

**Minutes of the Executive Committee
Humboldt Lodging Alliance
Wednesday, September 10, 2014
Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California**

Present: Marc Rowley, Chris Ambrosini, Mike Caldwell, Donna Hufford, Brad Laws, Gary Stone, Tony Smithers

The meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Chris Ambrosni.

The minutes of the August meeting were examined and approved (Caldwell/Hufford/unanimous).

The agenda for the September meeting was approved as-is (Caldwell/Hufford/unanimous).

Under Action Items, the committee first addressed Unfinished Business:

- Brown Act Training—a proposal by Sequoia Personnel to develop and implement board training in the Brown Act was shared with the committee. This was rejected as too expensive and complicated. It was suggested that training may be available through the California Special Districts Association or through the Humboldt County Board of Education. If training was already being offered then perhaps board members and staff could tag along.
- The official HLA response to the 2014 Grand Jury Report, signed by board chair Chris Ambrosini, was shared with the committee. The letter affirmed that the HLA meeting schedule, notices and minutes were indeed publicly available on the HLA website (humboldtlodging.com), and in general communicated the HLA's willingness and cooperation in providing public transparency.
- The 2014-2015 fiscal year schedule of HLA meetings was presented and approved with minor changes (adding meeting times, and moving the Willow Creek Executive Committee from May to April). The amended schedule was approved for posting on humboldtlodging.com.

Next, a report of HLA finances was given by Tony Smithers, which included updates on community tourism funding and expenditures from the "opportunity marketing" fund. It was noted that the City of Trinidad was late in sending the last quarter's assessment revenues to HLA.

Mr. Smithers then gave a report from the Humboldt Convention & Visitors Bureau on its progress and participation in the Airline Revenue/Recruitment program, saying that an \$80,000 commitment had been made by the City of Arcata but they were still waiting on the City of Fortuna. Otherwise, the partners were all in fundraising mode as far as he was aware.

Marc Rowley, as a member of the Humboldt County board of education, reported briefly on the HCOE Event Center under construction at the Burre Center in Eureka, saying that this facility would be open to outside events and represented an opportunity to kickstart Eureka's meeting and conference industry (within the limitations of transportation).

Smithers reported briefly on a renewed interest in attracting cruise ships to Humboldt Bay, spearheaded by Eureka City Councilman Chet Albin. Efforts were being made to model a program after Astoria, Oregon which now sees over 20 ships annually.

Next, the committee discussed some parameters for evaluating marketing agencies, in anticipation of the agency presentations scheduled for September 26. Marc Rowley opined that we need to engage local businesses in our destination marketing. He suggested asking Don Banducci to attend the agency presentations and provide input. "We also need to tout our culture," Rowley said. "We need to package it with our outdoor attractions as our product differentiator."

"This is our shot," said Mike Caldwell. "We need to keep our Redwoods Plus strategy."

The committee members also discussed the role of public lands agencies, and it was agreed that they would be brought in to the marketing discussion after the agency choice had been made.

Agency pricing models were discussed and the committee agreed they wanted to be given options. Gary Stone said that Eureka community tourism funds could be thrown in if needed.

Following this discussion, Tony Smithers gave a brief presentation about Content Marketing and how fresh, enticing content was being used as the advertising medium in much of online advertising.

In Director Reports, Mike Caldwell said that the Shelter Cove Plein Aire event had 32 registrants to date. "This could become a countywide event," he said.

With no further time, the meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers.