

Buena Park Hotel Marketing Association

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Monday, December 12, 2022

9:00 AM – 11:00 AM @ Doubletree Buena Park

1. Call to Order - Chairman

An adjourned regular meeting of the Buena Park Hotel Marketing Association was called to order on Monday, December 12, 2022 at 9:03 AM, Doubletree by Hilton by Chairman of the Board - Don Prescott.

Roll Call

Present: Don Prescott, Javier Solis, Camilo Bruce, Jecksther Dela Cruz

Advisor Present: Sara Copping, Visit Buena Park; Karina Diez, Visit Buena Park

Public: Beverly Hernandez, Fairfield Inn & Suites

2. Approval of Minutes – Chairman

Don made a motion to approve the minutes; Javier seconded it; approved unanimously.

3. Vote in Jecksther Dela Cruz with Fairfield Inn & Suites as New Board Member

Javier made a motion to vote in Jecksther; Don and Mariah seconded it; approved unanimously.

4. Public Comment

No public comment

5. City Update – Sara Copping, Executive Director – Visit Buena Park

Sara noted that The Source hotel has been pushed back from 1st quarter to 2nd quarter. Sara has reached out to Aimbridge Hospitality for an update but has not heard back. However, Matt Folks of Community Development has had confirmation that the project is moving along.

Sara said that City Council was leaning towards the Butterfly Wonderland for 7711-7733 Beach Boulevard, after going over the pros and cons with members of city government. The Butterfly Wonderland will have a prehistoric themed attraction attached to it with a restaurant reminiscent of the Rainforest Café. Another option for the lot is a surfing lagoon with a 140 room hotel and a restaurant that overlooks the wave pool. About 40 people can surf at once and there is a similar version currently in Waco, Texas that is known to sell out. Don inquired if there is one of these currently in the desert. Sara said the one in the desert is currently under development. However, the one in the desert is much more intricate and the city has been told that the version in Buena Park would likely open before it. Sara does not think that the e-sports arena will be chosen because the location on Beach Boulevard doesn't seem like the right fit. It would likely work better at The Source or in the old Sears building. Camilo asked about the noise

levels of the lagoon. Sara said that they were told the lagoon is very quiet and there is a lot of shrubbery between the hotel portion and the Courtyard Marriott property. Mariah asked how it might impact Soak City. Sara said the concept is different from the water park, without any swimming. The demographics are likely also different when it comes to those interested in surfing versus going to water park.

Sara noted that there was an issue with the government stating that the 7711-7733 Beach Boulevard property needed to have been opened up to residential property proposals, although residential property is not zoned on that lot. This will push the project back about 3 months.

Sara said 7851 Beach Boulevard is close to being acquired by the city. Javier asked about combining all three vacant pieces of land into one attraction. Sara said Rock & Brews & another Korean restaurant are in the middle so this cannot be done.

Sara explained that the former Stanford hotel site will be a 132-room Home2Suites. 1,300 residential units are also coming to the former Sears property, with construction starting in about 2 years. Knott's Berry Farm Hotel has also started their renovations. Identity Board Shop is receiving a new storefront façade.

Some new businesses have opened up such as Slurpin' Ramen Bar, BMC Pho, Giant Ramen & Sushi, Hiro Ramen & Udon, Pho House, and Orange Blossom.

6. Executive Director Report – Sara Copping

Sara covered the DCI Paid Media Program Report for September 1, 2022 – November 30, 2022. Paid research, YouTube video, and display ads have been reaching audiences across Google Ads. Sara explained that they have been testing out a new feature called Performance Max, which used Buena Park's Halloween images and videos to reach converting travelers across all of Google's channels like YouTube, and Display. Military families were also targeted in Display and Pay-Per-Click for military tribute months, which started in September. New landing pages were also tested to drive performance. Blogs were tested against hotels, travel guides, and things to do pages. Sara also noted that Visit Buena Park launched a sweepstakes on December 1st, which has been advertised through Display and third-party sites. The average Paid Search click-through-rate for ad engagement is at 15.26%, with the industry standard being 4.68%. The average for YouTube is 1.73% with the benchmark at 0.90%, and display at 0.76% with a benchmark of 0.47%.

Ad engagement for Halloween specific campaigns is at a 35.54% click-through-rate for Paid Search, with a benchmark of 4.68%. Performance Max (Display & Video)'s click-through-rate is 1.06% with a benchmark of 0.47%. Paid Search has 7,801 ad clicks and Performance Max has 65,971 ad clicks.

Military Tribute Campaigns have had 6,892 ad clicks for Display with a click-through-rate of 7.44% and a benchmark of 0.47%. Paid Search has a click-through-rate of 5.89% and a benchmark of 4.68%, with 622 ad clicks.

All add programs drove 65% of total site traffic, with 308,017 sessions and average time on page at 5 minutes and 17 seconds. All ad programs drove 94% of hotel page views. Hotel page views were at 41,632, travel guide page views at 42,536, and things to do page views at 3,964.

Ad programs drove 93% of Halloween page views. The Halloween promo had 44,104 page views, the Halloween blog had 1,350 page views, the Knott's Scary Farm attraction page had 2,427 page views, and the Knott's Scary Farm event page had 589 page views.

Javier asked how well Knott's Scary Farm performed this year. Mariah said the chaperone policy changed things, but overall it was strong. Because of the policy, the crowd they got was an older crowd willing to spend more at the event. Don explained that there were slightly lower crowds but that made for a better experience for park attendees. Attendance was lower than 2019 but revenue was up.

Sara transitioned into the current military promotions, which are going so well that Visit Buena Park will be strategizing on leveraging this year round. The current promotion revolved around a military page on VisitBuenaPark.com, Visit Buena Park newsletter, press releases, blogs, Pay-Per-Click, Display ads, social media ads, hosted media, and a button on a landing page.

Sara also talked about Visit Buena Park launching a sweepstakes to win a Southern California Getaway. The campaign includes a giveaway page on VisitBuenaPark.com, Visit Buena Park newsletter, press release, blog, Display ads, social media ads, button on homepage, coverage with Statepoint Media, Visit California newsletter, pop-up on homepage, Tripadvisor social media, and coverage on the AAA Northeast social media and newsletter.

Social media has had over 130,000 click-thru's to the Visit Buena Park website, 10.4 million impressions, 478,000 video views, a click-through rate of 2.24%, a cost-per-click of \$0.29, a cost-per-view of \$0.08, for a total of \$38,000 spend. The top three social posts revolved around the Land of Yes video, a food guide put together by A Taste of Koko blog, and a blog written by Visit Buena Park about new developments in the destination.

Sara explained that the Q3 Expedia OC Coop campaign ran July to September with \$627,000 in revenue and over 4,236 nights booked. Buena Park runs ads in collaboration with other OC Destinations through Expedia but also runs solo campaigns as well. The Buena Park solo campaign received 862 room bookings and \$122,000 in revenue for September, 1,100 room bookings and \$148,000 in revenue for October, and 772 room bookings with \$103,300 in revenue for November. Camilo asked if these rooms were booked directly through the ads and Sara confirmed that that is correct. The Q4 OC Coop and Buena Park solo campaigns are currently running. The Q1 Expedia OC Coop and Buena Park solo campaigns will run from January to March.

Trackable QR codes have been added to all print ads including the 2023 Anaheim Travel Guide, 2023 Visit California Guide, 2023 Winter Western Journey Magazine – PNW, and the 2022 Fall Via Arizona Magazine.

Sara said Orange County destinations met on December 7th at Visit Anaheim to discuss the potential for an Orange County Travel Guide. This would replace the Buena Park Guide and replicate the Visit California Guide. Sara said the thought is to minimize the amount of crossover

between destinations. Orange Coast Magazine has been thinking about doing an Orange County Guide whether destinations partner or not. Destinations really want the guide to be digital. Sara posed the question to board as to whether people still request print from them at their hotels. Javier said they take the printed guides if available, but don't specifically request them. Javier also asked if joining in on an Orange County guide will take away the competitive advantage or be beneficial to Buena Park. Sara explained that her point of view was to have it be like the Visit California guide with a certain amount of dedicated pages for each destination to cover all the major things to do, eat, etc. Sara feels it is still necessary for Buena Park to have some print available and not go strictly digital. Visit Anaheim also felt the same way. A big decision would be which destination is on the front cover. Sara pointed out there might be an issue of including hotels in the guide because there will be competing cities. The goal is to not to allow ad sales in this guide. Sara also said that Visit Buena Park receives about 500 print travel guide requests per month, which is the most out of all other Orange County destinations. The destinations also discussed the idea of having a 2023 Orange County digital interactive map.

