

**Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance meeting**  
**Wednesday, February 19, 2014**  
**Red Lion Hotel in Eureka, California**

Present: Raul Ainardi, Mike Caldwell, Marc Rowley, Lowell Daniels, Donna Hufford, Tony Smithers

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm by Lowell Daniels, in the absence of board chairman Chris Ambrosini. The minutes of the December, 2013 meeting were examined and approved (Caldwell/Ainardi/unanimous).

The agenda for the current meeting was approved as presented (Hufford/Rowley/unanimous).

Under old business, Smithers reported that the board retreat notes from January had been sent to the HLA membership for comment and priorities, under a cover letter signed by Chris Ambrosini. The committee directed Smithers to send a reminder email to encourage response from the assessed businesses.

Next, the financial report for January 2014 was examined, with no unusual activity to report. The committee directed Smithers to explore setting up a money market account for HLA at Redwood Capital bank, into which 75% of HLA funds would be placed. (Rowley/Caldwell/unanimous).

Following this, a presentation from photographer Nick Adams was received by the committee. Mr. Adams proposed working with the official HLA videographer, Malcolm deSoto, to capture in still photography what deSoto is getting on video. A slideshow of Nick's work was well received. In discussion, Marc Rowley suggested that perhaps the HLA wants to arrange a "stable" of photographers to work with rather than a single photographer. With no decision taken, the committee moved on to the next agenda item.

This was consideration of the Humboldt County Convention & Visitor Bureau board's response to proposals made by the HLA for upgrading the bureau's marketing capabilities. After meeting at a board retreat, the HCCVB board had agreed to beef up the marketing committee with new volunteer talent, and suggested that Executive Director Tony Smithers would be the point person on marketing projects for the HLA, making time for this by hiring an administrative assistant.

In discussion, Marc Rowley (who is also the HCCVB board president) acknowledged that the bureau needs to prove itself to the Lodging Alliance. Raul Ainardi and Mike Caldwell expressed doubt that significant change could be made quickly without new marketing personnel. Lowell Daniels said that outsiders don't have a "heart" for Humboldt, and wondered how long it would take to get someone recruited from outside the county up to speed. Mike Caldwell said we owe it to ourselves to canvas the local area for marketing talent first, then go further afield if someone can't be found.

In discussion of the marketing committee makeup, three names were put forward: Toni Dailey, Neil Leddy (already on the marketing committee) and Frank Whitlach from HSU. Marc Rowley asked about the committee's role in hospitality, and Mike Caldwell commented that once the basic marketing

function is firmed up the bureau can move on to other things. "Success breeds success," he said. Lowell Daniels made a point of saying that the HLA doesn't want another job, and that the HCCVB would implement the programs and services desired by the HLA.

In conclusion, a motion was made to accept the bureau's plan EXCEPT for staffing, and to request that the bureau hire a marketing professional for the Humboldt Lodging Alliance. The motion passed (Ainardi/Rowley/unanimous).

Next, committee member Mike Caldwell presented the topic of closer liaison with public land agencies. He explained his short-term goal of cooperating with the Bureau of Land Management for planning and promotion of Shelter Cove's plein aire event coming later this year, saying that with the right partnerships this event could be expanded countywide. Marc Rowley suggested forming a bureau committee to persuade public land managers to get involved with the tourism industry. Mike Caldwell then mentioned that the BLM would be allowing a web link for the plein aire event, which was a very positive development (and policy change). Caldwell and Donna Hufford volunteered to form a public lands committee to pursue this issue.

In a report on community funding projects, the Stone Lagoon visitor center was discussed. Mike Caldwell related that he had recently driven past this visitor center and that he felt their sign had too much information on it and needed to be simplified. The committee discussed the idea of having Lodging Alliance branded and funded visitor centers north, south and east, and that perhaps the Stone Lagoon facility could become the northern visitor center. Marc Rowley suggested that the HLA needs to work with chambers of commerce and others on this topic.

Also with regards to community funding, the committee discussed a more proactive approach to development projects. Staff was directed to communicate with board members about the fund balances available for projects in each area.

Under public comment, Chuck Leishman from the North Coast Journal shared preliminary designs for a quarterly visitor guide that they would like the HLA to underwrite. He suggested that the HLA, the HCCVB and the private sector could cooperate on this project.

With no further time, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers.