

During Old Business and New Business, Jonathan suggested we further the conversation Shelby and Danielle brought up regarding sustainability. He suggested a new committee, to which Shelby suggested adding this topic to the existing marketing committee's discussions. Karla offered assistance as the SYV Marriott is a green hotel. Shelby and Danielle announced they'd like to hold a marketing committee retreat to discuss new marketing implementations and strategies. They will be in touch with the marketing committee to nail down a time and date.

Board Comments:

Shelby thanked Chumash for hosting us, and also shared gratitude for Andrew Economon's service over the years; Shelby announced we've contracted with a photographer for monthly delivery of new digital assets. Jonathan is excited to see new campaigns out and to be working with the marketing committee; he shared enthusiasm for the upcoming busy holiday weekend. Budi also noted it should be a great weekend; Restaurant Weeks was great for traffic, though there's a little dip after Valentine's Day coming up; Budi loves the marketing initiatives we have coming up. Stormie is excited to be a part of this and looks forward to contributing; Stormie shared her background with the group, having grown up in Santa Barbara County, worked at the Alisal for 12 ½ years, and been with Chumash and Hotel Corque for 10 years. Sherrie noted that January was a slower month; they were the host for the Annual Worldwide Dude Ranchers Association Convention which was interesting as they all come from the same background as the foundation of the ranch; Alisal is now gearing up for the SB Culinary Experience – the Ultimate Afterparty; they are pushing individual ticket sales now. Karla seconded Sherrie on January being a slower month; historically there were Vandenberg launches in January and this year there were none; Karla has recently opened a speakeasy and is promoting it for locals and via word of mouth; she shared that Restaurant Weeks was awesome and provided a lot of traffic in the hotel; March through May are pacing ahead of last year and she's hoping for a good half of the month. Louise said this was the first year she participated in Restaurant Weeks and it helped get exposure to her to-go window; she grew her mailing list and received a significant number of calls; her popups are held on Fridays and the current theme is Thai food; they'll be doing African food in March. Will shared it's been an interesting few weeks at Pico and Los Alamos continues

to shine; they parted ways with their chef, but they've got a new chef who started yesterday, he comes from Tao in Hollywood most recently. Kimberly shared Skyview had a good January; Kimberly is excited to hear about the Los Alamos Theater Group opening at the Antique Depot; Skyview will be opening Norman for an all-day experience for their guests in the near future. Danielle shared that the Santa Ynez Valley received some love at the Poppy Awards at the Visit California Outlook Forum, noting VisitSYV was nominated in the co-op category with Visit Santa Barbara, and Alisal Guest Ranch & Resort was nominated in the PR category.

Noting that we are missing a current Vice Chairman, Linda made a motion to nominate Sherrie FitzGerald as Vice Chairman, and Karla Azahar as Secretary; Jonathan seconded. All in favor. These positions will remain through end of term in June, when all board positions will be reassessed and ratified.

Linda thanked the Chumash for allowing us to continue our meetings here, and thanked Stormie for coming on board. Linda is looking forward to meeting with the marketing committee, and loves that staff took the initiative to hire a photographer; she noted that Restaurant Weeks was amazing and thanked Danielle and Shelby for their efforts; Linda noted Taste of Solvang won't be held this year, which is affecting room revenue; Linda thanked Shelby and Danielle for all they do, particularly the current travel and convention schedule where they represent the Santa Ynez Valley so well; Linda looks forward to what we can achieve this year; with things changing in Solvang and how we are moving forward, Linda believes this organization is more relevant than ever, and wants us to always be in the forefront, respectful to our community and colleagues and bring us forward, together. Linda thanked all the board members for their service and time.

The meeting adjourned at 10:08 a.m. to the meeting of March 12, 2020, 9:00 a.m., Chumash Casino, Santa Ynez.

Prepared by Danielle Laudon Ruse,
Vice President of Marketing

Approved by Karla Azahar,
Secretary