

**MORRO BAY TOURISM BUREAU  
ANNUAL STAKEHOLDERS MEETING  
Thursday, April 10, 2014 @ 10:00 A.M.  
Vets Hall – 209 Surf Street  
Morro Bay, CA 93442**

MEMBERS PRESENT: JOAN SOLU, NICK MENDOZA, JAYNE BEHMAN, ALEX AMINI,  
MICHELE JACUEZ, JOHN MEYERS, KAREN BIAGGINI

STAFF PRESENT: PETER WILLIAMSON, BRENT HAUGEN

OTHERS PRESENT: JOHN SORGENFREI, STACIE JACOBS, KACI KNIGHTON, JOHN SOLU,  
RICK TURTON, CHRISTINE LASHNER, JUDY SALAMACHA, TOM CLARKSWELL, SUSAN  
STEWART, JEFF ECKLES, AMY CHRISTEY, NANCY MCKARNEY, ED KROVTIZ, JAMIE IRONS,  
JOHN HEADDING, NOAH SMUKLER, TIFFANY PORTER, CHRISTINE JOHNSON, MATT  
CLEVINGER, COLLEEN ACETO, NIKKI HARTZELL, SUMMER, RICKY, VALERIE SEYMOUR,  
KEN MACMILLAN, AMIT PATEL

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Member Jacquez called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. Member Jacquez thanked everyone for coming out for the annual stakeholders meeting.

**II. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

**Members of the audience wishing to address the Board on MB Tourism Bureau business matters not on the agenda may do so at this time. For those desiring to speak on items on the agenda, but unable to stay for the item, may also address the Board at this time.**

Member Jacquez did not open for public comment.

**III. BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS**

A) Member Jacquez updated the stakeholders on major 2014 accomplishments. Next, Member Jacquez listed and explained 2015 objectives and introduced the new DOT.

B) Brent Huagen, Director of Tourism, introduced himself and delivered a brief career history. He also explained the importance of gathering feedback from all stakeholders and invited all to stop by his office.

**IV. COMMENTS FROM CITY COUNCIL  
(Christine Johnson)**

Christine Johnson told the board what a pleasure it was to volunteer as the City Liaison. Johnson explained how the advisory board was working long volunteer hours to craft Morro Bay as a community. Johnson told everyone that the City contributed 26% to the MBTB efforts, making every Morro Bay citizen a stakeholder. Johnson pointed out three points Member Jacquez had made and explained how they'd benefited the City of Morro Bay. Johnson expressed that social marketing was an exciting activity that the community could tie into. Johnson told the audience that morrobay.org was a great resource to find Morro Bay on goings. Johnson thanked Karin Moss for launching the MBTB during 2013.

Christine Johnson listed these recommendations from Carl Ribaud: work together, measure what you do, and continue to improve over the long term. Johnson reiterated the importance of stakeholder

feedback. Johnson told everyone that it would be advantageous to work together on a five-year economic strategy. Johnson explained that working together would create a positive environment that keeps visitors coming back.

## **V. TREASURER'S REPORT (John Meyers)**

Member Jacquez introduced Member Meyers. Member Meyers delivered a break down of the 2014 and proposed 2015 Visitor Center budgets. Next, Member Meyers showed the regional marketing budget covering 2014 and 2015. Member Meyers followed this with a presentation of the destination-marketing budget and proposed 2015 budget. Member Meyers finished by showing lodging receipts and TOT statistics.

## **VI. AGENCY REPORT (John Sorgenfrei, Rick Turton, and Kaci Knighton)**

John Sorgenfrei began by listing what TJA and Mental Marketing had accomplished to date. Sorgenfrei continued by explaining media direction taken during the past year. Sorgenfrei explained that Mental Marketing was working hard to plan FAM trips, host travel journalists, shoot videos of Morro Bay, and target family and adventure writers. Sorgenfrei listed recent exposure channels.

Kaci Knighton showed the increase in fans, reach, engaged users, and impressions from 2013 to 2014. Next, Knighton showed increases for YouTube attention. Knighton continued by listing future strategies. Knighton told everyone about a new trend where travelers were selecting a destination based on destination videos. Knighton explained that social advertising was now more affective than Google advertisements. Knighton told everyone that an imagery focused strategy allowed social users to dream and begin planning their vacation.

Rick Turton began by showing positive website statistics with a strong ROI. Turton explained the future of Morro Bay's website and recommended changing the template to a more responsive design that makes updates more intuitive.

John Sorgenfrei showed past creative and emphasized that TJA had focused on calling viewers to action. Sorgenfrei showed the new creative that was focused on branding Morro Bay's natural features. Sorgenfrei continued by showing and explaining the longevity of the new campaign, including the "have you ever... [touched a volcanic plug]" strategy. Sorgenfrei finished by showing the new YouTube video.

## **VII. SUSTAINABLE FUNDING REPORT AND DISCUSSION**

**A)** Member Solu explained the proposed TMD plans and shared recent updates.

**B)** Next, Member Solu showed a graph of the TMD board structure by municipality. Member Solu explained board terms and positions. Member Solu told everyone about the importance of having a strong Morro Bay presence in place.

