

**Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance  
Wednesday, April 30, 2014  
Benbow RV Park & Resort, Benbow, California**

Present: Gary Stone, Mike Caldwell, John Porter, Jeff Durham, Chris Ambrosini, Lowell Daniels, Raul Ainardi, Tony Smithers.

Guests: Malcolm de Soto, Gary Todoroff, Cassandra Hesseltine, Mark Maxon, Nick Angelof

**Note: The seven attending board members did not constitute a quorum of the board. All matters considered by and voted on by the board were subsequently referred to the HLA Executive Committee for public discussion and official decisions.**

The meeting was called to order at 2:15 pm by Chris Ambrosini. The proposed agenda was briefly reviewed and approved (Caldwell/Porter/unanimous).

First on the agenda was a brief presentation by Mark Maxon and Nick Angelof regarding their proposed Redwood Empire Excursion Train. This would be a tourism-oriented attraction operating around Humboldt Bay and to the south, possibly as far south as Dyerville/Humboldt Redwoods State Park. Comparing the proposed project to the Cuyahoga Valley Train in Ohio, Maxon said that the train would use Timber Heritage Association volunteers and some employees to operate. Jeff Durham asked whether local residents would use the train for commuting and Maxon said that this was possible. Maxon then asked the Humboldt Lodging Alliance to write a letter of support, which the board agreed to do (Porter/Daniels/unanimous).

Next, the January board minutes were examined and approved without change (Caldwell/Porter/unanimous).

Then the March 31, 2014 financial statement was presented and approved (Porter/Daniels/unanimous). Tony Smithers reported that there was little activity except for the collection of assessment revenues and the payment of several Community Tourism projects as well as of the Destination Video project.

Board Chair Chris Ambrosini then gave the Executive Committee report, with a side comment about the need for more participation by other HLA board members. His report included:

- The Executive Committee has been interviewing/receiving presentations from potential destination photographers but had not yet found a suitable vendor.
- The Executive Committee did not choose to participate in the new tourism publication being produced by the North Coast Journal, but was interested in supporting the in-room binder (containing both hotel and visitor information) published by Gregg Gardiner of 101 Publications. The HLA's support of this publication will pay for countywide attraction and event info to be included in hotel rooms countywide (rather than just having the city or local information in each area).
- The Executive Committee was proceeding with the search for a dedicated Marketing Manager to hire. The job description had been approved and the position was being posted in several industry websites.

Next, Malcolm de Soto showed a sample video from footage he had captured over the past few months, including a variety of winter and spring subjects. Lowell Daniels commented that while the video was attractive and professional, most of it could have been taken anywhere. Mr. de Soto was advised to think about the context of his shots so that brand locations of Humboldt County and Redwoods are clearly communicated. De Soto said he understood and would try to do so, then asked about what film topics should be chosen for him to turn into edited pieces. This question was passed on to the Executive Committee for discussion at the May 14 meeting. Chris Ambrosini also asked whether the bald eagles that had been spotted recently could be captured on video, and de Soto said he would look into it.

Humboldt County Film Commissioner Cassandra Hesseltine then gave a report on the past year of activity from her agency, especially how the Humboldt Lodging Alliance funding was used. She distributed her annual marketing plan, and pointed out several activities including sales calls to Southern California that HLA funding made possible. Hesseltine also asked the HLA board to write a letter of support for AB1835, California's film tax incentive bill. John Porter said that he supported continuation of film commission funding support, and especially wanted the HLA to write the letter of support. Raul Ainardi wondered whether a local incentive (county tax or hotel discount) would have any effect. The motion to provide the Humboldt/Del Norte film commission with \$20,000 in funding for fiscal year 2014-2015, as well as to send a letter in support of AB1835, was made by John Porter, seconded by Raul Ainardi, and passed unanimously.

Next, photographer Gary Todoroff gave a presentation of his work and made a proposal to produce destination photography for the Humboldt Lodging Alliance. The requested fee of \$65,000 for an entire year's work included 120 new images with five years' exclusive rights, as well as selection of 30 images from Todoroff's extensive library of existing Humboldt County images. Lowell Daniels asked if the board would get to participate selecting these images (answer was yes). Raul Ainardi asked what if the HLA wants additional images? The motion was made by John Porter and seconded by Lowell Daniels to accept the proposal, with an approved amendment to the motion that Mr. Todoroff will add a set price for additional shots. With Gary Stone dissenting, the motion passed.

The 2014 HLA board election was then discussed, beginning with the realization that of the present board members only Chris Ambrosini's seat was not up for election—therefore these board members did not feel they could serve on the election committee. Chris Ambrosini agreed to serve as the election committee chair and Donna Hufford would be asked to also serve on the committee.

The board then reiterated its understanding that they did not currently constitute a quorum, and that the HLA Executive Committee would be asked to publicly review and discuss all of today's decisions, then ratify them with a vote of its own.

Finally, board member Raul Ainardi announced that he would be leaving the Red Lion Hotel almost immediately, recommended his replacement for HLA board service, and expressed thanks and best wishes to the Humboldt Lodging Alliance.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers