

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley August 20, 2020

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on August 20, 2020 remotely via Zoom. Chairman Linda Johansen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Board members present included Linda Johansen, Chairman, Sherrie FitzGerald, Vice Chairman, Budi Kazali, Kimberly Walker, Will Henry and Stormie Strickland. Board members absent included Jonathan Rosenson, Treasurer, Karla Azahar, Secretary, and Louise Smith. Shelby Sim, President & CEO, and Danielle Laudon Ruse, Vice President of Marketing, were present. Members of the public who RSVP'd included Dr. Harwood, Xenia Bradford, Maria Centrella, Stephen Janes, Debra Eagle, Channing Jones, Britt V. Meyer, Phil Janney, Phil Carpenter, Jamie Baker, Anna Ferguson Sparks, Jim Flagg, and Kim of Santa Barbara Adventure Co.

Dr. Harwood provided public comment, sharing an economic report.

Sherrie motioned to approve the July 9, 2020 minutes as presented; Will seconded. All in favor. The July 9, 2020 minutes were approved.

Shelby Sim presented the current financials and the proposed revised 2020 budget. The revised budget reflects adjusted numbers due to COVID-19 and has been recommended for approval by the previous marketing committee. Linda thanked Shelby, Danielle, and the committee for the revised budget and called for a motion for approval. Will made a motion to approve, Kimberly seconded, all in favor. The revised 2020 budget has been approved.

Shelby Sim provided the staff report, which included updates on the following:

- At Home with Visit the Santa Ynez Valley video series
- Marketing Committee update
- COVID-19 and recovery
- PPE for hotels through partnership with CH&LA: Shelby reminded hoteliers to pick up their complimentary PPE, which included hand sanitizer and masks.
- WineRam video production: production was a success and we will receive the footage in September.
- Solvang TBID collection: Solvang is in the process of collecting remaining TBID dues that were not collected from February, March and April.
- Visitors Center: VisitSYV was approached by the Solvang Mayor to put a proposal together to manage the Visitors Center which is currently closed. The Solvang Chamber has since expressed interest in submitting a bid to manage the Center. The City of Solvang will put out an RFP seeking all interested parties apply. VisitSYV will not submit a competing bid for management of the Visitor Center but instead would be happy to provide our ideas to enhance the Center.
- DiscoverSYV Series Season 1 complete
- TBID Renewal timing
- Activity Report for month of July

Danielle presented the monthly report on VisitSYV.com web trends, ad campaigns with DVA and Madden Media, and phased marketing efforts. With weekend visitation performing well in the Santa Ynez Valley, VisitSYV will be encouraging Sunday – Thursday midweek travel via an added content-driven campaign; content will cover broad benefits of midweek travel, outdoors/open spaces, and a work-cation angle.

In Old Business, New Business, Shelby brought up new business regarding Santa Barbara County Association of Government's (SBCAG) "SYV Bicycle Master Plan". SBCAG has requested VisitSYV submit a letter of support for a grant application which would fund the *Santa Ynez River Trail Alignment Study*. Linda and Sherrie raised

concerns over the trail's proposed route. After some discussion, the board reached a consensus that while they would like to support safe trails to connect the entire Santa Ynez Valley, they needed more information from SBCAG before they could confirm support in favor of funding the study. Shelby will contact Jared Carvalho at SBCAG to receive additional information.

Board Comments:

Sherrie expressed July was a good month for Alisal Guest Ranch, and they were able to welcome new guests to the property for the first time; they are still looking to fill the fall season; Sherrie loves the midweek promotion that Danielle is working on as Alisal already has a great package they're putting together to encourage midweek stays; Alisal is seeing success in last minute bookings and will continue to run short lead time promotions to encourage fall stays. Will shared updates on his recent travels where he saw how COVID is affecting other destinations; Will is seeing an increased demand for vacation homes as well as outdoor activities, including bike trails; Los Alamos has been notably busy but with short lead time travelers, and he hopes to see this continue in the fall. Budi shared the Ballard Inn has been busy on weekends but slower during the week; he expressed concern for the fall; The Gathering Table is doing well and has increased outdoor seating. Kimberly shared Skyview has had a busy summer and has seen an increase on weekday visitation from LA visitors; she is focused on the fall and winter months; Kimberly is currently trying to find consensus on whether hotels' dining rooms (which are currently closed) can be used as work-remote office space, and whether food could be delivered to such spaces; Shelby agreed this is a great question and will contact the county for insight; Danielle suggested we also contact the California Hotel & Lodging Association. Stormie shared Hotel Corque is currently repainting its exterior and remodeling the rooms for a more contemporary look; regarding Root 246, Chumash Enterprise is still in the decision-making process for the future of the restaurant; summer has been good for Corque and they have some small group business scheduled for the fall; all corporate group business has moved to 2021; the Wine Country Marathon organizers are still tentatively planning to hold the marathon this year; Stormie's hope is that after Labor Day weekend the governor will re-open indoor dining. Danielle expressed gratitude to the board for their thorough updates during board comments; hearing directly about the trends board members are seeing in the field allows the VisitSYV team to adjust current marketing tactics, which has become essential with California's evolving stages of reopening. Shelby agreed with Danielle board comments have been of significant value; as an organization Shelby feels VisitSYV has been doing extremely well during these trying times; we are proud of the outreach we are doing, and are grateful for the weekends; Shelby is also hopeful that things will open up more after Labor Day weekend. Linda shared that the weekends have been full for both King Frederik and Pea Soup Anderson's Inn; Linda agrees that driving midweek traffic should be a focus; Linda commented that the recent power outage and heatwave causes issues over the weekend; on a positive note, COVID numbers are going down, and she sees a wide adoption of masks; she encouraged everyone to make sure they are wearing the appropriate style of face coverings for safety; Linda cannot wait to see the finished product from the WineRam shoot and thanked Shelby and Danielle for their work on this project; Linda expressed how proud she is of every SYV business for the adjustments they have made to persevere. Linda thanked the board and public for attending these meetings while they continue to do great work to keep things going for the Santa Ynez Valley.

The meeting adjourned at 10:30 am to the meeting of September 10, 2020, 9:00 a.m., tentatively scheduled remotely via Zoom.

Prepared by Danielle Laudon Ruse,
Vice President of Marketing

Approved by Sherrie FitzGerald,
Vice Chairman