

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley March 11, 2021

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on March 11, 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, Budi Kazali, Will Henry, and Louise Smith. 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, Erica Flores, Phil Carpenter, James Flagg, Correna Moreno, Philip Grant, Anna Ferguson Sparks, Valerie Kissell, and Anna Rice.

Dr. Harwood and Valerie Kissell provided public comment. Dr. Harwood shared an economic report. Valerie Kissell provided an update on behalf of People Helping People, introducing herself as their new CEO.

Sherrie motioned to approve the February 11, 2021 minutes as presented; Will seconded; All in favor. The February 11, 2021 minutes were approved.

Jonathan Rosenson presented the current financials.

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

- COVID-19 Update: The COVID-19 case numbers in Santa Barbara County are steadily declining and we are projected to move into the “Red Tier” within the next week.
- Board Retreat: The retreat is scheduled for May 20th for the board to hold team building exercises and review short term goals. In the future, retreats will take place in the fall so that any new board members who join after the summer elections will have the opportunity to learn from the retreat.
- 2020 Annual Report: The annual report was submitted yesterday morning to Santa Barbara County, the City of Solvang, and City of Buellton. City of Solvang has us on the calendar to present the report on March 22nd.
- Destinations International, July 13-15: Staff may have an opportunity to attend this educational summit in person this year in Baltimore.
- Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley 2021: We intend to hold TasteSYV November 4 – 7th, with a smaller than usual structure. Staff will flesh this out further in the coming months.
- IPW 2021: Staff attended a webinar to learn more about the format for the September 2021 conference; there is a limit to the number of attendees per booth this year, and a double booth can only hold 4 representatives; because of this limitation, Shelby, Danielle, Kathy Vreeland of the Buellton Visitors Bureau, and Greg Corso (who will be contracted on behalf of VisitSYV) are tentatively scheduled to work the booth this year. Staff is also tentatively scheduled to attend the Dallas Travel & Adventure Show in September 2021 and is gauging how COVID-19 is being handled within the state and what safety measures will be in place at the show.
- Activity Report for month of February.

Shelby presented the new Midweek Promotion put together by staff and DVA with the feedback of board members Budi Kazali and Jonathan Rosenson. With the midweek promotion, guests who book two consecutive nights Sunday – Thursday at hotels within the SYVTBID through April 30th will receive 3 passport cards; each card could then be redeemed for a wine tasting for two or \$20 dining credit at participating wineries and restaurants. VisitSYV will then reimburse the winery and restaurant participants \$20 for each card collected. The campaign is ready to kick off as early as Monday of next week. This would be a trial program and if successful will be something we can execute the entire first quarter of 2022. It will be incorporated into our current DVA digital program, with up to \$10k approved to be used for the printed creative materials and the passport card reimbursements. Linda made a motion to approve the \$10,000 spend for the midweek promotion; Jonathan seconded; all in favor. The \$10,000 spend for the midweek promotion was approved.

Shelby presented the Visit Widget opportunity to the board. Visit Widget is an itinerary-building widget; the basic plan would provide both a responsive mobile app for iOS and Android devices, as well as an enhanced mobile and website experience for users on VisitSYV.com. The plan has a \$3,000 setup fee and \$299 monthly fee that would begin once the development is complete. Discover Buellton is among the 100s of DMO clients currently using Visit Widget. It also has a map feature which visitors can use to find nearby attractions while they are on the ground visiting the Santa Ynez Valley. Will made a motion to approve the basic plan, Budi seconded; all in favor. The basic plan with Visit Widget was approved. Danielle will share progress on the setup at next month's meeting and will incorporate Visit Widget insights into her monthly marketing reports.

Danielle presented the monthly report on VisitSYV.com web trends, ad campaigns with DVA, and SEO with Madden Media.

Board Comments:

Will provided insights on emerging travel patterns based on his own recent travels; the drive market is entering a large boom. He notes as a destination we have really capitalized on this drive opportunity, taking advantage of our proximity to large drive markets. In February PICO saw some of the largest numbers they have ever seen for weekend visitation. Budi shared The Gathering Table has been doing well and they are seeing an increase in hotel bookings; the future is looking good, and he also believes any day now we should be in Red Tier, which is a step in the right direction. Jonathan echoed Will's earlier sentiments, noting it is great to see so many visitors and the return to travel. They will return to 7 days a week of dining at First & Oak and are excited to see what spring and summer have in store. Sherrie provided an update on behalf of Alisal, who reopened at end of February; they have an incredible March on the books and weekends are sold out. She is excited to see the LA market and Orange County responding so positively to the drive market getaway. BBQ Bootcamp is coming up in May and they are celebrating their 75th anniversary; they also have a BBQ Bootcamp scheduled for fall and will feature female chefs specializing in BBQ. Sherrie closed by giving accolades to the Annual Report staff submitted. Danielle sang the praises of DVA, who helped put together the midweek promotion in record time, with beautiful, well executed creative; she also expressed gratitude for the board who helped finesse this idea. Last, Danielle shared the midweek promotion will be announced on The Weather Channel this coming Friday in a 2-minute spot secured for us by DVA. Shelby expressed thanks to Danielle, Linda and the entire board. He is motivated and excited as ever for the new opportunities we are facing, noting there is never a dull moment. Linda attributes the organization's success to being proactive instead of reactive. She gave accolades to the staff and thanked the entire board for their commitment to the organization, and for being resilient at their own respective businesses during this time. There is light at the end of the tunnel, and she sees great opportunity for success for the entire community. Linda also shared how impressed she was with the annual report which details the success of the organization. Linda closed the meeting thanking all who joined today.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 am to the meeting of April 8, 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 Sherrie FitzGerald,
Vice Chairman