

# Buena Park Hotel Marketing Association

## Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Friday, March 24, 2023

11:00 AM – 1:00 PM @ DoubleTree Buena Park

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1. **Call to Order - Chairman**

An adjourned regular meeting of the Buena Park Hotel Marketing Association was called to order on Friday, March 24, 2023 at 11:04 AM at Hampton Inn & Suites by Chairman of the Board - Don Prescott.

Roll Call

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

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

Public: Rikin Patel, Hampton Inn & Suites; Matt Foulkes, City of Buena Park

2. **Approval of Minutes – Chairman**

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

3. **Public Comment**

Sara advised the board that Destination Irvine is now operating under the City of Irvine. Javier asked if Irvine has an improvement district. Sara said they do and it is called an HID (Hotel Improvement District). The City of Irvine is looking to Buena Park as a reference on how to operate.

4. **City Update – Matt Foulkes, Director of Economic Development – City of Buena Park**

Matt said that 2022 was stable with a 1% sales tax increase from 2021. Auto dealerships have been having the most success over the last three years in the history of auto sales. The current forecast is that things will begin to stabilize so the growth is more moderate and it is expected that 2023 will be more of a flat year. The auto mall has spent almost \$40 million on reinvesting over the last few years, with another \$10 million projected. House of Imports which is a 4-story parking structure with a ground floor of 90 bays of auto repair. Ken Grody Ford is wrapping up their façade remodel and site improvements. BMW is expanding and completing a façade remodel as well. AutoNation Toyota just underwent a full remodel of its interior and exterior. Nissan also remodeled its exterior and is expanding their showroom. Jeep is also undergoing updates and will be placing a Jeep on rocks showpiece on the property. There is a vacant site on Western and Auto Center, which will soon be the Cadillac dealership.

1,650 residential units are currently under construction or being entitled in all parts of the city. Matt discussed the various projects including the Villas at Los Coyotes, Ascent (permanent

supportive housing), Jasmine Walk, Magnolia Square, Orchard View Gardens (senior affordable project), and the Village at Buena Park.

Javier asked if the City funded a portion of the Ascent project and Matt confirmed that they did not but that County funds backed the project. Javier also asked if these units are fully occupied and Matt said they are fully occupied with a waiting list for new tenants. Camilo asked if the tenants are paying rent or if it is subsidized. Matt stated that it is heavily subsidized. Sara asked if Buena Park homeless get priority for these units. Matt explained that rather than priority, preference is given to Buena Park homeless. Don asked if the retail options will change at the mall in regards to the Village Buena Park. Matt replied that the mall is enthusiastic that once construction is finished, there will be improved tenants and leases.

Non-residential projects around Buena Park include the Yamaha Corporation building their new headquarters in a former Yamaha warehouse. The former Farrell's will be a new 7-11, gas station, and taco restaurant. At 8422 Commonwealth Avenue a new industrial building is going to be built over the course of 12 months. The former Marie Calendars is now the site of Chick-fil-a, which was completed in November 2022. The former Fuddruckers will be a new restaurant called Iteawon Street, which is a Korean sports bar. The 175-room Source Hotel construction continues with Hilton wanting the property to be open by June. The construction team predicts it will likely be later in the summer. The McDonalds on Beach Boulevard just got approved to demolish the current building to create a modern, dual drive-thru McDonalds. Identity Board Shop is going out of business so the building is getting a full façade remodel and interior improvement to bring in new tenants. Sara asked if the McDonalds is moving forward closer to Beach Boulevard. Matt replied that it is but not by much. Sara followed-up by asking if the property behind McDonalds will be sold. Matt confirmed that it is going to be sold. Matt discussed the currently vacant lot on Artesia Boulevard which may be converted into a new multi-tenant commercial center and EV charging.

Javier circled back and asked about timing on the former Fuddrucker's converting into Iteawon Street? Matt replied that it will likely be another 3-4 months. Javier inquired about an enclosure for electrical equipment that is adjacent to both the plaza where the former Fuddrucker's is located and his hotel being filled with trash. Jecksther agreed that it has been an issue for his hotel too and that they've tried to remove it themselves. Matt said he would look into the issue for them.

Matt concluded his presentation with discussion of various updates in regards to the Beach Boulevard entertainment corridor. The Knott's Berry Farm Hotel renovation will include substantial changes to the entry court, Amber Waves, and throughout the hotel. Matt proceeded to discuss the City owned land located on 7860 Beach Boulevard which will soon be a new 6-story Home2Suites. They are currently finishing up design and will be taken to City Council this summer for approval by the fall. Parking will be on the first floor, underneath the building with check-in and the lobby being on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. There will be 138-140 rooms on the property. Javier inquired if there will still be a restaurant included and Matt said there will not be. Sara asked if there will be a pool. Matt confirmed that there will be on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level overlooking beach. The former Movieland site will be a new tourist attraction or entertainment venue. City Council has not yet decided which attraction developer to move forward with and will be re-addressed in April. Matt also shared that the City is currently in the process of reacquiring the former Aloft Hotel site, with the judge already having awarded the ability for the City to repurchase. The applicant has appealed but the City is in the final

stages of legal action to be the owners of the property within the next 6-months. Javier asked if there is consideration to open something different on the site. Matt said they are looking at hotels or one of the attractions that does not get selected for the Movieland site.

