

**Minutes  
Executive Committee of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance  
Wednesday, March 9, 2016  
Adorni Center, Eureka, California**

Present: Gary Stone, Chris Ambrosini, Lowell Daniels, Mike Caldwell, John Porter, Donna Hufford, Tony Smithers

Guests: Pat Wille

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm. The minutes of the February meeting were reviewed and approved (Porter/Daniels/unanimous), and the March meeting agenda was approved as submitted (Caldwell/Stone/unanimous).

The first item of business was a request for funding support from the Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau to provide concierge training to Humboldt County front desk and hospitality staff. Tony Smithers represented the bureau along with Pat Wille, chair of the bureau's Hospitality Committee. Following a proposal submitted to the committee in advance, Smithers outlined a program consisting of both "Fam Trips" to familiarize front desk staff with the most popular Humboldt County attractions, as well as a classroom component to teach "front desk etiquette" and customer service skills. The Executive Committee was very concerned by the omission of Shelter Cove and Willow Creek from the Fam Trip itineraries, and directed the applicants to add these destinations to the program (either as a separate tour as an extended Southern Humboldt tour). Lowell Daniels made the motion to approve funding of \$20,000 with the condition that these additional tours are added. John Porter seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Next on the agenda was the marketing campaign report and agency update. A March 2016 Status Report had been received from Misfit and distributed in the committee packet, including: the February photo & video shoot, cable TV advertising creative and schedule, online advertising including the new Weekend Sherpa content, Print advertising, the [www.visithumboldt.com](http://www.visithumboldt.com) website and the hotel front desk kit that had been delivered. A discussion about the makeup of the agency subcommittee was held, with Mike Caldwell asking if he was on the subcommittee. Chris Ambrosini responded by officially appointing Caldwell along with Gary Stone as the agency subcommittee.

The Executive Committee next considered replacement of Brad Laws, who had left the Red Lion Hotel and Humboldt County, on the HLA board and executive committee. Chris Ambrosini nominated Cari Shafer, Mr. Laws' replacement as GM of the Red Lion. Gary Stone moved to appoint Shafer to the board, John Porter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

John Porter then made the motion to appoint Shafer to the Executive Committee, saying "She IS up to speed." Gary Stone seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Tony Smithers then presented the committee with his plan for distribution of the Front Desk Kit. A written plan along with a draft letter to lodging properties was included in the committee packet. The

plan entailed committee members handling personal distribution in their own communities, with staff filling in around the edges. The plan was approved as presented.

The committee then discussed plans for renewal of the Humboldt County Tourism Business Improvement District. John Porter began by stating that the HLA needs to move ahead with this process. The participants at the January HLA board retreat were unanimous in agreeing the district should be renewed. There was a great deal of discussion about changes to the Management District Plan and the distribution formula for revenues, but the clear consensus was to renew for a five-year term.

Mike Caldwell raised the notion that a longer-term district would provide greater leverage for the financing of long-term projects, especially capital improvements.

Chris Ambrosini said that April was too soon to make an appeal for renewal to the HLA membership. "We need a plan we can defend," he said. Lowell Daniels suggested that the consultants from Civitas, the company that assisted with the original district formation, should be asked to attend a special meeting of the Executive Committee to get things rolling. Staff was directed to contact Civitas to ascertain their availability in the coming month.

The financial statement for February, 2016 was then presented for the committee's approval. Lowell Daniels moved to accept the report, Mike Caldwell seconded, motion passed unanimously.

John Porter requested that another page be added to the monthly financial reports to specifically track the advertising/marketing campaign finances.

Under Ongoing Projects, a letter to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors in support of vacation rental regulation was approved for mailing (Porter/Caldwell/unanimous).

The Destination Photography Project with Gary Todoroff was ready to wrap up. Chris Ambrosini said he would work with staff to distill the final selection of 150 images, which were to be posted on the Misfit creative asset website to be made available to all assessed HLA businesses.

Under Public Comment, Lowell Daniels and Pat Wille reported on plans for the "Concourse on Main" event in Ferndale, scheduled for Labor Day weekend. This luxury vintage car event would have 20 judges and over 100 participating vehicles, which would provide a significant number of room nights. Daniels said that the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce would provide some funding, and asked that this event be placed on the April HLA Executive Committee agenda to consider Lodging Alliance support.

Donna Hufford reported on the National Park Centennial event being planned in Redwood National Park. There will be a Centennial Celebration event on June 26 which she would be funding out of the Northern Humboldt Community Tourism fund, she said.

With no further time, the meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers