

**Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance meeting  
Wednesday, September 5, 2012  
Redwood Capital Bank in Eureka, California**

Present: Gary Stone, Chris Ambrosini, Lowell Daniels, Donna Hufford, Jeff Durham (by phone), Tony Smithers.

Absent: Marc Rowley, Mike Caldwell, John Porter

The meeting was called to order at 11:40 am. The minutes of the August meeting were examined and approved (Hufford/Daniels/unanimous).

Under old business, Gary Stone inquired whether the media had been contacted about covering the formation and activities of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance. Tony Smithers said he had reached out to Times-Standard business writer Thad Greenon but there was no interest shown. The committee discussed writing and distributing a press release, but ultimately decided that the Humboldt Lodging Alliance would keep a low profile until such time as the community took notice.

Next on the agenda was the question of how the HLA should communicate to assessed businesses and other stakeholders. Gary Stone recommended an annual report and this idea was agreed to by all. Lowell Daniels said the report should highlight the Alliance's accomplishments and the fact that we are marketing Humboldt County to the world. The committee decided that the report should be published in mid-November so that it could include a recap of the summer season as well as hard numbers from 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter results.

On the same topic, Jeff Durham suggested that following each HLA board meeting, all HLA members get emailed the meeting agenda and minutes so that the members will keep involved.

Next there ensued a lively discussion on the "Community Funding" part of the Management District Plan, as follows:

Lowell Daniels: The main point is that all projects have to help the lodging industry

Gary Stone: That's the Prime Directive. We need to lay out the criteria and keep it simple. A one-page application should be enough.

Jeff Durham: Use the wording from the Management District Plan

Lowell Daniels: The words must memorialize our focus on lodging

Gary Stone: Don't use the term community funds

Jeff Durham: How about "Tourism Funds"

Donna Hufford: Or "Regional Tourism Funds"?

Jeff Durham: Do we need the full board to approve the application?

Gary Stone: Yes; we will do the homework then get the board to bless it.

Next the committee discussed where to hold the next meeting. Gary Stone opined that a Eureka location would be convenient for most. Lowell Daniels offered to host the meeting at the Ingomar Club as a more professional venue. If it works out well, this could be the permanent home of the Executive Committee. Gary Stone suggested that a better conference/speaker phone be obtained, and said he might have one in storage. Staff was also directed to add a conference call-in line for those who are unable to attend the meeting in person.

The committee then discussed marketing the RV Parks and including them in HLA programs. Lowell Daniels said we should make a point to include the Ferndale Fairgrounds which sees considerable RV traffic. Gary Stone observed that the HLAs investment in marketing the RV parks should be relative to the amount of assessment collected by them. The committee decided to ask John Porter to take the lead on this as he owns a large RV Park. Jeff Durham undertook to contact the Riverwalk RV park to discuss their marketing needs and ideas. Lowell Daniels suggested that brochures with our RV parks could be put in restaurants, which are frequented by many RVers.

Tony Smithers raised the topic of working with non-assessed businesses, reporting that he had received money voluntarily from the Chumayo Spa in Blue Lake, which is not part of the district. He felt we should memorialize the relationship with a simple letter of agreement, which he shared the draft of with the committee. Lowell Daniels said the letter should specify that it is for "lodging" businesses, not just any non-assessed business. Donna Hufford said we should not exclude anyone who wants to partner with us, no matter how small. Gary Stone wondered whether we should have an attorney look over the letter, but Lowell Daniels felt that was not necessary. Chris Ambrosini stressed that when the letter of agreement is with one of the casino-hotels involving a lot more money, then an attorney should look at it. Tony Smithers was instructed to email this document to Jeff Durham.

Next, Tony Smithers gave a presentation on the Humboldt Lodging Alliance's Six Key Marketing Objectives, as distilled from board meetings, the board retreat and many other sources of input. The objectives as presented were:

1. Branding and Research
2. Online Marketing
3. Shoulder and Off Season Marketing
4. Direct Sales Effort
5. Using Events to Market the Destination
6. A Better Visitor Experience.

Smithers said that the upcoming marketing plan would reflect these priorities. Gary Stone asked that the plan includes a synopsis of each staff position, as well as comparative budgets for each marketing activity showing the amount of budget before and after the establishment of the HLA.

With no further time, the meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers