

Minutes of the Board of Directors of Visit the Santa Ynez Valley July 13, 2023

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 9:54 a.m.

Location: Alisal Ranch

Introductions

Linda Johansen called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone. Board members present included Chairman Linda Johansen, Secretary Stormie Strickland, Kathleen Cochran, Greer Shull, Michael Brughelli, and Vice Chairman Jonathan Rosenson and Will Henry via phone; Jim Flagg and Dave Elcon were absent. President & CEO Shelby Sim, Vice President of Marketing Danielle Ruse, and Website & Membership Administrator Brenda Ball were present. Members of the public present included Michelle Boss, Debra Eagle, Phil Carpenter, Don Connor, Emily Byram and Josh Lujan.

Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items

Members of the public were given the opportunity to provide comments, limited to three minutes. The following public comment was made:

- Danielle Ruse presented Dr. Harwood's economic report.
- Debra Eagle shared her gratitude for the grant provided by VisitSYV for the mental health walk hosted by Alma Rosa which supports Santa Barbara County mental health non-profit organizations.
- Emily Byram reported on Santa Barbara Vintners' Beyond the Bottle event, which VisitSYV sponsored with a grant. There were approximately 30-50 attendees present at each event. Marketing dollars were used to target Southern California residents via Meta ads.
- Josh Lujan applauded the Solvang 4th of July fireworks show and noted the travel weekend before July 4th was solid and Monday prior to the 4th sold out at SYV Marriott. Linda thanked the SYV Rotary for their hard work in making the event happen.

Approval of Board Meeting Minutes (June 8th, 2023)

Kathleen motioned to approve the minutes; Michael seconded the motion. All members voted in favor. The minutes of the June 8th, 2023 meeting were approved.

Financial Report

Shelby Sim presented a review of the current financials.

Staff Report

Shelby Sim provided updates on various topics, including:

- Sponsoring ILR Arts Foundation's Movies at the SYV Botanic Garden with \$500
- Exploring a full-time Sales Representative
- Destination Guide distribution increase of \$100 monthly (1st increase since 2014)
- Visit CA Regional Advisory Committee 1st meeting on August 4th
- Destinations International Conference on July 18-21 in Dallas, Texas

- US Travel's ESTO Conference on August 18-23 in Savannah, Georgia
- Update on Taste of the Santa Ynez Valley scheduled for September 28th- October 1st
- Proposal to skip the September board meeting and hold the 2023 Retreat on September 14th from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- Discussion on the 2023 Annual meeting date in October
- Activity Report for June

Marketing Update

Danielle Ruse provided a review of DVA Marketing, Visitor Data, and the Website for June.

Old Business & New Business

- In old business, Shelby shared that the board voted via email not to provide a sponsorship for a writers group that would not be staying overnight in the Santa Ynez Valley.
- In new business, Linda proposed we offer the board the opportunity to go ziplining following the board retreat in September.

Board Comments

Danielle shared her gratitude for the time on maternity leave and expressed excitement to be back at it with VisitSYV and Shelby. Brenda shared an SEO tip. Greer shared that the Fess Parker Wine Country Inn renovation is complete, and they have continued a successful concert series at the winery. Kathleen shared occupancy is down but explained it is a strategic move with their rate increase. She also mentioned adding AC to all rooms, which guests have loved. Fall bookings are starting to pick up. Michael shared Folded Hills tasting rooms had a great 4th of July weekend with more foot traffic than anticipated. They have upcoming events planned, including food truck and live music events. Stormie shared The Hadsten has a tentative August 1st open date pending certification. Hotel Corque has been busy but not yet sold out; revenue and average daily rate are up, and the 4th of July was extremely busy. Will shared a significant increase in midweek traffic in Los Alamos and mentioned changes in the menu at Pico. Kali is taking over as Executive Chef. Jonathan shared strong occupancy at Mirabelle Inn and mentioned a new burger to be added to the restaurant's menu. Shelby welcomed Danielle back, thanked Alisal for hosting the meeting, and expressed gratitude to Kathleen for hiring his son Aiden, who is enjoying the job. He also mentioned Solvang recently hired a marketing agency and their plans to attend the next meeting. Linda thanked the board for their dedication, recognized the busy summer season in the Santa Ynez Valley, and encouraged attendees to approach VisitSYV with questions or comments. She mentioned various ongoing activities and events that have increased visitation. Shelby added that Jessica Schley has been introducing guests at Alisal to one of the horses early in the morning and suggested we could open next month's meeting with an introduction.

The meeting adjourned at 9:54am. The next board meeting will be held August 10th, 2023, 9:00 a.m. at The Alisal Ranch.

Prepared by Danielle Ruse,
Vice President of Marketing

Approved by Stormie Strickland,
Secretary