

**Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance meeting
Wednesday, October 3, 2012
Ingomar Club, Eureka, California**

Present: Gary Stone, Chris Ambrosini, Lowell Daniels, John Porter, Marc Rowley, Jeff Durham

Absent: Mike Caldwell, Donna Hufford

Staff: Tony Smithers

The meeting was called to order at 11:45 am and lunch orders were placed.

The minutes of the September meeting were examined and approved (Daniels/Ambrosini/unanimous) with the following change suggested by Gary Stone: That in the first paragraph the words “until such time as the community took notice” be changed to “until such time as the board was ready to announce its marketing program to the public.”

Under Old Business, Gary Stone requested that his name be added to the draft memorandum of agreement for working with non-assessed businesses. Discussion led to the question: can assessed businesses (HLA members) attend the Executive Committee, and is the Executive Committee in fact subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act, contrary to what was staff’s initial opinion. The committee wanted staff to perform further research and obtain a legal opinion on this matter.

Next, Tony Smithers briefly explained the Grand Jury inquiry into the Visitors Bureau operations, saying he had immediately complied with all information requests and was waiting to hear back from them. A brief discussion by the committee concluded that this was nothing to worry about and not surprising given the increased public visibility of the bureau and the HLA.

Smithers then presented the committee with a conceptual budget for the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, noting that the revenue figures could only be rough estimates until we have some collection history to go by. Smithers proposed the idea of dividing the marketing budget into a fixed percentage (50%) committed to the consolidated marketing plan (ie, blended with other HCCVB funding sources), with the remainder (about 17% of HLA revenues) in a “challenge” category to be applied for by HCCVB or other organizations. The committee did not like the term challenge and suggested “discretionary” or “opportunity.” Gary Stone said he was not willing to commit funds automatically, but wanted to consider each year’s budget and marketing plans individually.

Next, the committee reviewed a draft document for the Community Tourism Projects. Marc Rowley suggested the inclusion of private sector partners, not just nonprofits. Thus the line “name of organization” on the application would be changed to “name of applicant.” Jeff Durham wanted the document to include more information about this opportunity and what it could mean for each community. Lowell Daniels said the document should not be intimidating, but should make people feel

welcome to apply. John Porter said the text should reference all types of lodgings as program beneficiaries, including RV parks. Gary Stone suggested adding the following question: Has this idea or program been tried elsewhere? The committee instructed staff to present an updated draft at the next meeting.

Next, Smithers gave a report on the proposed Eureka lodging ordinance, as a purely informational item. It was agreed that this was not a concern for the HLA as a whole, but for the Eureka subcommittee. Chris Ambrosini received the draft ordinance and city email from Smithers for further study. Marc Rowley cautioned that the HLA should not become seen as the universal problem solver, to which Chris Ambrosini replied—“Yes, and they’ll be asking for money next.” Lowell Daniels reiterated that the HLA exists for one purpose only—marketing overnight stays in Humboldt County.

The issue of how the HLA and HCCVB work with non-assessed businesses was discussed next. John Porter suggested that to begin with, a list of all HLA members should be posted on www.redwoods.info. Lowell Daniels observed that HLA marketing will float all boats, and therefore every business should contribute. Marc Rowley said that as a beginning, they should be asked to join the visitors bureau if they are not already members. The discussion then ranged to how to approach the casino-hotels (Blue Lake and Bear River). It was agreed it was time to start, even though a marketing plan has not yet been approved. John Porter said we should start to feel them out with an informal meeting in which we could explore mutual goals. Smithers said he would contact Blue Lake Casino and attempt to schedule a meeting.

Next, the committee discussed policy for outside groups or individuals who request to address the HLA board. It was agreed that staff should not be the decision maker on who addresses the board, but applicants can address a letter to the Executive Committee who will consider whether or not to recommend approval to the board. Jeff Durham said to include in the minutes under “Applications to Address the Board” a report of who asked and what the Executive Committee recommended. Finally, a form letter to applicants should be written.

The “Public Comment Period” of HLA board meetings was briefly discussed and explained as necessary for a Brown-Act compliant organization. John Porter suggested that a three-minute limit to public comments should be announced by chairman Stone at board meetings. The committee agreed to the three-minute limit.

Finally, the committee confirmed the Ingomar Club as the Executive Committee venue for the time being, and that the HLA board meetings, in months when they are scheduled, should be held on the same day to facilitate travel for board members. It was brought up whether all board meetings should be held in Eureka as a centralized location, and it was agreed to bring this question up before the full board. Chris Ambrosini did suggest that the Executive Committee meeting could occasionally be moved around (for example, a meeting held in Shelter Cove would be useful to solidify support in that community).

With no further time, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers