

Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, meeting Wednesday, May 10, 2017 at the Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California

Present: Gary Stone, Chris Ambrosini, Donna Hufford, Cari Shafer, Lowell Daniels, Tony Smithers

Guests: Dave Feral, Tracy Mack, Mary Burke

The meeting was called to order by Chris Ambrosini at 12:00 pm.

The minutes of the April meeting were examined and approved (Shafer/Stone/unanimous).

The agenda for the May meeting was approved as presented (Shafer/Stone/unanimous).

The first item on the agenda was a presentation and follow up report by Humboldt Steelhead Days representatives. The presentation and follow up questions ranged widely, therefore, the key information is given in bullet points:

- The 2017 event was significantly impacted by the torrential rains experienced in Humboldt County, which limited the number of fishable days on the rivers.
- At the awards dinner, it was estimated that 20% of the attendees were from out of town.
- According to Dave Feral, Humboldt County is far and away the best fishing destination in California.
- Several hotels offered “Fishermen’s Specials” to Steelhead Days participants.
- Again according to Dave Feral, the 2017 event was highly impacted by the weather as well as by road closures (Highways 101 and 299).
- “We have learned a lot about what is successful, such as watershed tours.” These could be expanded to Redwood Creek.
- “The main objective of Humboldt Steelhead Days is education, to raise awareness about our fishing and our watersheds.”

In discussion. Cari Shafer said “Ecotourism is our future.” Gary Stone asked the presenters about the event prizes—were they awarded to visitors or to locals? (Mostly to locals). Lowell Daniels observed that the event “is not about us (lodging operators)—they can stay anywhere.” There was further discussion about the difficulty of tracking overnight stays generated by events like this. Finally, Dave Feral said that he would like to come back to a future meeting to further discuss this event with the committee.

Next, a report was given by Tony Smithers on the progress of renewing the Humboldt County Tourism Business Improvement District. He reported that since the last meeting of the Executive Committee, Resolutions of Consent had been adopted by the Rio Dell, Ferndale, Fortuna and Arcata City Councils. The Eureka and Trinidad councils were slated to address their resolutions on that very day (May 10); the Eureka meeting would be attended by Chris Ambrosini and the Trinidad meeting by Tony Smithers. The final hearing at the County of Humboldt was scheduled for May 16, but would be continued to May 23. Smithers said this would allow us to get all the Resolutions of Consent submitted to the County in time.

Regarding Trinidad, the petition count had surpassed 51 percent, but it was anticipated that some members of the public were going to speak against Trinidad's inclusion in the district.

The next item on the agenda was to address the two administrative agreements that were due for renewal with the re-establishment of the HCTBID:

1. The Agreement for Services with the County of Humboldt, which names the Humboldt Lodging Alliance as the management entity for the HCTBID.
2. The Administrative Agreement with the Eureka-Humboldt Visitors Bureau, for the provision of administrative and management services to the Humboldt Lodging Alliance.

Tony Smithers reported that he had contacted the County of Humboldt about the Agreement for Services, and would be following up with any changes requested by the County or by the HLA. Smithers also presented the Administrative Agreement with his proposed changes. The committee directed him to present them, at the June meeting, with the agreement as it currently stands with suggested changes highlighted, along with an accounting of all HLA expenses incurred by the Visitors Bureau.

The Committee then addressed issues of budget and planning that are triggered by the renewal of the HCTBID with changes to the funding allocations. Cari Shafer said that, if anything, she would like to expand the HLA's market reach. Chris Ambrosini said that we need to closely analyze the Misfit Agency to make sure we are getting our money's worth. Ambrosini, along with Gary Stone, also suggested the possibility of the HLA establishing a "rainy day fund" of \$500,000 or \$1,000,000.

The committee decided that the July Board Meeting would focus exclusively on the HLA budget and not include any presentations from outside groups.

Further budget meetings could be held by the Executive Committee in August and September.

Finally, the committee addressed the 2017 HLA board election. Tony Smithers suggested that Pritesh Patel be asked to run for the open Fortuna seat, and he was directed to contact him.

With no further time, the meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers