

**Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance,
Wednesday, April 29, 2015
River Lodge Conference Center, Fortuna, California.**

Present: John Porter, Chris Ambrosini, Gary Stone, Diane Cutshall, Audrey Archibald, Shailesh Patel, Pritesh Patel, Marc Rowley, Mike Reinman, Lowell Daniels, Tony Smithers

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm and the board members introduced themselves.

The minutes of the January, 2015 meeting were examined and approved (Porter/Daniels/unanimous).

Then, the agenda for the April meeting was approved as-is (Rowley/Reinman/unanimous).

Tony Smithers presented the Financial Statement dated March 31, 2015 and also pointed out some new information in the Community Tourism Funds and Opportunity Marketing funds report. The statement was approved as presented (Porter/Stone/unanimous).

The first order of business was a proposed change to the Humboldt Lodging Alliance Bylaws, Article 8, Section 10, Quorum, which would change the necessary quorum to 33 percent of voting board members. In discussion:

Lowell Daniels said he was in support of the change because board members give up their time and need to do business.

Gary Stone felt that a quorum of seven was "light" and suggested eight board members.

Chris Ambrosini said that with this much money being managed, the board needs input and ideas from everyone.

Mike Reinman expressed concern about implementing a smaller quorum of the board.

John Porter said that it is frustrating for board members who drive long distances to find they can't conduct business for lack of a quorum. "We are a public entity; nothing is hidden," he said.

The motion was made by Marc Rowley to reduce the board of directors quorum to eight board members. Lowell Daniels seconded the motion.

In discussion, Shailesh Patel suggested giving this motion a try because it can be changed in the future.

Diane Cutshall said that the board needs to be given more notice of upcoming meetings.

Mike Reinman suggested that the meetings be noticed using Google calendar invite.

At this point, the question was called and the motion passed.

The next item was a report of the Executive Committee, which began with a report of the recent campaign launch party held at the Ingomar Club. Some negative feedback had been received, to which Gary Stone commented that we have to look at who we are marketing to—people outside of Humboldt

County. Marc Rowley said that the campaign was right on the edge and that's where it needs to be. Someone will always complain, added Diane Cutshall. Much of the feedback involved concerns over the campaign promoting drug culture. Shailesh Patel asked "Who is already coming here to try drugs?" The board agreed that the actual campaign has very little to do with drugs, though the particular music chosen for the launch party (White Rabbit by Jefferson Airplane) gave some people the wrong impression.

Marc Rowley said that the campaign should be kept vague and kept open to personal interpretation. Shailesh Patel agreed that it should offer "something for everyone."

Next, various projects funding by Community Tourism funds were discussed, and the board agreed that research was necessary to measure the financial impact and success of these projects. This information should be sent to the entire board, said Lowell Daniels.

One such project was the Redwood Comedy Festival which had again asked the Fortuna committee for funding. Pritesh Patel said the event should not be held in June, but in a month where the business is more needed.

The Executive Committee next discussed the destination photography project with Gary Todoroff. Chris Ambrosini has asked the Executive Committee for input and ideas on what photos were still needed in the library. A smaller committee is needed to go through the library, he said. Lowell Daniels volunteered to join this sub-committee; Gary Stone volunteered to help with the final photo selection.

Mike Reinman pointed out that web search results will reward the use of unique photographs in our destination content.

Gary Stone asked whether the board wants a summary of the photo and video projects—the consensus was yes, at the next board meeting. The board also said that the photos should be available to all assessed businesses.

Next, the board approved sending a letter in support of Senate Bill 593 (McGuire) which would require vacation rental companies such as Airbnb to disclose information about their properties to local taxing authorities. The draft letter was approved as presented (Daniels/Porter/unanimous), and staff directed to mail it to all voting members on the relevant committees.

Shailesh Patel said that these untaxed rentals were taking a large bite out of the lodging business. Marc Rowley added that the "sharing economy" is growing quickly and that everyone is trying to figure it out.

Mike Reinman, whose company represents 75 vacation rentals in Humboldt County, reported that the City of Trinidad was considering an ordinance to cap the number of vacation rentals in the city. He said the city requires a health and safety check of rental properties, and that the County of Humboldt is just starting to look at regulation of the vacation rental industry. Shailesh Patel commented that most rentals do not meet ADA requirements, and also that local government needs to apply the same fire and health safety requirements to these rentals as they do to other lodging businesses.

“This phenomenon is not going away” said Marc Rowley.

The board next discussed the upcoming board election. Gary Stone recommended sending a letter to HLA membership to ask for board nominations. The letter should include a pledge to participate in the HLA, he said.

Chris Ambrosini said that the board is finding it difficult to find enough candidates. He suggested a nominating committee. Ambrosini and Mike Reinman volunteered to sit on this committee.

The question was raised whether HLA members vote only for candidates in their jurisdiction, or for board members countywide. Staff was instructed to consult the bylaws to confirm the answer (note: according to HLA bylaws:

“Except as noted hereafter, the Board Nominating Committee shall conduct an election by written ballot in which each member in good standing on the date the ballots are communicated will have one vote to cast for each Directorship position to be elected.”

Therefore the answer is countywide.

In conclusion, board members gave individual reports on their activities and items of interest:

The bathrooms at Patrick’s Point State Park did not receive renovation funding from the HLA. They still need renovation.

Lowell Daniels mentioned the Hospitality Program at College of the Redwoods and some promising developments there for education and training of our workforce.

Chris Ambrosini spoke about the upcoming Humboldt State University graduation, during which the county would essentially be sold out.

With no further time, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers.