

**Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, meeting  
Wednesday November 7, 2012  
Ingomar Club, Eureka**

Present: Gary Stone, Chris Ambrosini, Marc Rowley, Jeff Durham, John Porter, Donna Hufford, Mike Caldwell, Lowell Daniels  
Staff: Tony Smithers

The meeting was called to order at 11:35 am. The minutes of the October meeting were examined and approved without change (Durham/Daniels/unanimous).

Lowell Daniels announced that the Executive Committee can continue to meet in the Ingomar Club for the foreseeable future. While members of the public are usually not allowed in the club, they can be accommodated as invited guests of a committee member who is also an Ingomar Club member.

Under Old Business, Mr. Smithers reported that he had been asked to appear before the Grand Jury to answer questions about the Visitors Bureau and the Lodging Alliance. The committee took the opportunity to give him some advice on how to comport himself.

Donna Hufford asked that the agenda be made more compliant with the Brown Act, and the ensuing discussion included:

- Each agenda item needs to be listed as an action item or informational item
- Items to be considered under Old Business should be specified
- The first action item on the agenda should be to approve the agenda
- Staff reports and committee reports should be added as agenda items
- Committee members should contact the Executive Director the week prior to each meeting if they want any Old Business put on the agenda
- We should copy agenda formats from city and county samples

Next, Executive Director Smithers confirmed that according to his best understanding, the Executive Committee meetings are indeed subject to the Brown Act. This opinion was primarily rendered by the Humboldt County CAO, Phillip Smith-Hanes, who offered to confirm with county counsel on behalf of the Humboldt County Tourism Business Improvement District (not HLA or HCCVB). This option was kept open in the event the committee wanted further confirmation, but it was agreed that Brown Act compliance was a prudent measure anyway and that we will proceed under that basis.

The topic of negotiating a working relationship between the Humboldt Lodging Alliance and Blue Lake Casino was next addressed. John Porter offered to take the lead in setting up an exploratory meeting with Mandy Kindred, the general manager of the Blue Lake Casino & Hotel.

The committee next examined the updated version of the Community Tourism Project document and application. No further comments were received at this time, however, it was acknowledged that Jeff Durham's suggestions had not yet been incorporated into the document. In discussion of the Community Tourism Projects, Marc Rowley voiced the need for a way to filter the applications lest the committee be overwhelmed with them. However, Mike Caldwell wondered if we are overthinking this—that we should just see how things go first. The committee further asked whether applicants for new event funding should get a sponsor on the

HLA board to champion their project, but this was seen as unnecessary as long as the purposes and goals of the program are clearly communicated and adhered to. John Porter added that the individual committees in each community should bring their applications and projects to the board for the purpose of sharing information, not to receive approval. Jeff Durham opined that the application requests enough information to evaluate the projects—that we should make the applicants “do the legwork” and completely fill out the application. Lowell Daniels agreed saying that we can change the procedure if we get overwhelmed, but that he for one would like to see all the projects and ideas that emerge through the Community applications. Donna Hufford suggested implementation of a point scoring system on the applications (how well the applicant meets the different project criteria identified in the document) to judge the different ideas. Gary Stone agreed, saying this would be useful for justifying our decisions if we are ever asked.

Next, Tony Smithers announced the Humboldt Marketing Roundtable, an event to be sponsored in partnership with the Arcata Chamber of Commerce and the Headwaters Fund. This is essentially an expanded version of the old “Chamber Boards” meetings and is an opportunity for information sharing and collaboration among those who represent the Humboldt brand in outside marketing. Smithers felt this would be the perfect opportunity to announce the Community Tourism Project program, and it was agreed that Jeff Durham would be the ideal spokesman for this. The entire HLA board will be invited to this event.

Following this, the committee discussed establishing a funding formula to allocate marketing funds between the Humboldt County Convention & Visitors Bureau and other marketing partners. Executive Director Tony Smithers requested that 50 percent of district revenues be allocated to the “Consolidated Marketing Plan,” in other words combined with other HCCVB funding sources. This would leave 17 percent of district revenues unallocated for an “opportunity” fund to which the bureau and other entities can apply for countywide marketing projects that are not included in the Consolidated Marketing Plan. In discussion, Gary Stone cautioned that this is only the first year of the district and that the HLA should “learn to crawl before it runs.” Marc Rowley voiced concern over whether the Humboldt product is market-ready before a lot of additional marketing is done. The motion to approve the requested formula was made by Lowell Daniels and seconded by Donna Hufford, and passed with seven in favor and one opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 pm as the committee prepared to attend a special HLA board meeting to brainstorm the marketing plan.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers