

Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, meeting Wednesday, September 11, 2013 at the Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, CA

Present: Raul Ainardi, Chris Ambrosini, Lowell Daniels, Donna Hufford, Gary Stone, John Porter (via telephone), Alex Stillman, Tony Smithers

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm. The minutes of the August meeting were reviewed and approved (Ainardi/Hufford/unanimous).

John Porter suggested that the Executive Committee meetings be held in different venues around the county, and volunteered the Benbow Inn.

It was agreed to hold the October meeting at Elk Meadow Cabins in Orick. Gary Stone requested the preparation of a one-year schedule of meeting locations. The HLA board meeting was scheduled for October 30 with a meeting location in Arcata or Ferndale.

The agenda for the current September meeting was approved as submitted (Stone/Daniels/unanimous).

The August financial report was presented and accepted (Hufford/Stone/unanimous).

Next, a presentation by Humboldt Made was given by their Executive Director Angie Schwab, to support a funding request from Humboldt Made which was included in the meeting packet. Her board members Don Banducci and John McClurg were also in attendance. Several Humboldt Made videos were shown, and then Schwab went over her plan to help local businesses create tours and other visitor experiences.

After the presentation, Gary Stone commented that the proposal was very complicated and could not be decided quickly. John Porter and Lowell Daniels agreed with this. Raul Ainardi asked how many hotel room nights had past Humboldt Made activities generated.

Gary Stone said that the "Crab Crawl" event in the proposal was a good idea and could perhaps be presented to the Eureka committee for funding consideration.

John Porter made the observation that many Humboldt businesses are already doing their own marketing, and similarly the lodging industry knows what it is doing.

Gary Stone added that the lodging industry can support local businesses that have tourism experiences by promoting them in Humboldt lodging properties.

Donna Hufford said this was an important topic because we need to increase the activities available to increase length of stay.

Gary Stone then observed that as a whole the proposal won't fly, but that pieces of it may work.

Chris Ambrosini said he would like to see matching funds from participating businesses to demonstrate their commitment---"show me the money." Gary Stone said he didn't feel that the Lodging Alliance would get a fair return on investing \$100,000 in this project.

Board member Alex Stillman commented that the HLA needs to collaborate with other entities to be successful.

John Porter then made a motion to reject the proposal while encouraging Humboldt Made to come back with measurable, results-oriented events and cooperative marketing projects. The motion passed (Porter/Daniels/unanimous).

Because this agenda item took up so much time, the request was made to put time allotments on the agenda for similar items of business.

Next, Smithers presented a proposed 2013-2014 budget based on Year One collections for the Tourism Business Improvement District and spending allocations laid out in the Management District Plan. After some confusion was caused by a budget detail page, page one only of the budget was approved (Daniels/Ainardi/unanimous).

Next, the issue of public speaking requests was addressed.

Lowell Daniels began by recommending that the HLA does not agree to public speaking requests "because we have nothing to gain." John Porter agreed with this statement.

Gary Stone suggested that the requests be handled on a case by case basis, to be approved by the Executive Committee or by the board chairman.

Chris Ambrosini said it would be a benefit for the HLA to be seen in a good light.

John Porter moved that the upcoming Eureka Rotary engagement should be kept by Tony Smithers, that board chair Chris Ambrosini should accompany him if possible, and that all future speaking engagements must get the committee's or chairman's approval. The motion passed (Porter/Daniels/unanimous).

The Fall advertising campaign was then reported on and discussed. The issue of campaign tracking was debated and it was agreed that we should seek the technical support to track website links to room bookings.

It was suggested that Guy Fieri would be an excellent spokesman for Humboldt tourism ads, and Chris Ambrosini agreed to explore this possibility through personal contacts.

The upcoming ad campaigns for winter and the spring were discussed and the proposed budgets of \$120,000 and \$400,000, respectively, considered. Lowell Daniels advised that the campaigns should be timed as not to promote weekends that are already busy.

Chris Ambrosini suggested that a seasonal tie-in with fresh crab should be looked into. Alex Stillman suggested that the Spring campaign include promotion of the arts and theater. The campaigns and budgets were approved (Daniels/Ainardi/unanimous) with details to be approved later.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm. Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers.