

**Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance,
Wednesday, March 18, 2015
Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California**

Present: Brad Laws, Mike Caldwell, Gary Stone, Marc Rowley, Chris Ambrosini, Donna Hufford, Lowell Daniels, Tony Smithers

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by board chair Chris Ambrosini

The minutes of the February, 2015 meeting were examined and approved (Laws/Rowley/unanimous).

The agenda for March, 2015 was approved with the following change: Switch items #1 and #2 on the scheduled agenda (Rowley/Caldwell/unanimous).

The first item of business was to receive a presentation and funding request for the Redwood EdVentures program of the Redwood Parks Association, California State Parks and the Humboldt County Office of Education. Beth Chatton of the HCOE and Susan Doniger of CA State Parks made the presentation, explaining how the Redwood EdVentures program grew out of the State Parks PORTS program that brings the redwoods into classrooms with virtual technology. This program, they said, has been delivered in 37 states and five countries, with 50 percent of the participation coming from California classrooms. The "Quest" part of the program is a national movement to make public parks and lands more interesting and accessible to families, providing a "scavenger hunt" format for exploring the parks. The partnership in Humboldt County had created its own Quests and also re-branded a few Quests created by other agencies under the "Redwood EdVentures" title, and there are now a total of 17 Quests or EdVentures in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

Regarding the funding request of \$8,000 to print Redwood EdVentures brochures (and other program collateral) which are available for distribution in local hotels, Marc Rowley said it was "a no-brainer." Mike Caldwell inquired how another Quest is added to the program, and the presenters suggested contacts at the Bureau of Land Management and Southern Humboldt schools who could collaborate with him. The motion to approve the request was made by Donna Hufford, seconded by Marc Rowley, and approved unanimously.

Next, photographer Gary Todoroff gave an extended presentation of images he has taken under contract for the Humboldt Lodging Alliance. An animated slide show with over 170 images was presented, showing a wide range of locations, events and attractions around the county. Among committee member comments were:

Marc Rowley: We need more diversity in our images. We are not being sought by an homogenous group. Where are images of theater, fishing, industry, paddlesports? We are arguably the most diverse county in the United States.

Mike Caldwell: Agree with Marc. What about images of surfing?

Lowell Daniels: Let's keep in mind this is a limited contract for 150 images. If we need more specific photos we can create a new contract.

Brad Laws: We need to avoid generic images that could be anywhere.

Chris Ambrosini: I'm pleased with the presentation.

Marc Rowley: We need to be "light on our feet" to appeal to many niche markets. "Our diversity is our strength."

In further discussion, the committee agreed that Mr. Todoroff should get further shooting direction from the Misfit agency; that the photos would primarily be used for social media and for local visitor information purposes; and that the shot list should be expanded for the rest of the project (though May) with niche activities and sub-categories, what Chris Ambrosini dubbed our "second tier" subjects.

Tony Smithers then presented the Financial Statement for February, 2015, detailing payments made to the Misfit Agency and several Community Tourism Fund projects.

Next the Agency Committee (Gary Stone, Lowell Daniels and Tony Smithers), reported on work with Misfit, which had focused on planning for the March 25 campaign launch party. Highlights were:

- The URL of www.visithumboldt.com had been secured by the Visitors Bureau for use in the marketing campaign.
- A purchase order of \$160,437 in print advertising was approved for signature.
- At the campaign launch party, only designated people would respond to media questions. These were: Chris Ambrosini, Gary Stone, Lowell Daniels and Matt Kolbert (Misfit).
- Follow up would be done by Tony Smithers to make sure that "A-list" guests had received their invitations and made their RSVPs.
- The RSVP Excel file would be sent to the committee for their review.

The next item discussed was a funding request from Patricks Point State Park for \$30,000 to help with upgrades at the restrooms of Agate Beach campground. Mike Caldwell commented that while this was a necessary project, the HLA doesn't have the money to do it all. Marc Rowley suggested that the Hospitality Committee of the HCCVB could develop a list of Humboldt's top ten attractions, and then all the partners could work together to make sure that these top 10 are all up to a minimum standard. Some committee members also expressed concern about this request due to the well-publicized story a couple of years ago that seemed to indicate State Parks had been sitting on a pile of money while pleading poverty. The motion to reject this request was made by Mike Caldwell, seconded by Lowell Daniels, and passed.

Next, a funding request for the Fortuna Ice Rink was discussed and the motion made to refer this request to the Fortuna Community Fund Committee (Rowley/Caldwell/unanimous).

During Public Comment, Katie Texas from Kinetic Universe spoke about a new museum for the Kinetic Grand Championship, and explored whether the HLA would be interested in supporting the museum and/or the race itself. She was encouraged to work with staff and board members to develop ideas.

Finally, the committee discussed the issue of compliance with the HCTBID Assessment and local bed taxes by AirB&B and other informal lodging businesses. Marc Rowley commented he was aware of operators who participated in no zoning review, licensing or bed tax payment. The committee discussed the possibility of developing an in-service educational presentation for county and city tax collectors on this topic, and agreed to begin with research so that the amount of uncollected revenues could be estimated. A quick check on a mobile phone produced 170 AirB&B listings in Humboldt County. Brad Laws volunteered the services of his hotel's night auditors to compile a listing of these lodgings that could be prepared to bed tax rolls.

With no further time, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers.