

**Minutes of the Executive Committee
Humboldt Lodging Alliance
Wednesday, October 14, 2015
Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California**

Present: Marc Rowley, Mike Caldwell, Chris Ambrosini, Donna Hufford, Lowell Daniels, John Porter, Tony Smithers

Guests: Debi Faber Bush, Emmanuel Rose, Dave Feral, Chuck Leishman, Drew Hyland

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 by Chris Ambrosini

The minutes of the September meeting were examined and approved (Caldwell/Rowley/unanimous).

The agenda for October, 2015 was reviewed and approved, with Marc Rowley confirming that the project with Humboldt Insider magazine could be included under ongoing projects (Caldwell/Daniels/unanimous).

The first order of business was a presentation and funding request from Dave Feral of Humboldt Steelhead Days. Feral began with thanking the committee for the support the event received this current year from the Humboldt Lodging Alliance. He announced that next winter's event would expand to include the Eel and Trinity rivers. "This is the largest Steelhead concentration and event in California," Feral stated. He said that over 900 people attended the last event, and for the coming event they planned to double the participation and directly drive at least 225 room nights. The event will be expanding to three weekends in late January and early February, with activities taking place throughout the two intervening weeks.

Marketing consultant Emmanuel Rose then spoke about the plans for building attendance. "We will implement targeting user groups (Steelhead fishermen) with an emphasis on tracking the return on investment," he said. The marketing outreach would focus on six areas within driving distance of Humboldt County. The event planning and marketing would be planned to complement that of the Eureka Crab Festival, and would also integrate with the Cal Trout Film Fest and Award Dinner. Rose also said that they could leverage HLA members' customer mailing lists.

The event organizers requested HLA funding of \$13,000 per weekend for a total of \$39,000.

Marc Rowley observed that Steelhead fishermen are "hard core" and don't necessarily stay in hotels. He asked, "Who are we dealing with? Who are we marketing to?" Feral and Rose replied that the event was being marketed to all Steelhead/fly fishermen and they would be encouraged to bring their spouses on the trip with a variety of events and activities for them to do.

John Porter said that this is an off season event which is the mission of the HLA. "We have to roll the dice," he said. "This is a process and we can expect the event to build."

Rowley agreed that the event could be a cornerstone of a Northern California winter fishing attraction and industry.

Mike Caldwell said that if funded the Steelhead Days advertising needs to include the Follow the Magic campaign slogan and HLA identification/logo. (Lowell Daniels agreed that HLA branding needs to be incorporated into the event marketing).

John Porter said this event needs to truly be countywide in choosing venues and planning the marketing. He also requested that the event organizers report back to the HLA in March after the event.

With no further discussion, the funding request was approved (Porter/Rowley/unanimous).

Next, a Follow the Magic campaign update was made by the agency subcommittee (Caldwell, Daniels and Smithers).

Mike Caldwell said he felt very optimistic and was impressed by the work being done by the Misfit agency. He stressed the need to include the "Follow the Magic" tag in all marketing efforts.

Lowell Daniels agreed and cautioned that it is still too early to truly gauge campaign results.

John Porter suggested that we get the ball rolling on retail product development for the campaign, to possibly include clothing, coffee mugs and the Humboldt rabbit character. This task was assigned to the Humboldt County Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Marc Rowley requested further discussion about another HLA board retreat. Lowell Daniels offered to host the event at the Victorian Inn in Ferndale, and the date was tentatively set for the Executive Committee meeting day in January (the 13th) with discounted rooms offered the nights of January 12 and January 13.

Also under the agency report, the committee discussed the importance of keeping the redwoods prominent in the marketing and advertising.

The committee then addressed questions of renewing an agreement with the Misfit agency and possible direction for the 2016 campaign. In discussion, it was agreed that the HLA would draft an agreement/document with Misfit in which issues of creative ownership, confidentiality and liability were all clearly addressed.

In discussing the 2016 campaign, Chris Ambrosini reminded the committee that the HLA can expend marketing funds on projects besides those run through the agency. Mike Caldwell agreed, saying that a large sum of money could be leveraged in ways that would greatly assist renewal of the Humboldt County Tourism Business Improvement District. Lowell Daniels suggested a large TV sponsorship as an example.

Next, the September, 2015 financial report was presented and approved (Porter/Rowley/unanimous).

Under Ongoing Projects: Marc Rowley introduced the topic of culinary tourism which had been discussed by the HCCVB Hospitality Committee. He referenced the Humboldt Restaurant Week event which the HLA had helped to fund. "Destination dining is a top activity," Rowley said. "We need to elevate ourselves." Then he introduced the gentlemen from the Humboldt Insider, Chuck Leishman and

Drew Hyland, who wanted to propose a new dining promotional piece and were seeking HLA funding. The "HumboldtCuisine.com" product would highlight specific dishes of local restaurants in a "best of" format. These printed pieces would be given to hotels and also available online.

Chris Ambrosini said that the printed pieces need to be community specific (not countywide) and encouraged them to approach the Eureka committee. John Porter observed that the more promotion of dining and culinary, the better. Mike Caldwell agreed. "Our cuisine could be a destination event," Marc Rowley said.

Leishman and Hyland were thanked and the topic was tabled with no action taken.

With no further time, the meeting adjourned at 2:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers.