

Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, meeting Wednesday, April 27, 2017 at the Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California

Present: Chris Ambrosini, Kelly Martin, Cari Shafer, Marc Rowley, Diane Cutshall, Mike Reinman, Lisa Cosoletto, Donna Hufford, Gary Stone, John Porter, Tony Smithers

Guests: Matt Kolbert, Cameron Tyler, Gregg Foster, Cassandra Hesselstine

The meeting was called to order at 12:00 pm by Chris Ambrosini, and began with examination and approval of the agenda (Shafer/Rowley/unanimous).

The minutes of the January meeting were reviewed and approved without changes (Hufford/Shafer/unanimous).

The first item of business was a presentation and proposal by Gregg Foster, Executive Director of the Redwood Region Economic Development Commission, appearing in his role as coordinator for Fly Humboldt. Foster explained that PennAir was connecting to Boise, Spokane and Seattle through a “code share” arrangement with Alaska Airlines. The proposed project was a joint marketing campaign with the other destinations to promote use of this regional network. In the discussion and Q&A:

- Diane Cutshall asked about the Minimum Revenue Guarantee program and about ticket price reductions.
- Cari Shafer asked what other entities are providing funds for this campaign; and about who would have creative control over the joint campaign.
- Gregg Foster said that the campaign would be geared toward the shoulder seasons; he led a discussion of airline growth strategies, and referenced the “Point Of Origin” study to identify opportunities.
- Kelly Martin asked if the Humboldt County airport had committed funds—Gregg Foster said no, that RREDC is our airport’s marketing organization.
- Kelly Martin asked what specific marketing would be done for this campaign. Gregg Foster said it was not decided yet, but that the HLA’s contribution should be conditioned on having input.
- Chris Ambrosini asked for input from Matt Kolbert (there to make his own presentation). Mr. Kolbert observed that these airline partnerships are usually a co-branding effort.
- John Porter asked whether the HLA has funds to contribute to this campaign (staff answered yes, there was a current balance of over \$400,000 in the Opportunity Marketing Fund.) Mr. Porter then asked whether we could stipulate that the Misfit Agency works with the partners for creative input and approval. John Porter made the motion to approve the proposal to contribute \$25,000 to the campaign. Donna Hufford seconded; the motion failed 5/4.

The next item of business was the annual report and funding request from the Humboldt/Del Norte Film Commission, represented by Film Commissioner Cassandra Hesseltine. She began with an overview of what the Film Commission does to attract location filming and contribute to the local economy (including lodging sales); significantly, she said her organization's mission now includes film tourism, and that efforts are underway to highlight Humboldt County filming locations to visitors.

"This year we need a bigger budget, so we are making a bigger ask" Hesseltine said, referring to missed opportunities to talk to filmmakers and the need to retain staff.

Mike Reinman asked what the specific missed opportunities were; Hesseltine said the biggest one was the Sundance Film Festival, which is a tremendous venue for talking to potential productions and educate them about Humboldt County locations and services.

Meanwhile, "the California Film incentives are working—they are bringing film and TV production back to California," Hesseltine said. "We are still the #1 state for film."

Hesseltine also alluded to the importance of airline connections for our local film industry. "Without a direct flight to Los Angeles, we lose commercial productions," she said. Then she spoke about the growth in film tourism and the opportunities we have to attract these visitors.

Cari Shafer asked whether the requested funding included going to the Sundance Film Festival—Hesseltine said it depends on the overall funding approved. The cost to attend will be \$5,000 to \$7,500.

Cari Shafer moved to approve the \$60,000 request; John Porter seconded. In discussion, Gary Stone asked for specifics on what the increased funding will go for. Hesseltine said that \$20,000 would go to Film Commission overhead and \$10,000 for staffing (an assistant). Chris Ambrosini asked about commitments from other agencies (the County of Humboldt, Del Norte County and City of Eureka all contribute to the Film Commission). Donna Hufford said that if necessary she would be willing to kick in some funding from the Northern Humboldt Community Tourism Fund. Cari Shafer modified her motion to stipulate that at least \$5,000 of the HLA funds go toward attending Sundance; John Porter seconded the amendment, and the motion passed.

Matt Kolbert then gave the board his Misfit Campaign Report, billing his presentation as a "high level overview." In his report he touched on:

The campaign has many components including broadcast TV, digital and print advertising. The agency tracks metrics including impressions.

Comcast Sports is the high level "air cover" of the campaign; our advertising during Warriors games has included over \$90,000 in value-added coverage.

This year we are testing the Comcast Sports LiveStream product—we are one of only 20 advertisers on this new platform.

Kolbert also mentioned the Weekend Sherpa coverage as part of the campaign, and reminded the board that Misfit provided creative services for the “Bus Wrap” project in San Francisco.

Kolbert said that he would like to address social media at the June Executive Committee meeting.

Next, Tony Smithers gave the board an update on the TBID renewal process, reporting that he was in the process of obtaining all the Resolutions of Consent from the different cities. There was still concern over whether enough petitions would be received from Trinidad, and whether the Trinidad City Council would elect to join the district given the local controversy over vacation rentals. Smithers said that he had met with councilmember Susan Rotwein and felt there was some support there.

The board then discussed the process for receiving presentations and funding requests. Gary Stone suggested that all proposals be voted on 30 days after the presentation to allow board members sufficient time for research and discussion. There was talk about instituting a grant cycle, with specified dates for applications, rather than our current ongoing grantmaking process. And Kelly Martin said that we should be getting financial statements from all our applicants. These issues could be addressed through board policy as well as by possible changes to the HLA bylaws.

After a brief round of board member reports on their individual projects and activities, the meeting was adjourned at 2:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers.

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

Board Members Present: 9

Actions Taken:

- Approval of agenda

- Approval of January 2017 minutes

- Rejection of Fly Humboldt funding request

- Approval of Humboldt Film Commission funding request