## **5. PR/Marketing Updates – Karina Diez**

Karina introduced new businesses that were added to the Visit Buena Park website which included bb.q Chicken, BCD Tofu House, ChoSunOk, Delicious Table, Jin Cook, Jjin Jjajang, Chinese and Korean fusion, KyoChon Chicken, Mindeulle, Tong Tong BBQ, Yoko – House of Donkatsu, Sul & Beans Korean Dessert Café, Han Yang, and Ki Sushi and Sake Bar. Dining that will be opening soon includes Seed & Water, Tempo Cantina, and Itaewon Street.

The enter-to-win giveaway was discussed, which brought Visit Buena Park's subscriber count to 41,300. On January 11th, the new year newsletter was sent out highlighting the 2023 calendar of events, PEANUTS celebration, a Valentine's day getaway, and the enter-to-win giveaway. This received an open rate of 26%. On March 10th, the spring newsletter was sent out, showcasing the boysenberry festival, a family-friendly spring break itinerary, a college spring break itinerary, rainy day activities, and the spring eggstravaganza. This received an open rate of 28%.

Karina went over some highlights of press coverage over the past few months which included outlets such as MSN, MouseSteps, NBC Los Angeles, Paste Magazine, Delectious Food, Visit California, Laughing Place, Spectrum News 9, Spectrum News 13, Travel Lemming, KHON Hawaii, Head Topics, ABC 10 News San Diego, Nerd Bot, YTravel Blog, My Perfect Itinerary, and Daps Magic.

A local food FAM was hosted in early March which included a group of 5 Instagram influencers who primarily focus on dining in their content. The itinerary included The Source OC, Porto's Bakery, Mrs. Knott's Chicken Dinner, The Cauldron, and the Boysenberry Festival Media Event. The goal was to collaborate with local influencers as a cost effective option to not only get Buena Park content in front of their followers but also as a source of content creation. The rights to all videos created and shared during the foodie FAM were purchased so that they can now use them across several platforms including Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

Upcoming media that will be hosted includes This Crazy Adventure Called Life Blog who will be visiting in April. Karina said they have currently surpassed the goal of 12 creators for the year, have currently hosted 16 creators to date, and she is working on bringing a few more out-of-state bloggers to Buena Park as well as coordinating one more FAM before the fiscal year is up. Contracts have not been signed but talks have begun with additional bloggers for the upcoming fiscal year including Carpe Diem Our Way and Food, Fun, and Faraway Places.

Blogs and press releases written for the Visit Buena Park website since the last board meeting include: 2023 Calendar of Events - Blog/Press Release, Need to Know: PEANUTS Celebration -, Knott's Boysenberry Festival Guide, Guide to Exploring Buena Park, College Spring Break 3-Day Itinerary, Family Spring Break 3-Day Itinerary in SoCal, Year-Round Military Deals, Ultimate Girls Weekend, Rainy Day Activities, Best Croissants in Buena Park, Top Spots to Never Skip Dessert,

Top Spots for Grab-and-Go Breakfast, Donut Pass Go on These Buena Park Donut Shops, Cheers! It's Happy Hour at Our Favorite Buena Park Restaurants, and MICHELIN-Recognized Restaurants in North Orange County.

Upcoming events include the Visit California Canada Sales and Media Mission on April 24-27 which will bring together more than 30 of Canada's top journalists, influencers and trade professionals in-market for a 2-day networking retreat. The trade session will feature key airlines and tour operators including Air Canada, Air Canada Vacations, WestJet and WestJet Vacations for one-on-one sales appointments and networking. Karina will also be attending the North American Travel Association Conference on May 16 – 18 which is an annual conference brings together NATJA media and destination marketing organization members, from all over the world, for three days of professional development, networking, and tours of the host destination. Lastly, Karina will also be attending IPW on May 20 – 24 for the day long Brand USA Media Marketplace where she will have up to 20 appointments with freelance journalists, bloggers, and editors.

Karina discussed her recent trip on the Visit California Mexico Sales and Media Mission on January 24-27 which was a retreat that revolved around networking opportunities with a delegation of California trade partners including representatives from Guadalajara, Monterrey and CDMX-based trade professionals including Price Travel, Aeromexico, Volaris, Mega Travel, and many others. She had 15 one-on-one appointments and continuous networking opportunities during the two-day event. Visit California has pivoted into this new format of retreat-style missions, which Visit Buena Park is currently unsure is the most effective approach. They are looking at attending the Mexico mission with Visit Anaheim this upcoming fiscal year to compare.

