

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley December 9, 2021

Visit the Santa Ynez Valley held a board meeting on December 9, 2021 at Chumash Casino Resort. Chairman Linda Johansen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Board members present included Chairman Linda Johansen, Vice Chairman Jonathan Rosenson, Secretary Stormie Strickland, Kathleen Cochran, Greer Shull, Will Henry, and Kimberly Walker (via conference line). Shelby Sim, President & CEO, Danielle Laudon Ruse, Vice President of Marketing, and Brenda Ball, Website and Membership Administrator, were present. Board Member Jim Flagg was absent. Members of the public present included Anna Ferguson Sparks and Dave Elcon.

Danielle shared an economic report on behalf of Dr. Kenneth Harwood during public comment.

Kathleen motioned to approve the November 18, 2021 minutes as presented; Stormie seconded; all in favor, the November 18, 2021 minutes were approved.

Shelby presented the current financials in Jim Flagg's absence.

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

- COVID-19 Update
- DiscoverSYV filming underway; we have 5 episodes in the can, the show will premier in February.
- 2022 Destination Guide
 - Launch Date: January 13th
 - Goes to print today, December 9th
- Restaurant Weeks 2022 update
- Sunset & TasteSYV Opportunity update
 - Staff is meeting with the Sunset team via zoom on Monday.
- Membership renewals update & member appreciation reception: To be held in Coquelicot's courtyard this evening, we're expecting about 80 or so people.
- Midweek Promotion update: we have over 30 members participating in this promotion.
- World of Pinot Noir Sponsorship
- Buellton Fall Festival Sponsorship
- Activity Report for month of November

Shelby presented the board with a Westways Co-Op ad buy. Staff recommends partnering with Discover Buellton on the co-op for \$10,000; the two-page advertorial spread would be delivered to 500k households. Will made a motion to approve; Stormie seconded. The \$10,000 ad buy was approved.

Danielle presented reports on VisitSYV.com web trends, the progress of our ad campaigns with DVA, a Visit Widget update, and SEO with Madden Media for the month of November.

Board Comments:

Kathleen asked if there was an update on STR reports; Shelby let her know yes, we've reached out and will follow-up at the next meeting with an update. Kathleen also brought up the notion of "ski week" - a two-week period in February – which is a huge opportunity to attract travel.

Kimberly shared Skyview and Hotel Ynez are seeing high occupancy on weekends; this is the first Christmas season for Hotel Ynez and they decorated the property accordingly and have been serving mulled wine and Christmas cookies, extending the Julefest cheer.

Stormie shared that a 3rd party is leasing Root 246 and they are taking over in January; there is no opening date at this time for the new restaurant.

Will shared a story about Clark Staub, owner of Full of Life Flatbread, and how the town of Los Alamos has cemented itself as a destination thanks to the restaurants and wineries that line Bell Street; Will thanked VisitSYV for helping to put Los Alamos on the map. At PICO – things are still going really strong. Will's wife and partner has opened a shop down the street from PICO, and Elderflat has opened their shop as well, trying to enhance the guest experience in town; they'll be kicking off The Dirt Shephard's tours to sustainable farms and vineyards soon.

Kathleen shared Alisal is in the middle of a rebranding exercise; they've reskinned the site if you want to get a feel for their new look. The hotel is at 85% occupancy for the month of December. She's very grateful, they've never had this type of December occupancy. Their Jan – March occupancy already looks incredible as well. She has a new marketing manager with a strong marketing background. Kathleen has also hired a #2, Director of Hotel Operations, and a new front office manager.

Greer shared things are busy and steady for Fess Parker. They're doing a refresh of the Inn which will include new paint, furnishings and overall new vibe for public spaces and rooms. This will be a Q1 initiative.

Jonathan shared he never would have thought a year ago we'd be talking about 85% occupancy and the incredible numbers we've all been seeing. It's incredible to see the success, and the partnerships that have developed. To see the town full is amazing. The staff is overworked but are also happy to see such business. Jonathan thinks projections are strong for 2022. It's been nice to see it all come full circle.

Brenda is delighted to be on board with the team and expressed she has admired the work Shelby and Danielle have done for year, delighted to be on the inside now. She thinks she'll really enjoy it and hopes her skills will be an asset to the Santa Ynez Valley.

Danielle expressed her gratitude and excitement that she gets to work with Brenda, and is ecstatic for the work she's been able to achieve with Shelby thus far.

Shelby thanked Stormie for hosting us. He noted Tensley has a new tasting room and has moved into Martian Vineyard's old location. Shelby asked if everyone has seen that the Board of Supervisors has remapped the district, noting that Los Alamos will now be in the 4th district. Shelby welcomed Brenda to the team and said it was delightful having our first day together. Shelby thanked the board, expressing gratitude for the work we get to achieve with their support.

Linda expressed gratitude to the board, Shelby, Danielle and now Brenda. She appreciates everyone more than she could ever say. She thanked the public for attending, noting it's a team effort and we couldn't do it without you. She gave a major shoutout and thank you to all the communities in the SYV that have made our Valley a winter wonderland. Local people and visitors alike are able to enjoy the festive environment. With that said, she hopes everyone has a joyous holiday surrounded by loved ones.

Shelby concluded the meeting thanking Danielle for all of her work and partnership.

The meeting adjourned at 9:50am to the meeting of January 13, 2022

Prepared by Danielle Laudon Ruse,
Vice President of Marketing

Approved by Stormie Strickland,
Secretary