

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley January 14, 2021

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on January 14, 2021 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, Karla Azahar, Secretary, Stormie Strickland, Budi Kazali, Will Henry, and Louise Smith. Board members absent included 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, Brenda Ball, Joanne Lodato, Debra Eagle, Channing Jones, Erica Jane Flores, Jim Flagg, Anna Ferguson Sparks, and Phil Carpenter.

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

Sherrie motioned to approve the December 10, 2020 minutes as presented; Jonathan seconded; Karla abstained due to her absence at the December meeting. All others in favor. The December 10, 2020 minutes were approved.

Jonathan Rosenson presented the current financials.

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

- TBID Renewal Update: The SYVTBID has officially been renewed and the new \$3 assessment will take effect in July when the new term begins.
- Publication Guide Update: The new 2021 destination guides will be delivered this Friday, with direct mailings and the digital release taking place next week.
- Restaurant Weeks 2021: The Takeout Edition of Restaurant Weeks begins on Monday, January 18th.
- COVID-19 Update: As numbers are high in the Santa Ynez Valley at the moment, Shelby reminded all we must remain vigilant in our safety practices.
- Membership dues in 2021: After eliminating dues in 2020 due to the pandemic, 2021 membership dues will be invoiced in November to allow further recovery.
- Activity Report for month of January.

Both the publication committee and marketing committee have recently discussed the potential for developing a mobile app. Suggestions have included developing a mobile app for Santa Ynez Valley alone; partnering with other Santa Barbara County DMOs to create a collaborative app; partnering with existing travel-related apps; and investing further in optimizing the current website for mobile. During board discussion, the consensus became interest in a county-wide app that would have an interactive map featuring wineries, restaurants, and hiking routes. Staff will move forward with outreach among Santa Barbara County DMOs to gauge interest in creating a collaborative mobile app, focusing on an interactive map; staff will also research existing DMO apps.

Staff recommends contracting with Madden Media for SEO and presented a "Silver Tier" one year plan for optimizing VisitSYV.com. Stormie made a motion to approve the recommended one year, silver tier SEO contract with Madden Media; Louise seconded, all in favor. Staff will kickoff the new SEO strategy with Madden and provide an update next month.

Danielle presented the monthly report on VisitSYV.com web trends, ad campaigns with DVA and Madden Media, phased marketing efforts, and debuted the cover of the 2021 Destination Guide.

Board Comments:

Budi provided an update on the status of Ballard Inn & Gathering Table; while the inn is closed, they are offering takeout from The Gathering Table. Louise provided an update for Louise's Kitchen Table and takeout at The

Castle; she has been busy at both front and back of house with limited staff due to COVID; Louise is looking forward to Restaurant Weeks and is thrilled so many restaurants are on board. Karla shared an update on behalf of SYV Marriott; occupancy is low due to being open for essential travel only; business has been good in terms of takeout. Jonathan shared that First & Oak will be offering three different menus for Restaurant Weeks; for Valentine's Day they'll be offering a virtual wine blending party. Sherrie wished everyone a happy new year and shared that Alisal is still shut down for both dining and overnight stays; the golf course remains open; the ranch is projecting they will bring back the core team in early February. Will shared what a rollercoaster it's been for PICO; he's very hopeful for Restaurant Weeks that it will be great for takeout and shared the burger and wine special for two they're offering; Will sees positive signs for the road ahead once we get out of the weeds. Danielle thanked Linda, Shelby and the board for all their efforts in getting the TBID renewed. She looks forward to seeing the vaccine rollout take place and welcoming more people back to the Santa Ynez Valley. Shelby shared that PPP has been opened to DMOs; he attended a webinar and learned that our organization could easily apply for PPP funding, however with the strength of our budgeting and financial health, he does not believe it make sense for us to apply; he is happy to chat if any board members feel otherwise. Shelby thanked the board and Danielle for their support in renewing the TBID and gave Danielle accolades for pounding the pavement with him. Linda was masterful with her words in advocating for our organization. Shelby also commended Danielle for the work she's been doing on SYV Restaurant Weeks. Linda expressed her great pride in our organization and appreciation for Shelby and his work on the TBID renewal; she thanked Danielle for the Restaurant Weeks promotion and is elated by the amount of participation by our restaurants and tasting rooms. Linda recognized what a difficult time this is for everyone and encouraged people to reach out if they need support during this time. Linda also complimented Shelby and Danielle on the marketing materials that have gone out in the last year and is excited to see what's to come for the 2021 campaign. Last, Linda would like to see the board get together for a retreat to plan the year ahead.

The meeting adjourned at 10:12 am to the meeting of February 11, 2021, 9:00 a.m.. Due to COVID safety precautions, the meeting is tentatively scheduled remotely via Zoom.

Prepared by Danielle Laudon Ruse,
Vice President of Marketing

Approved by Karla Azahar,
Secretary