

**Minutes of the Executive Committee
Humboldt Lodging Alliance
Wednesday, September 9, 2015
Red Lion Hotel, Eureka, California**

Present: John Porter, Marc Rowley, Gary Stone, Chris Ambrosini, Lowell Daniels, Mike Caldwell, Brad Laws, Tony Smithers

Guests: Toni Dailey and Elle Snow, Matt Kolbert and Cameron Tyler

The meeting was called to order at 12:06 pm by Chris Ambrosini.

John Porter moved to approve the minutes of the August meeting, Lowell Daniels seconded, and the committee unanimously approved.

The current meeting agenda was approved with the one revision of moving the Misfit agency report to last item.

The HLA financial statement for August was examined and approved (Porter/Stone/unanimous).

As the first item of business, Toni Dailey introduced a report and presentation on sex trafficking. "Sex trafficking is brutal and it is happening in Humboldt County," Dailey said, referring to an article in the North Coast Journal entitled "Game Over." Dailey described a new nonprofit organization being formed to create awareness of sex trafficking and to actually conduct rescues of young women who are trapped in this trade, and to create a safe house for survivors. She said that a groundswell of community of support was growing, with outreach being made to schools, parents and teachers. Now, she said, the outreach was being extended to the lodging industry because so much of sex trafficking takes place in our hotels and motels. "Sex trafficking does involve the hotel industry," Dailey said. "Do you know the signs of trafficking and what to do if you see them?"

At this point, Dailey introduced Elle Snow, founder of the "Game Over" nonprofit and a survivor of sex trafficking. Ms. Snow shared her harrowing personal story including how she experienced Stockholm Syndrome and identified with her victimizers. She strongly urged the education of hotel employees so they can learn how to spot the signs of sex trafficking in their properties. The goal, she said, was to deny sex traffickers the use of lodging facilities—to make their trade so difficult in Humboldt County that they will go elsewhere.

Gary Stone suggested development of a Humboldt Lodging Alliance communication channel (such as a "BOLO" or Be On the Lookout bulletin) to educate and alert lodging operators and employees.

The committee thanked Dailey and Snow for their efforts and assured them of the HLA's support.

Next, Tony Smithers report on research requested by the Executive Committee in which he identified several consultants/practitioners of tourism and community assessment and marketing. The leader in the field, he said, was Roger Brooks Inc. This consultant and his company offers an extensive video library of related topics, which can be accessed for a subscription of \$500 for a year. The committee

approved HLA subscription to this video library (Rowley/Caldwell/unanimous) and directed Smithers to make the necessary arrangements.

Next, Ongoing Projects were addressed. The destination video project had been completed except for the actual editing of short videos for various uses. Chris Ambrosini opined the need for a Humboldt County highlights video. The agency subcommittee informed him that Misfit had nearly finished creating such a video, and the agency was directed to send this to the entire committee for review.

Mike Caldwell reported on the upcoming Plein Aire event in Shelter Cove, supported by community tourism funds. This year was even bigger and better than before, he said, with more artists and more room reservations being reported in Southern Humboldt.

With the arrival of Matt Kolbert and Cameron Tyler from the Misfit Agency, the “streamlined” agency report proceeded:

The agency subcommittee was undergoing some restructuring and a new member was needed. After some discussion about whether a single board member to supervise the agency was preferable to two board members (maximum allowable under the Brown Act), it was agreed that two was preferred. Chris Ambrosini made a motion to appoint Lowell Daniels and Mike Caldwell to the agency subcommittee, with Tony Smithers participating as a non-board member, and Marc Rowley being consulted on any especially complicated issues or to be a tie-breaker. The committee also agreed on Tuesdays at 2:00 pm as the time for the weekly agency conference call. The motion passed. Matt Kolbert described the subcommittee’s function by saying “Here’s what your agency thinks—now shoot holes in it.” He expressed appreciation for the input and give-and-take shown by the committee.

Kolbert spoke about the advertising campaign, going into detail on the strategic progression from destination awareness to the preference to visit here. Campaign metrics was a topic of great concern to the committee. Kolbert’s belief was that web impressions and click-throughs are the most meaningful metrics for advertising campaigns. He also said that video pre-roll advertisements are an effective strategy, though some board members had questions and doubts about them.

Kolbert then previewed four themed videos to be used in the HLA website under development. Each video showcases one of the four navigation themes on the website (Adventure, Family, Romance and Unplugged) and the agreed upon points of interest to be included under each. The committee feedback was that the videos were all fairly similar, and that they would like to see more distinction and variety between the four videos. Marc Rowley said he wanted the videos to be “more intimate.” Kolbert said they would work on it.

With no further time, the meeting adjourned at 2:15 pm

Respectfully submitted by Tony Smithers