

**Minutes of the Executive Committee
Humboldt Lodging Alliance,
Wednesday, July 13, 2016 Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California**

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

Tony Smithers, staff, Matt Kolbert, guest.

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm by Chris Ambrosini.

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

The agenda for July, 2016 was reviewed and approved (Porter/Ambrosini/unanimous) with the following change: Item #8, HLA Renewal, was moved to space #3 on the agenda.

The first item was the Misfit Agency report given by Matt Kolbert, who renewed his suggestion that the committee approves additional campaign expenditures for the 2016 campaign. Chris Ambrosini said that he approves of all the suggested items except for the BART advertising. Gary Stone said he likes the BART ads. Kolbert explained that they provide an additional "touch point" for the campaign within the target market. Stone then asked how we would know if these ads were successful, and John Porter asked whether BART keeps the ads up beyond the contracted period if the space is not sold to another advertiser. Kolbert was not sure and said he would find out. Porter then asked whether the agency had any ideas for the BART ad creative. Kolbert said that the two posters would play off on another, and would certainly feature the Follow the Magic campaign theme as well as the redwoods.

Lowell Daniels moved to approve the campaign additions, John Porter seconded, pass unanimously.

Kolbert went on the report on campaign metrics through June 30, using data collected through third party analyst "Sizmek." This included banner ad impressions, and a cost per completed view of 2 cents for the pre-roll videos. Kolbert said that the video completion rate was down a bit but still ahead of industry averages. John Porter asked for more details on the "Film Strip" digital ad format; Kolbert explained that these small content capsules included eye-catching video, and that the HLA film strips linked to 3 to 5 locations in Humboldt County to "drill down to."

Kolbert said that to date the campaign had made about 25 million advertising impressions and produced 17,000 visits to the HLA website, www.visithumboldt.com. Then Kolbert briefly referenced the print advertising in the current campaign, which was less than in last year's campaign.

Kolbert then moved on to the HLA campaign website, including an analysis of the visitHumboldt.com timeline that looks at where visitors are leaving the site. He also said that we would like to get into paid search and social media to drive more traffic to the HLA website. There was discussion about removing the "How might you arrive?" page and about shortening the video lengths in order to streamline the website experience for visitors. Chris Ambrosini commented that the site still needs work to improve its ease of navigation.

Next on the agenda, the Executive Committee discussed the letter that had been sent by several Arcata hoteliers expressing their dissatisfaction at Arcata's lack of inclusion on the HLA website. Chris Ambrosini reported that he had met with several of the signatories to discuss their concerns. Matt Kolbert read a letter that the agency had sent in response to the Arcata hoteliers, emphasizing the agency's and the HLA's commitment to equal and fair representation. The discussion was opened up to the audience which included some from Arcata. Christy Laird of Arcata Stay had done a summary of how often each community in Humboldt was included in the website videos, and she presented this to the committee. John Porter said that to say Arcata is absent on the website is a misstatement because all of the Arcata hotels appear in the booking links. Matt Kolbert said that from the agency's analysis, 86 percent of all HLA funds have not focused on any particular community but on the county in general. "There was certainly no intention to exclude Arcata," he said. "We need to rectify this in the website and in the front desk video." John Porter added that the website needs to include pins or points of interest for all Humboldt County towns. Another audience member, Jim Gurman, said "Natural beauty is not all that brings people to Humboldt—what about the creature comforts?"

The committee then briefly addressed the TBID renewal and the letter of engagement with Civitas, Inc. It was agreed that a special meeting of the board of directors would be called for Thursday, July 21st, at which the parameters of the new tourism business improvement district would be agreed upon, and they could then be communicated to Civitas. Staff was instructed to make the arrangements, and Cari Shafer volunteered the use of a room at the Red Lion for this meeting.

The committee then reopened its consideration of a funding request from the Humboldt Botanical Gardens Foundation to conduct a marketing campaign. HBG board president Evelyn Giddings was present. Gary Stone and Cari Shafer had both taken a guided tour of the Botanical Gardens since the last meeting. Stone said, "I was very impressed by the facility—it is of high quality." Cari Shafer said that the gardens have lots of growth potential. John Porter opined that the grant request should be referred to the Eureka committee for funding because the Gardens are near Eureka. Gary Stone disagreed, saying that the Gardens will draw people to the county as a whole and all areas will benefit proportionally. Gary Stone made the motion to grant the funding request of \$34,000 with the contingency that the HBG website links to the HLA website, and that the HLA receives regular marketing updates. Chris Ambrosini seconded, the motions passed unanimously.

Next, the committee received a report from Smithers and Ambrosini on the tabulated results of the 2016 board election. They reported that two new members, Jonna Kitchen for Trinidad and PJ Lynch for Eureka, had been elected to the board, replacing Mike Reinman and Jayshree Patel, respectively. The committee then certified these election results (Shafer/Stone/unanimous).

The committee then reviewed the proposed agenda for the July 28 meeting of the HLA board of directors, and voted to leave it as presented (Daniels/Shafer/unanimous).

Finally, the committee began a discussion of the vacation rental industry in Humboldt and its impact on the hotel/motel industry. Mike Reinman reported that there are about 200 full on vacation rentals in Humboldt County. For lack of time, this discussion was tabled to a future date, and the meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers.