

**Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, meeting Tuesday, January 31 at the Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California**

Present: Chris Ambrosini, Marc Rowley, Gary Stone, Mike Reinman, Mike Caldwell, Lisa Cosoletto, Sherrie Larson, Donna Hufford, Cari Shafer

Staff: Tony Smithers

Guest: Pat Wille

The meeting was called to order at 12:08 by Chris Ambrosini, and began with introductions around the room.

The meeting agenda was approved with the addition of "Old Business" to the agenda (Caldwell/Shafer/unanimous).

The minutes of the October meeting were examined and approved (Shafer/Caldwell/unanimous).

The first item of business was a presentation by Pat Wille of the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce on the community's "Concours on Main" event which the HLA had helped to fund the previous year. Wille said that the chamber was pleased with the 2016 event, which in fact comprised six events over three days. Event participants stayed in Humboldt County from one to four nights, he reported. "We had a few growing pains, but the participant feedback was good," he said. The organization has plans to increase the 2017 event attendance by accessing the active database of concours car owners. As in the previous year, the chamber was requesting \$10,000 from the HLA.

Chris Ambrosini said that the Concours seems more of a Ferndale than a county event. Mike Reinman asked what the return on investment was for the HLA in funding this event, to which Gary Stone replied that it takes three years to build up any event. Mr. Stone also asked that the chambers community funding application be updated to include the specific uses of the requested funds. Marc Rowley asked Mr. Wille what the funds granted in 2016 were used for, to which he replied that all funds and revenues received are put toward event expenses. Then Mr. Rowley asked whether the Concours event in Monterey charges its participants. Wille said "It is \$375 to walk in the door." Mr. Wille expanded on the chamber's plans to promote the event. "We are expanding the marketing to include Enjoy Magazine, some radio advertising, and outreach to car clubs on the West Coast." Mike Caldwell asked if the event has a website; the answer was [www.ferndaleconcours.org](http://www.ferndaleconcours.org).

Chris Ambrosini noted that the lodging link on the event flyer provided to the board led only to the Ferndale Chamber of Commerce. He said that if the HLA funds this event, then the lodging link used must be VisitHumboldt.com. Mike Caldwell said: "Though it is hard to justify the dollars spent for supporting events, it's all about getting people here to see us, to get to know Humboldt County as they pass through. These things are good in general."

Gary Stone said: "The \$10,000 requested is a big nut; I have a hard time supporting this from the full HLA as we did last year. Maybe if the amount could be split with the Ferndale Community Fund I can support it. We have to support stuff and try to see what will grow."

Gary Stone then made the motion: The HLA shall match the funds provided by the Ferndale Community Fund up to \$5,000 to support the 2017 Concours on Main. Cari Shafer suggested an amendment to this motion, that at least 50 percent of the funds provided must be used for outside marketing; Gary Stone agreed to the amendment. Mike Reinman seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Next on the agenda, Tony Smithers (in his role of Executive Director of the Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau) proposed a new project for which he was requesting HLA funding support. The "Humboldt Adventure Guides" would be twelve all-new visitor brochures created by the bureau, displayed in a custom redwood brochure rack or "mini visitors center" and distributed throughout Humboldt County. Smithers detailed a plan in which 120,000 guides were developed and printed, and 100 of these racks manufactured and placed prominently throughout the county. "The strategy is to provide the information where the visitors are, rather than try to lure them into a visitor center," he said. The plan he presented detailed the proposed schedule and all of the tasks and services which the bureau would be providing to implement this project.

Donna Hufford made a motion to approve up to \$50,000 for the Humboldt Adventure Guides project; amendments to the motion, agreed to by Hufford, were for the bureau to seek input from the HLA, which would appoint a subcommittee, and to include an app when the brochure content had been developed. Mike Caldwell seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Next, the Follow the Magic campaign report was given by staff; Chris Ambrosini announced that Misfit principal Matt Kolbert was not attending the board meeting because we would be at the upcoming meeting of the Executive Committee. The report included the following:

- The 2017 campaign began with no dead time between it and the 2016 campaign—online coverage was continuous.
- The Cable TV buy began right away in January with in-game commercials (80% were Golden State Warriors games).
- For creative development this spring, the agency was planning an in-county shoot in February or March, depending on the weather.
- A targeted marketing activity for the San Francisco market was budgeted; the exact media placement was to be determined.
- The location featurette videos would be brought back to the Executive Committee by Matt Kolbert, who has said that he wants to explain the agency's approach to these productions, and who also said that the agency will redo them if requested.
- A report on campaign metrics was to be given by the agency to the Executive Committee. Marc Rowley asked if the agency had done any research on destination awareness, which he said was standard procedure to track before-and-after change in consumer awareness.

Chris Ambrosini then reported his success in securing a reduced price for a “bus wrap” advertising opportunity in San Francisco. He shared information on this advertising product, showing the routes taken by these tourist busses, which embark on the routes from six to eight times per day. “Misfit thought that the cost for this was 30 percent too high,” Ambrosini said. “So I went back to them with this and suddenly the price came back 30 percent less. We can buy a bus for \$5,000 a month, plus a one-time fee of \$8,500 for production of the wrap.”

Mike Caldwell said: “We should do the bus wrap plus another activity in the San Francisco market. I go for the Comcast streaming.” Cari Shafer moved to pursue the bus wrap advertising for a three-month term, after which we will review for possible continuation. Gary Stone seconded, passed unanimously.

Tony Smithers then gave an update of the Humboldt County Tourism Business Improvement District renewal process, and talked the board through the report of Executive Committee actions that was provided in the board packet.

There was no Old Business to discuss.

The financial statement for December, 2016 was presented and approved (Caldwell/Shafer/unanimous).

Under Director Reports, the following items were raised and discussed:

Humboldt Steelhead Days and Fishing Tourism

AirBnB “Trips” feature

Mike Caldwell and John Porter met with Laura Lassiter of the Garberville/Redway Chamber of Commerce to discuss Community Tourism Funds and opportunities for partnerships.

Mike Caldwell has advertised in Thunder Roads motorcycling magazine, promoting an event at the Inn of the Lost Coast. For the third year running the event has sold out, filling the Cove with motorcyclists.

Chris Ambrosini reported that the Redwood Coast Music Festival is coming up again. He said “The event is growing again and hopes to overflow Eureka.”

With no further time, the meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers