

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley September 10, 2020

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on September 10, 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, Jonathan Rosenson, Treasurer, Budi Kazali, Louise Smith, and Will Henry. Board members absent included Karla Azahar, Secretary, Stormie Strickland and Kimberly Walker. Shelby Sim, President & CEO, and Danielle Laudon Ruse, Vice President of Marketing, were present. Members of the public who RSVP'd included Dr. Harwood, Stephen Janes, Debra Eagle, Channing Jones, Phil Carpenter, Jamie Baker, Anna Ferguson Sparks, Jim Flagg, and Kim Vawter.

Dr. Harwood, Anna Ferguson Sparks, and Jamie Baker provided public comment. Dr. Harwood shared an economic report and a COVID-19 update. Anna Ferguson Sparks provided a "Skål Solvang" update, which is a 4 week-long event in place of Danish Days. The promotion will have virtual and in-person events; Anna also shared that SYV Scarecrow Fest will take place and run all of October. Jamie Baker confirmed that he is on the ballot running for Solvang City Council. Jamie is attending the board meeting to stay abreast of what is happening in the community.

Jonathan motioned to approve the August 20, 2020 minutes as presented; Will seconded. All in favor. The August 20, 2020 minutes were approved.

Jonathan presented the current financials. The organization has done an excellent job of adapting and reducing expenses to fit within the revised 2020 budget.

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

- WineRam video production – staff has received the first cut of the 90 second "Place to Be" commercial and is working with WineRam on edits. The team is excited to have something to share at the next board meeting.
- Submitted letter in support of grant to study SYV Bicycle Trails
- Submitted Q2 Report
- Publication Committee Update – the publication committee met and has agreed that the 2021 guide should debut in January 2021 rather than December 2020. The committee is also interested in seeing a more digital friendly guide, and staff is looking into our options.
- Final DiscoverSYV Season 1 episode aired
- COVID-19 and recovery
- Status of dining rooms at hotels – Shelby contacted the California Hotel & Lodging Association (CH&LA) to inquire whether hotels could convert their dining rooms into spaces for remote work; CH&LA confirmed dining rooms can be converted into temporary work stations; any food provided would need to be pre-packaged, and no alcohol may be provided. Shelby also contacted Santa Barbara County Board Supervisor Joan Hartmann who sought confirmation but was unable to provide guidance from the county at this time.
- Civitas – VisitSYV will begin the TBID renewal process in October and will provide additional updates next month.
- Activity Report for month of August

Danielle presented the monthly report on VisitSYV.com web trends, ad campaigns with DVA and Madden Media, and phased marketing efforts. Danielle announced the new midweek promotion campaign is live and shared VisitSYV.com has undergone a beautiful website refresh. PR was strong for the month of September and we are seeing an increase in media visitation.

In Old Business, Shelby shared an update on the Solvang Visitors Center. The City of Solvang put out an RFP for managing the Center, and the public has until September 15th to submit a proposal. If other organizations do not submit, VisitSYV will be prepared to submit a proposal to reopen the Visitors Center. In New Business, Shelby shared that he recently met with Santa Barbara Vintners President, Stephen Janes, and they discussed the branding of the association, and the Vintners' proposed BID. Shelby expressed VisitSYV would better be able to support the Vintners and their efforts if they reincorporated County back into their branding, which would then include north county and the Santa Ynez Valley in their marketing. Stephen announced that they will be updating their logos, branding, and messaging to include County. VisitSYV looks forward to the opportunity to work with Vintners when these updates are in effect. Linda thanked Stephen for the effort to work together.

Board Comments:

Sherrie provided an update on Alisal; they were at full capacity during the record heatwave, and thanks to their marketing efforts, they have a solid September lined up; in October, they'll host BBQ Bootcamp which is sold out; they'll be filming short vignettes in October for digital promotions, and will be updating photography on their website featuring the Nathan Turner rooms; they have a midweek promotion called "The Alisal Academy" that Sherrie will share with Danielle for the website in October; Alisal will be opening up their horseback rides to the public. Louise shared that private catering has been flat and she's been focused on takeout which is performing very well; Louise will be doing hotel outreach in October to increase awareness among visitors, and will be offering delivery for hotel guests; Louise has been offering takeout for vineyard crews during harvest. Jonathan shared that Coquelicot is busy with harvest, Mirabelle Inn is steady, and First & Oak has been steady since they've switched to a more a la carte style of dining which is working well for both locals and tourists; he's also noticed a quicker table turnaround. Will shared Lumen is quite busy with harvest, the weather last weekend kicked things into high gear; Pico continues to do well, they were busy over the weekend despite the heat; Will loves the midweek promotion and congratulated Danielle and Shelby on the campaign. Budi started by saying there is a lot to be thankful for; their Labor Day weekend was a success; Budi also loves the push for weekday visitation, especially as we go into October; everything is going well at the restaurant and inn. Danielle shared that there has been a significant return of large-scale media visits; Shelby and Danielle respectively met with Thrillist and Sunset over the weekend; Danielle shared her gratitude for Shelby who spent an entire day going from one media visit to the next; she confirmed the visits are socially distanced and media has been very respectful of the new travel climate. Shelby shared his gratitude of the board for their volunteerism and efforts; he thanked Linda for her encouragement and how she keeps everyone active and engaged; Shelby recognized how hard the board has been working in their own respective businesses while also volunteering to serve; COVID has led to staffing challenges and board members are going above and beyond in their efforts. Shelby gave accolades and gratitude to Danielle for her consistent drive, and execution of the midweek campaign and website redesign. Linda is so proud of the organization, and Shelby and Danielle for leading the charge; she is proud of the collective efforts of the board. She sees this community as resilient and recognizes everyone's incredible ability to progress forward. By working together, she believes we can achieve great things for our community.

The meeting adjourned at 10:09 am to the meeting of October 8, 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