**C)** Member Solu spelled out how denial or support of the TMD could play out.

**D)** Member Solu finished her update by listing the three logical ways to fund the TMD.

E) Member Meyers finished by showing a chart of sustainable funding options and their impact to the 2016 budget. Member Meyers encouraged stakeholders to think outside of the box and consider everything when determining where sustainable funding could go. Member Solu told hoteliers that they could expect to receive the sustainable funding packet and board reports.

## **VIII. OPEN FORUM – Questions and Comments from Stakeholders**

Jonni Biaggini asked about the timing of the vote. Stacie Jacobs asked that all feedback be submitted by May so that VSLOC could bring the decision before the cities. Member Amini explained how funding the County might make sense because the MBTB had already allocated .5% of the budget for VSLOC.

John Solu explained that asking for feedback on sustainable funding wasn't ideal because very few of the stakeholders present understood what VSLOC was bringing to the table. John Solu told the board that the first decision was to determine if VSLOC's proposal should be accepted or denied. Member Behman explained how Morro Bay would be assessed if the MBTB decided to fund VSLOC.

Stacie Jacobs explained that she hoped to create parity between all TOT businesses (RV parks, vacation rentals, etcetera). Jacobs gave a comparison of San Luis Obispo County to other counties. Jacobs continued by showing how the collected dollars could reach new markets not previously achievable. Member Amini sought to determine what new additions VSLOC would add for Morro Bay. Jacobs explained how VSLOC planned to expand the brand reach, increase collaboration efforts, and create resources that would allow all cities to measure success.

Ken MacMillan explained that increased TOT didn't mean an overall increase for everyone. MacMillan explained that if the integration was done properly, it could bring new people to the door that MBTB could then attract to Morro Bay. Nancy Johnson advised the board to send the sustainable funding information to the vacation rental and RV park owners using a City licensing database.

Carla Wixom explained how adding vacation rentals and RVs to the assessment would help fund the new program. Member Amini advised that these individuals would then need to have representatives on the board and commit their time too. Member Meyers explained from a budget standpoint why the MBTB board had not sought to add vacation rentals and RV parks.

John Solu explained how taking tourism under one voice had created a positive impact. John Solu advised that this was what VSLOC hoped to do. Stacie Jacobs explained that the TMD was a five-year commitment defined by law. Stacie Jacobs explained that there might be loopholes in the legal restrictions, but that these were not clear yet. Member Meyers reminded everyone that the most important decision was to decide if stakeholders liked the business plan presented by VSLOC.

John Solu proposed that MBTB could join VSLOC, but abandon ship down the line. Members Solu and Amini explained how this wasn't a possibility because the contract was binding (even if TBID disbanded). Jonni Biaggini advised that the City Council might determine if joining was possible, because of the possibility that TOT could be raised. Noah Smukler explained that the Council could not address this question due to the Brown Act. Ken MacMillan expressed that raising TOT another 1% was extremely frustrating when it was raised 1% a few years back. Member Jacquez voiced that the City would hopefully not raise the TOT because they recognized the value of tourism. Member Jacquez explained that the concept was a partnership between the MBTB and the City Council. Ken MacMillan added that if there was an increase, there should be a cap set where it couldn't be raised again for another [seven years]. Member Amini agreed stating that Morro Bay would not get the ROI equivalent to Paso Robles or Pismo Beach.

Susan Stewart, business owner in Morro Bay, explained that she promoted her own niche business within the perimeter of the MBTB. Susan Stewart continued explained that because of the MBTB, people were coming to the area and discovering her shop. Susan Stewart said that adding a percentage to VSLOC may be impractical, but joining with strong representation would continue to drive traffic toward the area.

Peter Behman presented a fourth option, saying that other resources, like in Mammoth Lakes, could share the burden. Christine Johnson requested that Stacie Jacobs explain the breakdown of what cities were contributing. Stacie Jacobs listed current BID amounts from each City. Member Solu told everyone that all hoteliers agreed that the desire was that all community members would join. Member Solu reminded everyone that information and surveys would be forthcoming.

Amit Patel asked if the survey would make a final decision. Member Jacquez explained that the vote wasn't final, but would help the board move forward in a preliminary direction.

#### **IX. DECLARATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

No future agenda items were listed.

#### **X. ADJOURNMENT**

Member Jacquez thanked everyone for coming out and closed the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

**THE PURPOSE OF THE MORRO BAY TOURISM BUREAU IS TO PROMOTE AND INCREASE TOURISM IN THE CITY OF MORRO BAY BY IMPROVING AND STRENGTHENING THE CONDITION OF THE TOURISM BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT. THE OBJECTIVE SHALL BE ACCOMPLISHED THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF A TOURISM IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT AND OTHER MARKETING, BRANDING AND PROMOTIONAL PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES.**

**IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, IF YOU NEED SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MEETING, PLEASE CONTACT THE CITY CLERK, (805) 772-6205. NOTIFICATION 24 HOURS PRIOR TO THE MEETING WILL ENABLE THE CITY TO MAKE REASONABLE ARRANGEMENTS TO ENSURE ACCESSIBILITY TO THIS MEETING.**