In 2023, Sara said she will be attending several travel trade events including the SYTA Summit, which Buena Park will be participating in hosting 80-100 tour operators from January 16 – 19, 2023. She will also be going to the Go West Summit in Alaska in February and IPW in San Antonio in May.

Sara concluded with discussing the Brand USA Orange County Cooperative Campaign with Visit Anaheim and Travel Santa Ana. This is a beta test that includes web opportunities through the Visit the USA Experience page, the Multichannel Mexico Winter campaign, and the Multichannel Canada Spring campaign.

7. PR/Marketing Updates – Karina Diez

Press coverage included many outlets such as Southern California Life Magazine covering Knott's Scary Farm, Knott's Merry Farm and Vampirates with a reach of 408,000 unique monthly visitors. Nerd Reactor covered the Insider's Guide to Knott's Scary Farm at 60,000 unique monthly visitors. Brit + Co focused on Knott's Scary Farm, Vampirates, and Silverado Days with 2.2 unique monthly visitors. The OC Register did a piece on Silverado Days at 3.4 unique monthly visitors. Patch included the Cops 'N' Goblins event with 25.3 unique monthly visitors. Visit Anaheim included Cops 'N' Goblins, Vampirates, and Knott's Scary Farm with 477,300 unique monthly visitors. The LA Girl showcased the Cauldron and has 24,500 unique monthly visitors. A Taste of Koko covered dining throughout Buena Park with 44,700 unique monthly visitors. Visit California focused on Silverado Days, Knott's Scary Farm, and Knott's Merry Farm in separate stories with 864,000 unique monthly visitors. Voice of OC covered Cops 'N' Goblins and Knott's Scary Farm and has 177,000 unique monthly visitors. Military Families Magazine showcased military deals in Buena Park with 100,000 unique monthly visitors. Military Times wrote on military deals in Buena Park as well with 3,200,000 unique monthly visitors. The Epoch Times focused on the Sugar Plum Arts & Crafts Festival with 25,200,000 unique monthly visitors. Tourism Trend did a piece on the Enter to Win a Southern California Getaway in Buena Park at 10,000 unique monthly visitors. Foodgressing covered the sweepstakes as well at 370,400 unique monthly visitors, with Attractions Magazine covering the same with 238,600 unique monthly visitors.

Karina shared that Visit Buena Park currently sponsors the TripAdvisor page and they have been taking action to optimize the page as much as possible. In her initial audit, she found issues like Medieval Times saying it was permanently closed and many businesses that no longer exist still listed as operating. She encouraged everyone to take a look at their TripAdvisor business page, claim it if you have not yet, and optimize it as much as possible.

Karina said that Visit Buena Park hosted theme park enthusiast and YouTuber, Tim Tracker, from October 1 – October 3. He created a three-part video series covering Vampirates, The Cauldron, Knott's Spooky Farm, Knott's Scary Farm, Porto's Bakery, and The Broken Yolk. Tim has 891,000 subscribers on YouTube and the 3 videos he created have reached a total of 245K views

Visit Buena Park also obtained coverage from U.S. Military Veteran influencer, Suzy Leanos, in November with a focus on Veteran's Day and U.S. Military deals in Buena Park. Suzy visited Porto's Bakery, Rock & Brews, Eggslice, the Broken Yolk, Knott's Berry Farm, Knott's Independence Hall, and Medieval Times. Her coverage had a reach of 54,600 and included a blog post on her site, as well as a photo and two short-form video reels on Instagram. The footage gathered from this visit was with the intention of using it to promote the deals further next year.

Karina said that there are three members of media to be hosted in early 2023. My Perfect Itinerary will be focusing on a girl's trip angle, and has 24,300 Instagram followers and 34,500 unique monthly visitors to her blog. A family travel focus will be covered by Trips with Tykes, who has 6,302 followers and 150,800 unique monthly visitors to her blog. Theme park enthusiasts, Mouse Vibes, will also be hosted and have 25,000 Instagram followers and 9,190 YouTube subscribers.

Blogs and press releases were written to promote Buena Park, including the following: Boo-vena Park's Fall Foodie Roundup, SoCal's Fun City Honors Military with Exclusive Deals, Honor Your Veteran in Buena Park: A Weekend Itinerary – Blog, Un-Pho-Gettable Dining in The OC, We're Hopeless Ramen-Tics: Top 7 Japanese Ramen Spots in Buena Park, CA, The Souper-Stars of Buena Park, Buena Park is on a Roll: Top 12 Best Sandwiches, Best Authentic Korean Restaurants in Buena Park, California, You Ain't Seen Stuffin' Yet: Best Places to Get a Thanksgiving Meal, "Stocking" Up on Christmas Cheer in Buena Park, Winter Checklist of Southern California Attractions, The Ultimate Guide to Christmas in Orange County, Knott's Merry Farm: Know Before You Go, The Gift of Travel: A Buena Park Getaway, Enter to Win A Southern California Getaway in Buena Park, Buena Park Restaurant Named a MICHELIN Guide Bib Gourmand, and Where to Ring in 2023 in Buena Park.

Karina also talked about attending TBEX North America on October 13th to 14th, 2022. TBEX North America included workshops and breakout sessions about content creation, SEO, pitching, and working with media. Key takeaways revolved around best practices for SEO optimization throughout our website, pay ranges for different tiers of media, and finding niche topics to cover in your destination. Karina will be attending the Visit California Mexico Trade Retreat from January 24th – 26th, 2023. The retreat will revolve around networking opportunities with a delegation of California trade partners. Approximately 15 clients from throughout Mexico will attend, including Guadalajara, Monterrey and CDMX-based trade professionals. She is also looking into attending the Visit California Sales and Media Mission, which will likely be in April

2023. In the past, this mission has included training seminars and a platform to connect with wholesalers, retailers, airlines and key commercial partners.

Karina went on to say that on November 16th, Visit Buena Park sent out the winter newsletter highlighting all the festive activities occurring around the city. This was sent to 25,270 subscribers and received an open rate of 31%. In early January, they be sending out another newsletter to cover PEANUTS Celebration, 2023 events, and Valentine's Day.

Karina also shared that Buena Park restaurant, Ramen & Tsukemen TAO, was granted the honor of a MICHELIN Guide distinction of Bib Gourmand. This is given for "exceptionally good food at moderate prices," with the ability to order two courses and a glass of wine or dessert for under \$49 before tax and tip. Restaurants that make it into the MICHELIN Guide must also serve fresh ingredients that are carefully prepared and provide an overall good meal. Anonymous MICHELIN Guide Inspectors visit the dining location to assess the quality of the food before making their recommendations. Social media posts with video and a press release was sent out to cover the news.

Lastly, Karina explained that Visit Buena Park made a goal to put more of a focus on the holidays in Buena Park during November and December. To do this, various blogs were written including Knott's Merry Farm: Know Before You Go, "Stocking Up" on Christmas Cheer in Buena Park, Winter Checklist of Southern California Attractions, The Ultimate Guide to Christmas in Orange County, and the Gift of Travel: A Buena Park Getaway. She also went around to all of the winter events throughout the city and got footage and photos to be able to put together a video that highlights all the festivities for 2023 advertising.

Javier inquired about \$139,000 being budgeted in September, but under \$50,000 was spent. Sara explained this was due to a print ads and other advertising that rolled over into January.

8. Annual Report Creation & Presentation Discussion – Sara Copping

Sara reminded that Civitas was budgeted for to create the annual budget report for city council. Civitas proposed \$3,000 to draft the report, review the report, and present the report to City Council. The audit will be completed in January, meaning the presentation would need to be at the first Council Meeting in February. Sara asked the board for their thoughts on the proposal. Don and Javier agreed to move forward with the proposal.

9. Discuss Finance/Budget Review YTD, audit, insurance & taxes – Treasurer, Javier Solis

Javier stated the TMD has collected 43% of revenue thus far this fiscal year. The revenue for October was \$119,472, which is an increase from that of 4 years ago. In July \$109,000 was budgeted and the TMD spent \$103,000. In September, \$139,000 was budgeted and \$47,000 was spent. Javier stated that the TMD is in a very good financial position. Javier inquired about the status of the Buena Park Grand Hotel & Suites. Sara explained that the city has requested that updates and fixes be made to the property.

Sara said that she has renewed the TMD's insurance, with no changes in cost. She also said that the audit will wrap up in January and the TMD's taxes have been paid. The audit is going to be returned late to Council and Sara has spoken with the city's finance department to ensure this does not happen next fiscal year.

10. Public comment on matters on the agenda

No public comments were made.

11. Set Meeting Schedule – Chairman

The next meeting will take place in March 2023.

12. Agenda Items for Future Meetings – Board Members

No agenda items for future meetings were discussed.

13. Adjoust

The board meeting ended at 10:30am.