

Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, meeting Wednesday, December 9, 2015 at the Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California.

Present: Lowell Daniels, Gary Stone, Marc Rowley, Chris Ambrosini, Donna Hufford, Tony Smithers

Guests: Dave Feral, Don Banducci, Emmanuel Rose

The meeting was called to order at 12:05 pm.

The minutes of the November, 2016 meeting were examined and approved (Daniels/Stone/unanimous).

The agenda for December, 2015 was then approved as submitted (Daniels/Stone/unanimous).

The first order of business was an update from representatives of Humboldt Steelhead Days, an event which had received a grant of \$39,000 from the Humboldt Lodging Alliance.

Emmanuel Rose began with the marketing program in place, reporting:

- The Steelhead Days website was live and included a lodging section
- The Facebook page had already received 354 likes
- Publicity efforts had ramped up (reaching out to outdoor and fishing journalists), with a lot of traction generated by the slogan "Steelhead Alley"

Then Dave Feral of the Mad River Alliance thanked the committee for the HLA support.

Don Banducci, acting strictly as a volunteer, had visited fishing shops and dealers throughout Northern California to distribute the Steelhead Days counter display and materials. He had gone over the mountains and through the woods, he said, and visited dozens of establishments. For example, the Bass Pro shop in Rocklin, California has a redwood themed entrance and a massive fly fishing department. "They are selling escape," Banducci said.

"This is exactly what we're trying to do by supporting local events," said Chris Ambrosini. Marc Rowley agreed, but added that this is a "learning year."

The Steelhead Days team also said hats, posters and other collateral were in development. Lowell Daniels suggested that a Native American Salmon Barbeque be added to the event activities.

The committee then moved to discussion of the 2016 Follow the Magic campaign and the details of media spend and strategy proposed by the Misfit Agency.

Chris Ambrosini suggested that the media allocation could be moved north to include Southern Oregon.

Marc Rowley reported on an article on Skift which said the new trend in U.S. travel marketing was highly targeted niche campaigns. "Communities are more and more homogenous, not stratified," he said.

Lowell Daniels recommended staying with the “Follow the Magic” theme but moving away from using Alice and the other Wonderland characters in our advertising.

The committee discussed agency management and direction, saying “We need to be the grownup in the room.” Lowell Daniels felt that strong results from the campaign are absolutely necessary to provide ammunition that justifies renewal of the tourism district.

Gary Stone said he wants to wait on giving the committee’s approval to the 2016 plan until some questions could be answered and more details provided (particularly regarding creative costs). Mr. Stone and others expressed the opinion that the agency should be utilizing a higher percentage of the Malcolm deSoto video in their creative development.

The campaign website was briefly discussed. “The website still lacks the Wow! Factor,” said Chris Ambrosini. “Their stuff should be better,” agreed Gary Stone. Marc Rowley was also dissatisfied with the website video. “It is very static—we need their A game on this,” he said. Gary Stone suggested a special meeting with Matt Kolbert to address the website concerns, and in general he felt that the committee needed more time to consider the year’s campaign proposal. “Give us more time next year,” he said.

Under the “search” line item in the campaign proposal, the committee agreed that this should not be Google Adwords, which would conflict with the Visitor Bureau’s search marketing.

Gary Stone made the motion that the agency subcommittee could approve pieces of the 2016 proposed campaign. Marc Rowley seconded, and the motion passed (unanimous).

Finally, the committee discussed plans for the coming board retreat. Marc Rowley suggested that a speaker be identified to come and present to the board—“Someone from a community or organization that does sophisticated events.” Talking points were discussed including the Management District Plan and the division of responsibilities between the HLA, HCCVB and the Misfit Agency. Finally, Marc Rowley was appointed to facilitate the retreat (Daniels/Ambrosini/unanimous)

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers