

**Minutes of the Executive Committee
Humboldt Lodging Alliance, meeting
Wednesday, June 8, 2016
Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California**

Present: Gary Stone, Cari Shafer, Lowell Daniels, Shailesh Patel, Chris Ambrosini, John Porter

Guests: Matt Kolbert, Cassandra Hesseltine, Evelyn Giddings, Max Abrahamson

The meeting was called to order at 12:07 pm by Board Chair Chris Ambrosini.

The minutes of the May, 2016 meeting were examined and approved (Porter/Shofer/unanimous).

The June, 2016 agenda was approved as is (Stone/Shofer/unanimous).

The first order of business was an agency report delivered by Matt Kolbert of the Misfit Agency. Mr. Kolbert said that in July he would be delivering a full campaign report with analytics, but at this meeting he wanted to give an overview as well as propose some new elements to be added to the second half of the campaign. He began by reporting that the agency had conducted a great video shoot the previous week, but that unfortunately some of his staff members were involved in a car accident in Willits on the way home. There were no very serious injuries, and Kolbert was quick to reassure that the new video footage was safe and sound.

Kolbert went on to display a visual summary of the campaign, one which showed the highly targeted digital campaign continuing all year, with the occasional “air cover” of print and cable TV ads. According to the chart there is an upcoming gap in this air cover that the Misfit Agency would like to fill with some additional campaign elements—specifically, a three-week run of TV advertising (Comcast Sports) from mid-September into October.

Chris Ambrosini asked why the audience impressions in Chico/Redding were so small; Kolbert replied that these are small markets in comparison to the San Francisco Bay Area. Lowell Daniels asked why the ads are playing in Eureka, to which Kolbert replied that the TV buy has a very wide signal. Chris Ambrosini asked what we should do if the Giants “tank” early in the season. Kolbert suggested that the campaign buy could be delayed to the start of the Warriors season.

For the creative element of the Fall TV ads, Kolbert said that the agency would repurpose existing video footage, rather than conduct all-new video shoots.

In addition, Kolbert revived the idea of advertising on the BART system to supplement the Fall campaign. These would be in-car posters on targeted routes, he said. John Porter related that he recently traveled on BART on a Saturday and it was crowded. “It’s not a magic bullet solution, but it provides another point of contact in our primary market,” Kolbert said. He added that the agency was continuing to look at billboards in San Francisco but they do not recommend the ones currently available.

Kolbert then proposed that the Misfit Agency produce in-county videos of Humboldt County attractions for use in hotels and visitor centers. The cost of these would be largely covered by the creative credit that was applied when the agency re-evaluated the cost of the Weekend Sherpa creative services.

He also reported that a free ½ page ad had been negotiated with Sunset Magazine, and that the agency was providing the ad creative free of charge as well.

All in all, Kolbert requested an additional \$150,000 in campaign spending for the Fall, of which he said 80 percent would go to media buys and 20 percent to creative costs. He was not asking the Executive Committee for an answer, but would make a formal request in July, he said.

Chris Ambrosini asked Kolbert if the agency had looked into other markets beyond the Bay Area, such as Medford and Portland, Oregon. Gary Stone said that we should stick with our core campaign and target markets for now.

Next on the agenda was the annual request for funding support from the Humboldt/Del Norte Film Commission. Cassandra Hesselstine had made a request to the HLA board in April, and as directed had since submitted a written application for HLA funding. The questions asked by the committee were:

Patel: Does anyone here get business from filming? (most committee members said they get some)

Ambrosini: How much does Del Norte County contribute (\$7,500 to \$10,000, said Hesselstine)

Stone: Do you ask productions not to stay at casino hotels? (I suggest hotels near the location, said Hesselstine)

Patel: Do you have a problem with steering them away from casino hotels? (It would be viewed as unprofessional, said Hesselstine)

Porter: Were you involved in the new Geico ad in the redwoods? (Yes, said Hesselstine, who in further comments said that film tourism can often be more profitable to a destination than the filming itself.)

With this, funding of \$20,000 for fiscal year 2016-2017 was approved (Porter/Shafer/unanimous).

Next on the agenda was a presentation from board members of the Humboldt Botanical Gardens Foundation, proposing HLA support of a marketing campaign for the gardens. Board President Evelyn Giddings started with a history of the Humboldt Botanical Gardens, tracing its growth and steadily increasing visitation and days of operation. She reported that there is a high demand for gardens as a travel destination; that the HBG has five major features or areas that make it a worthwhile and popular attraction, and that they simply have to get more tourists there to increase their revenues.

Dan, an HSU marketing graduate and volunteer for the HBGF, compared the Humboldt Botanical Gardens with the Mendocino Botanical Gardens in Fort Bragg, which has significant annual visitation. Committee members asked some questions about the garden operations, marketing, etc., and requested a tour before they could further consider this request.

Next, the May 2016 financial statement and Community Funding Report were presented and approved (Porter/Shafer/unanimous).

Finally, Tony Smithers reported that three new board candidates, Elly Roversi, Jonna Kitchen and PJ Lynch, had been nominated and would be included in the ballot to be mailed immediately. He was instructed to verify that all candidates are HLA assessed businesses in good standing.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers