Santa Maria Valley Tourism Marketing District (SMV TMD)

Advisory Committee Minutes

January 22, 2019

3:00 p.m. (Santa Maria Inn)

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED

Advisory Committee: Jean-Luc Garon, Ryan Swack, JP Patel, Susan Garcia, Jerry Patel
Absent:
City Staff: Jason Stilwell
Chamber|Staff: Ed Carcarey, Glenn Morris, Jenn Harrison, Yarely Corona, Cheryl Cuming
Guests: Mark VandeCamp, Paul Patel
KPS3 | Team: Rob Gaedtke, Rachel Curran, Andy Walden

Call to Order by Chair Jean-Luc Garon at 3:03 p.m.

Public Comment None

Consent Calendar: Minutes and Financial Report
A motion was made to approve the November meeting minutes. Motion: Ryan and 2nd Jean-luc. Motion carries.
STR and TOT reports were discussed, and Glenn noted that financials will be sent.

Business Items
KPS3 Team Report: Rob introduced the new KPS3 team member Andy Walden, who reviewed 2019 tourism trends:
- Use of virtual personalities | chat bots | voice search
- Impact of Social influencers
- In search of unique experiences (charm & culture; small towns; renaissance neighborhoods and less-visited places
- Health movement with food, travel & fitness and want a digital detox
- Generation Z born in 1990’s are mobile first and want affordable but authentic
- Driverless world
- Video, video, video is evolving with more IGTV and Facebook Live
Rob noted that overall web sessions were 51% up YoY with a 14% conversion rate. Ryan asked if conversions were on pace with last month, and Rob noted that the were. JP asked about percent of overall budget invested in digital and Cheryl confirmed it is almost 50%.

**PR, Media Update and Progress:** Rachel shared the PR coverage with 19 stories this fiscal year, and 45 this calendar year. Rachel also noted that social stats continue to grow and are a key driver for organic traffic. Seth asked about impressions on our social platforms and Rob provided his insights. KPS3 touched on the VisitCA newsletter stats and JP asked about the email target audience for VisitCA – Rob confirmed primary target is Los Angeles.

Rachel provide a brief media update noting remaining media contingency, and Glenn mentioned current revenue impact tracking 3% off budget, forecasting that we will end of the year with approximately $15,000 deficit.

The KPS3 team review recent web enhancements, noting the new dynamic Event page, Event widget and Plan Your Trip page with 6 interest focused itineraries. This content has been created to increase time on site and reduce bounce rate. The recently added photography assets were discussed and the lodging partners are encouraged to access these assets on FLICKR. Jason asked about AirFest photos and Jenn noted that she is discussing the approach for the 2019 event. The enhanced email strategy was also reviewed, and Rob explained how back-end coding was developed to track the content footprint of a prospective visitor so they can receive emails specific to their interests.

Rob presented the swirl machine, reminding the AC that our goal was to virtually create a wine focused tool that would drive social engagement by combining our SMV brand voice along with art. KPS3 will also focus on how to drive PR opportunities through the swirl machine.

**Discussion Items**

**Committee Structure:** Glenn confirmed that the only parameter outlined in the original formation documents is that the committee was comprised of 5 members. It was asked is the AC should designate that there be officers, including a Chair and Vice Chair.

JP wants to ensure the focus is on marketing ‘heads in beds’ and that any AC member must pay into the assessment and be an owner or designated lodging representative. He re-emphasized that he wants funds to be invested in marketing efforts only and is concerned that there is a future opportunity for City Council to change the focus. Paul Patel comments that he was initially opposed to the TMD, and he is in support of it as long as it remains focused on ‘heads in beds’. The AC agreed that this discussion should continue and be placed on the March agenda to focus on structure and membership.
**Action Items**

**Pole Banner details and pricing:** Glenn referred to 1 pager included in the AC packet and reviewed the cost and coverage. Noted current SM City program with Hometown Heros. The cost is $250 each with a banner life of about 6 months. Jerry noted his interest to target key entry points and intersections to increase visibility of visitors. Jean-luc stated we need many banners to create a noticeable presence. It was noted that this effort will not have a direct measurement of effectiveness/success. Ryan suggested that it may be too much of a local draw and not focused on our ‘heads in beds’ strategy. Susan wondered the locations that would capture the most ‘eyeballs’, and Glenn noted the benefits of place-making. JP added that the corridor at Main and Broadway does need to be enhanced and that these banners are a good opportunity for event marketing; Ed asked if outreach had been done to see if local event promoters to help cover the costs. Jean-luc asked Ed about Downtown Fridays and Ed confirmed that between 2,000 – 3,000 attend and that it is mostly locals. Jason added that the City needs to identify top projects in the planning process for the Main and Broadway corridor. Jerry would like to see a visible improvement and does agree that banners would help with place-making.

The AC suggested a test on 2 entry points and requested that information be brought back to the March meeting to detail exact costs and locations to possibly support the SB County Fair and AirFest.

**Updates**

- Chairman’s Report: None.
- VCB/TMD Report: Yarely provided updates on CalSAE, restaurant week, craft cocktail promo and the new coupon book

**Committee Member Reports:** JP mentioned new general plan and adding tourism, and Jason agreed this is a good idea. JP wants to create tourism as a higher priority with the City and suggested they refer to the City of Atascadero’s GP. Jason stated that there will be additional outreach and engagement throughout 2019.

**Good of the Order:** None

**Future Agenda Items:**

- 2019|202 Planning
- Pole banner details

**Adjourn** at 5:02pm

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, March 26 was moved to March 20.