

**Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance,
meeting Wednesday, December 12, 2012 at the Adorni Center, Eureka, CA**

Present: Stone, Ambrosini, Daniels, Durham (by telephone), Porter, Rowley, Hufford
(by telephone), Caldwell
Staff: Smithers

The meeting was called to order at 9:10 am. The first item of business was approval of the meeting's agenda as provided. (Porter/Caldwell/unanimous).

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

There were no items of old business on the agenda.

Next, John Porter gave a report on a meeting held by the tribal outreach committee (Porter, Ambrosini, Stillman & Smithers) with management of the Blue Lake Casino & Hotel. He said that the offer to include the Casino Hotel in the HLAs marketing program for the equivalent of 2 percent room assessment was clearly communicated, and that in exchange they could possibly have a seat on the HLA board of directors. Gary Stone said that Blue Lake needs to realize that this is a team effort to market Humboldt County that they are being invited to take part in. Lowell Daniels asked if the casino/hotel mistook this a request for a donation, not an assessment. Gary Stone said we should suggest an appropriate number for them to contribute, while John Porter advised letting them name the number first. He said he would follow up personally.

Next, Gary Stone brought up the question of whether Executive Committee decisions need to be ratified by the full board of directors. He referred specifically to the committee's decision to allocate 50 percent of HLA revenues to the consolidated marketing plan with the HCCVB. The consensus was that the Executive Committee is empowered by the HLA bylaws to act on most matters on behalf of the board, but there is nothing to stop the committee from seeking approval for any specific decision it wants.

Marc Rowley brought up the question of whether there are lodging businesses in Humboldt County "flying under the radar" and not collection TOT or the assessment. He said that many small vacation rentals promote themselves on AirB&B and VRBO, but don't seem to be known to local taxing authorities. Smithers said his office would conduct research to see whether there are a significant number of such businesses.

Next, Mr. Smithers requested approval for disbursement of \$32,837 to reimburse HCCVB for start-up costs of the HLA and the HCTBID, which was granted (Hufford/Porter/unanimous).

The next item of discussion was a general topic of "The Future of HLA," during which the following points were made:

Marc Rowley said that we are still finding our way. Perhaps the HLA executive committee/board should meet with the HCCVB marketing committee to better coordinate their activities.

Lowell Daniels said that the HLA should not micro-manage their marketing contractor (HCCVB).

Gary Stone said that Eureka lodging operators are not happy with the value they are getting. He wondered whether Eureka would be better off as a separate organization.

Chris Ambrosini said the HCCVB marketing committee was not doing its job.

Mike Caldwell said that we need a sterling new marketing plan.

Lowell Daniels reminded everyone that we're about marketing Humboldt County as a whole, not the individual towns.

Marc Rowley said we still need equity in funding, but that Eureka needs to provide more leadership.

Gary Stone said he doesn't want anything unfair for Eureka, but that the program needs to be fair for everyone.

Lowell Daniels agreed that the HCCVB marketing committee had become "blah"

Next, Mr. Smithers shared a draft Request for Proposals & Qualifications to be sent out to various marketing firms. The document and the activity were approved (Porter/Daniels/unanimous), and the following individuals asked to be on the agency review committee: John Porter, Marc Rowley, Mike Caldwell.

Marc Rowley mentioned Herb Brooks as a possible marketing consultant. He also suggested that a good use for an outside agency would be to help us assess our visitor readiness, looking at our tourism product and infrastructure and making recommendations for needed improvements.

Lowell Daniels said that we are looking for out-of-the-box ideas.

With no further time, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 am

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers