

**Minutes
Executive Committee of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance,
Wednesday, February 10, 2016
Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California**

Present: John Porter, Gary Stone Chris Ambrosini, Lowell Daniels, Donna Hufford, Tony Smithers

Guests: Cari Shafer, Matt Kolbert

The meeting was called to order at 12:10 pm, and began with the introduction of Cari Shafer, who is the new General Manager of the Red Lion Hotel. Ms. Shafer, who has an extensive background in the hospitality industry, was warmly welcomed and encouraged to become involved with the Humboldt Lodging Alliance.

The minutes of the December Executive Committee meeting were examined and approved (Hufford/Daniels/unanimous). Note: The January 2016 meeting was replaced by the HLA board retreat.

Next, the agenda for the current meeting was approved as submitted (Porter/Stone/unanimous), with Mr. Porter inquiring about a follow up presentation from Humboldt Steelhead Days. (This item will appear on the April meeting agenda.)

Matt Kolbert of the Misfit Agency presented the "Front Desk Kit" for the Follow the Magic campaign, consisting of a new Humboldt map and attractions guide, along with a White Rabbit character brochure holder. Gary Stone suggested that the brochure holder needs a sticker with "to order more" information. Cari Shafer asked "Why the White Rabbit?" to which Matt Kolbert explained the Wonderland and Follow the Magic themes of the campaign.

Mr. Kolbert then presented the revised website design with the many revisions made in response to committee input. The committee viewed most of the site again, and agreed that it could be given a "soft launch" with the understanding that changes and revisions could be made on an ongoing basis. Mr. Kolbert said he would send the committee members a preview link after the meeting. Among ideas and questions raised during this presentation were:

- Chris Ambrosini asked whether we should rate the accommodations by diamonds.
- John Porter suggested other methods of sorting the lodging choices, such as icons, franchise, rating and services.
- Gary Stone said the Executive Committee should address this issue and give direction to the agency.
- Should the site give the option of merging themes into a single itinerary?
- Should we have the ability to save itineraries?
- Should the location map show the location of spots/attractions before you pin them?

Chris Ambrosini said that the goal should be for a soft launch and ongoing changes. The motion was made and approved (Porter/Daniels/unanimous) to approve the soft launch and provide further direction for web site changes.

Next, the 2016 Marketing Campaign was discussed. Chris Ambrosini provided a recap of the meetings and discussions between the Misfit Agency and the agency subcommittee. To summarize, the direction given to the agency was that all elements of the proposed campaign were approved except for the BART and mall advertising and for agency fees in support of visitors bureau projects. Special emphasis was made that the expectations for the TV advertising were very high.

John Porter said that this campaign is all about generating advertising impressions, and that the ad spend should be tailored to maximize impressions. Mr. Kolbert said the immediate focus was on coming deadlines for the San Francisco Chronicle insert (April 10) and for the beginning of the TV spots on April 1, which were planned to air during Giants, Kings and Warriors games. The agency was scheduling a video shoot for the week of February 24th to develop content for these ads.

The committee then addressed the County of Humboldt's plans to regulate vacation rentals in the unincorporated area. Lowell Daniels said that there should be a level playing field in all aspects of providing accommodations. John Porter said that it is entirely appropriate for the HLA Executive Committee to take a stand on this issue. The motion was made to direct staff to draft a letter, with the committee's approval and signature, and then send it to the county. (Stone/Porter/unanimous). In further discussion, Lowell Daniels suggested that a two-night minimum in residential areas was one way in which to reduce the impacts of vacation rentals.

Tony Smithers then made a request on behalf of the Visitors Bureau, for permission to use the Malcolm deSoto "Four Seasons of Humboldt" video to promote overnight stays in Humboldt. The motion was made and passed to grant permission for the bureau to use this video at its discretion, with the caveats that this permission can be withdrawn, and that the bureau will provide a monthly report of how the video is being used. (Porter/Daniels/unanimous).

Finally, the January 2016 Financial Statement was presented and accepted (Porter/Hufford/unanimous), with the request that staff develops a method for accounting of the one percent collection fees that the county and cities take from the assessment revenues before forwarding to the HLA.

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

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers