



Yosemite Mariposa County Tourism Bureau

Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

March 29, 2017

1:30 pm

Directors Present:

Kevin Shelton
Donna Davis
Douglas Shaw
Barbara Robinson

Dane Carlson
MaryAnn Huff
Donna Nassar
Sara Zahn

YMCTB Staff Members Present:

Terry Selk
Noel Morrison
Carrie Kidwell

Advisors Present:

Roger Biery
Scott Gediman

Board Liaisons Present:

Kevin Cann
Merlin Jones

Visitors:

Marianne Eitzman – Event Consultant ME3 Association
Kim Bursak – Coulterville – Owner of a small event space
Dawn Houston – Coulterville – Owner of a small event space
Dick Wittington – YARTS
Yulian Gotsev – The Redwoods
Christian Mueller – The Redwoods
Ken Bouche – Yosemite Closeup Tours

CALL TO ORDER FOR OPEN SESSION

1:37pm Kevin Shelton

SELF INTRODUCTION BY ALL IN ATTENDANCE

Everyone made self-introductions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA BUT WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THIS BOARD

– Members of the audience may address the Board on matters not on the regular agenda. Brown Act regulations restrict the Board from taking action on any subject presented that is not on the agenda.



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Garden Show Lake Don Pedro - MaryAnn Huff shared what the North County lakes are doing. The yearly Garden Show is coming up on Saturday at Lake Don Pedro and 5 homes have been volunteered to show off their plentiful gardens. The event is a fundraiser for the Master Gardeners.

Highway 120 Road Closure Concerns - Terry voiced Douglas Shaw's concern regarding the impact of the closure of Highway 120 to Yosemite Valley on overnight stays. Guests may shorten their length of stay should they not be informed about the activities that are available in the North County. The Tourism Bureau is taking steps to communicate out to prospective visitors the road closure but also the many things to do in the North County. Noel will be conducting a trip, which will highlight the North County of Mariposa, prepare a blog, with photos and boost it on our social media outlets.

Website lodging booking suggestions - Barbara Robinson suggested that Yosemite.com provide a method for vacation rentals owners to have an option to avoid fees with OTAs platforms, such as VRBO, and book directly with the owners.

Marketing Update – Not on the agenda

- Yosemite.com showing strong performance, “Where to Stay” is up 16%.
- Working with Noble Studios has been looking well and promising. Will talk to Marketing Committee regarding renewal of contract with Noble Studios for 2017/2018.
- Staff is unhappy with JackRabbit Systems booking widget on the website, checking with other DMO's regarding their success of using a booking engine.
- Revised and optimized Bed & Breakfast on Yosemite.com with new search filters.
- Changed Vacation Rentals on website to Cabins Rentals per the advice of Noble Studios audit of website.
- The mini-planner has been translated into German, Chinese, and Japanese, available at the corresponding Visit California offices.

INFORMATION AND PRESENTATION MATTERS

• **Yosemite National Park Update – Scott Gediman**

- Update on Highway 120 site visit. George Reid is the contractor working on the road, currently working around the clock. They did run into an issue regarding an aquifer spring, which is making it hard to move forward on the road construction. There is still no estimated time of opening; however, best scenario would open the road at the end of April.



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- Encourage travelers to still drive thru Highway 120; Merced and Tuolumne Grove are accessible via 120.
- Noel will be conducting a road trip highlighting the North County and will post on social media outlets.
- Yosemite Ski Resort closed as of April 2, 2017 road crews are working on Glacier Point, possibly to be done by the end of April, with the shuttle starting to Glacier from Yosemite Valley near early May.
- Visitation numbers are down 31% for January and February, most likely due to weather.
- Events coming up: Earth Day and *Shakespeare in Yosemite*, which is a continued partnership with UC Merced. Both events are free.
- Still conducting interviews for the new Superintendent. Chip Jenkins is current acting Superintendent.

- **Treasurer's Report - Douglas Shaw**

YMCTB

- Balance sheet bank account \$675,182.45 versus \$932,525.65 from the previous year. This is close to a 30% decrease from last year.
- Income is up 121% compared to last year, due to BID income increase.
- Advertising and Marketing 95% of normal, versus 121% of income. Clearly under budget, all others inline.
- Over budget on Digital Network Ads
- Vacation Rentals have a budget, which will be used.
- BID is 9% over from the previous year.
- Reports and additional information attached

Yosemite.com

- Financial reports are attached.

- **International assignment report – Noel Morrison**

- Noel thanked the Board for the opportunity and experience to work with the international offices that we currently contract with in Germany, Scandinavia, United Kingdom and Australia
- See attached report for details on her assignment.



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- **YARTS presentation – Dick Whittington**

- YARTS needs the help of the board and Lodging Partners to continue encouraging travelers to use public transportation.
- Summer ridership summary: Highway 120 down 31% (Tioga). Mono up 29/30%, Tuolumne up 70%. Highway 120 (North) up 27.5%. Highway 41 up 58%. Highway 140 up 18%.
- On October 15, 2016 YARTS launched their online reservation system. So far it has worked well for future riders.
- Additional Services i.e. extra buses, more time slots are not available now due to their budget already being allocated for this year.
- Terry added that all 4 gateways are a part of a transportation team with the park service and that YMCTB did highlight public transportation in a 2-page brochure along with the mini-planner that is produced in multiple languages.
- Point-of-origin booking report for YARTS online service shows a breakdown of users from the launch of the program in October 2016. See report attached.
- YARTS brochure attached.

- **TBID strategic plan review**

- A final draft is due by October 2017

- **2017-2018 budget (preliminary)**

- Budget was not reviewed due to time issues and will be revisited at the next Board Meeting in May.

- **International market travel sentiment update**

- Terry's client interaction during recent trips to Europe and Asia revealed greater impact by strength of US dollar than political rhetoric.
- Japan is a mature market, Korea is less mature, and China is the least mature.
- The Korean market sells the same itinerary featuring an overnight in Fresno and a limited visit to Yosemite before moving to San Francisco. Recent efforts to change selling mindset are showing signs of improvement to encourage overnight stay in Mariposa and longer day visit to Yosemite.
- A combination of research by Brand USA and Visit CA has helped the industry keep a pulse on traveler sentiment.
- California hotel occupancy is up 1.2% versus 0.1% nationally.



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- California had a 5.4% average daily rate increase versus 3.1% on a national level.
 - Air traffic to the US is 5.6% up thru Dec 2016, 11.5% projected for 2017.
 - 2017 visitor forecast is down with most markets confirming slow-down in bookings.
 - 2018 projection shows overseas and Canada will be up 3%, Mexico down 3-5%.
 - 2019 projection shows 3-5% increase across most markets.
 - 11% increase in airlift to California is being realized.
- **County Economic Vitality Strategy Report**
 - Handout reflecting County consultant's "action steps" for Tourism attached.
 - **Event Consultant year in review - Mariann Eitzman**
 - Market events to our domestic California travelers.
 - Use 3 day holidays to our advantage if our overnights are weak
 - The UNTZ Festival is showing growth because of the guidance and direction provided. Ari, the Event Coordinator wants the event to be a long-term event in Mariposa.
 - ME3A handout attached
 - **Discussion of Director resignation and replacements**
 - Donna Davis verbally stated her resignation and introduced Yuli Gotsev and Christian Mueller from the Redwoods. May meeting will be her last meeting. Donna will need to submit a formal letter of resignation. Donna can suggest to the Board regarding a replacement.

ACTION MATTERS FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION, REGULAR AGENDA

- **Approval of meeting minutes for January 18th Board Meeting**
 - MaryAnn Huff motioned to accept the minutes, Donna Nassar seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed.
- **Develop an Ad Hoc Committee for TBID renewal**
 - Terry suggested that the Board created an Ad Hoc committee for the upcoming TBID renewal.



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- MaryAnn Huff motioned, and Kevin Shelton seconded. All were in favor, with none opposed.

- Kevin Shelton, Donna Nassar volunteered for this committee. Donna Davis volunteered until her departure from the Board in July 2017.

CLOSED SESSION

- N/A

ITEMS TO REPORT FROM CLOSED SESSION

- N/A

COMMENTS FROM BOARD AND STAFF:

- N/A

ADJOURNMENT:

- The meeting was adjourned at 4:24pm.