

**Minutes of the Executive Committee  
Humboldt Lodging Alliance  
Wednesday, October 12, 2016  
Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California**

Present: Shailesh Patel, Chris Ambrosini, Gary Stone, Mike Caldwell, John Porter, Cari Shafer, Donna Hufford, Tony Smithers

Guests: Bruce Stiverston, Mike Kellogg, Pete Oringer (Timber Heritage Association)

Matt Kolbert, Cameron Tyler (The Misfit Agency)

The meeting was called to order at 12:02 by board chair Chris Ambrosini.

The first order of business was examination and approval of the September, 2016 meeting minutes (Shafer/Stone/unanimous).

Next, the agenda for the October meeting was approved as-is (Porter/Shofer/unanimous).

First under Action Items was a presentation by members of the Timber Heritage Association, whose appearance before the committee was sponsored by Shailesh Patel.

Bruce Stiverston, president of the THA, began by describing how Humboldt County's history of rail and logging, and all of the artifacts associated with this heritage, impart a distinctive sense of place to our destination. It has been the goal of the THA to parlay this into more tourism. For example, he said, the THA's Speeder rides offered during the summer have been growing in popularity, this past season serving 1,800 passengers. The ultimate goal is to establish a Humboldt Bay Excursion Train.

The committee asked numerous questions about the proposed train, during which the following points and information was shared:

- The THA's first goal is to open a Timber Heritage Museum. They are purchasing the 8 ½ acre site at Samoa from the Harbor District.
- Their fundraising is ongoing with two annual events being mentioned, the Roundhouse Rendezvous and the Salmon, Oysters, Ales & Rails (SOAR) event.
- The THA will be operating under an agreement with the North Coast Rail Authority.
- The Timber Heritage Association needs to share the cost of developing the Excursion Train. It needs to meet federal standards which will entail an environmental impact report and extensive track rehabilitation.
- Many small "tourist trains" have implemented a successful holiday program based on the film Polar Express. These events are highly profitable.

- A report issued some years ago concluded that an investment of \$1 million was needed to open the train from Samoa to Eureka. Shailesh Patel asked the THA representatives to update this with current costs.
- Gary Stone asked if the Excursion Train could be extended south to the Redwood parks. Mike Kellogg said yes, it would take a lot of money but it could happen.

John Porter commented that this kind of project is why the assessment district should be renewed for a 10-year period. Chris Ambrosini said that the committee should meet again and go over this project in greater detail. The THA representatives were thanked for sharing the information.

Next on the agenda, Chris Ambrosini introduced a funding request received from the Humboldt-Del Norte Film Commission, asking for funds to print its “Map of the Movies” publication. This map highlights dozens of North Coast film locations. In discussion, it was agreed that a number of visitors are very interested in film locations and it would be good internal marketing to make the guide more widely available. It was understood that the guide would be printed AFTER a current major production could be added to it. The committee agreed to fund the project (Shafer/Porter/unanimous) with the caveat that the map would be corrected to show the road going all the way to Shelter Cove.

The next item was a report from the Misfit Agency, presenting their recommendations for the 2017 marketing campaign. Matt Kolbert began by explaining that he was presenting a “digest version” of the plan and that greater detail would be provided later on. The visual summary of the campaign covered:

1. Digital—nine new preroll videos in 2017, updated film strip formats and updated banner ads.
2. Cable TV—three flights of four weeks each, still on Comcast Sports, in January, April and September. The TV budget is growing from \$80k to \$144k.
3. Print—same as the 2016 campaign
4. San Francisco In-market—same dollar amount as 2016; media to be determined. This includes advertising to “115,000 avid outdoorsmen” through Weekend Sherpa.
5. Social Media—investing in Instagram
6. Location Featurettes—to be determined. Sample Featurettes to be available in mid-November.

The committee responded with the following points and questions:

- Our library of creative assets should be used to the greatest extent possible in the 2017 campaign.
- Chris Ambrosini: wants to see more coverage in Oregon (Salem/Eugene/Portland)
- John Porter: Add this coverage with new budget; don’t take it from other markets.
- Cari Shafer: Eugene residents like the outdoors and have disposable income.
- John Porter: Can HLA members (businesses and subcommittees) piggyback on the print ads? Matt Kolbert answered yes, they can.
- We should look into celebrity endorsements and team sponsorships as part of the cable TV buy.
- The location featurettes should include video shot by Malcolm deSoto. This item will be placed on a future agenda for more detailed planning.

Finally, Matt Kolbert said that he would distribute a written summary of the proposed 2017 campaign to the Executive Committee. He said he would like to get approval of the campaign and budget at the November meeting, failing that, at a special meeting to be determined. The goal is to hit the ground running on January 1 without any blackout in the ongoing campaign. Chris Ambrosini asked Mr. Kolbert to come prepared to share more data on website traffic and utilization.

The committee then addressed questions and decisions regarding renewal of the Humboldt County Tourism Business Improvement District, and of the directions to be given to Civitas, Inc., the renewal consultant, for preparation of the Management District Plan.

After giving a report on their interactions with Civitas representatives Nichole Farley and Gina Trechter, Chris Ambrosini and Tony Smithers brought up the issue of specific division of revenues to be made official in the Management District Plan. The committee had previously directed a split of 65% going to Community Funds and 35% going to the marketing campaign, but this did not take into account the needed diversions for administration, reserves and renewal. In a lengthy discussion, it was suggested by some that these overhead costs be taken off the top, and the remainder split 65/35 as above. In order to provide a specific formula in the Management District Plan that totaled 100%, the committee agreed to include a 10% "overhead" category in the Management District Plan, directing 60% to communities and 30% to marketing, with any unallocated funds in the "overhead" category to be diverted to the other fund categories at the board's discretion (Shafer/Stone/unanimous).

The inclusion of Rio Dell in the district was discussed, with Tony Smithers reporting his presentation on the HCTBID and the HLA to the Rio Dell City Council. A draft letter to the two Rio Dell lodging operators had been prepared, and the committee directed that this be sent to them (Shafer/Stone/unanimous).

The committee discussed a staff recommendation to produce a HCTBID renewal brochure, based on a model from Santa Barbara County that was distributed to the committee. John Porter said, "This helps transparency." The committee approved developing the brochure (Caldwell/Porter/unanimous).

The issue of district lifespan was then readdressed by the committee. Mike Caldwell recommended a 10-year district so that the HLA and its committees could leverage this long-term funding stream for financing of larger projects. After it was confirmed that any participating jurisdiction could quit the HCTBID on each anniversary of its start date, the ten-year term was approved (Caldwell/Porter/unanimous).

The committee then confirmed October 25 for the quarterly board meeting of the Humboldt Lodging Alliance, and the Holiday Inn Express Eureka as the meeting venue.

Finally, the financial statement and community funding reports for September, 2016 were examined and approved (Stone/Shafer/unanimous).

With no further time, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers.