Lastly, Karina shared information about the World Korean Business Convention that will be coming to the Anaheim Convention Center from October 11 to 14, 2023. The suggestion to create a page for the event came from Buena Park's Korean councilwoman, Joyce Ahn, who is involved with the Korean Business Chamber. They have created a dedicated webpage to visitors attending the convention with Korean translations, a map of Buena Park with English and Korean, a list of main attractions and suggested dining, as well as hotel offers. PPC campaigns are also being run for this event. Sara shared that DCI is currently working on the PPC campaigns for this event. Camilo asked how many attendees there will be. Sara said it's bigger than the NAMM conference. She also said she is working on getting last year's attendee list so Visit Buena Park can target more closely on PPC campaigns.

## **6. Executive Director Report – Sara Copping**

Sara explained that she is working on new street banners for Beach Boulevard which include Medieval Times, Pirates Dinner Adventure, Knott's Berry Farm, Soak City, and a standard city banner. The goal is for them to be up in April.

Civitas presented the annual report and audit on February 14 to City Council, which they approved. Next year, the audit will be completed before January next year to ensure it is within the City's bylaws for audit completion.

A year-round military campaign has launched which includes a landing page, PPC campaigns, social media ads, editorials in military publications, blogs, and a press release that will be going out in April. Sara also noted that the enter-to-win campaign that recently ran garnered over 31,000 travel guide requests and drove traffic of over 61,000 visits to the hotel page.

Sara recapped social media statistics which included over 125,000 clicks, 9.6 million impressions, 1.5 million completed video views, 1.78% click-through-rate, \$0.30 cost-per-click, \$0.05 cost-per-video, and a spend of \$41,000. The top three performing videos were related to a couple's getaway for Valentine's Day, a guide to the PEANUTS Celebration, and where to ring in the new year in Buena Park. These are aside from the military and enter-to-win social media campaigns that dominate social media performance across the board.

Sara presented the Expedia results which included the Q4 Expedia OC Coop that ran from October – December, 2022 and garnered \$374,000 in revenue and over 2,782 room nights booked. The revenue numbers were lower than previous campaigns because of ad placement. Buena Park also had three individual campaigns, which generated \$98,000 in revenue and 690 room nights booked in December 2022, \$110,000 in revenue and 857 room nights booked in January 2023, and \$111,000 in revenue and 845 room nights booked in February 2023. The next Q1 Expedia OC Coop campaign is currently running January through March and the individual campaign for Buena Park is running in March as well. Javier asked how much is being spent in total. Sara said the Coops are quarterly and \$25,000 per campaign. Individual campaigns are \$10,000 per month.

QR codes have been added to all the print ads this year so that performance can be tracked. Ads have gone out in the 2023 Anaheim Travel Guide, 2023 Visit California Guide, 2023 Winter Western Journey PNW, Holidays with Kids Magazine – Spring Edition, and military guides in May. The reach for the military guides is 200,000.

A Visit California email blast was beta tested in February with a reach of 215,375 subscribers, a 53% open rate, 1.86% click-through-rate, 2,231 clicks, and \$3.80 cost-per-click. The cost-per-click was high and geo-targeting was not available through this campaign. TravelZoo performed better in a campaign that included a 3-month featured story running from February to April 2023 and PPC. The cost-per-click was \$1 with \$3,000 spend per month. The campaign also included display ads and an email blast.

The 2024 travel guide may be moving to a digital only guide with very minimal hard copy distribution and reducing the print guide to a 6x9 booklet to keep costs down. Advertising would not be present in this guide. Javier asked how much it currently costs to print the guide. Sara said it costs \$25,000 for 40,000 copies in print, design, and advertising. Sara proposed a rack card with a QR code that leads to the digital book and a QR code for deals around the destination. Javier suggested keeping print another year to stand out from those only going digital and test its effectiveness. Sara noted that the guide has already been printed for 2023 and this can be revisited for 2024.

Sara explained that Orange Coast Magazine is launching an OC Guide in summer 2023 with a distribution of 30,000. DMOs are not directly partnered with them and space for advertising closes in April 14.

Hulu commercials have also been launched for Visit Buena Park. Sara is currently beta-testing commercial ads with no management fee on their self-service platform. Javier asked if it will appear on his Hulu but Sara said it will not because she is not targeting Buena Park area. If the spend is over \$100,000, Hulu would release AI capability to track how many people clicked on a link in a commercial.

Sara also reviewed DCI's advertising program overview, which covered paid search, YouTube, and display. The click-through-rate for paid search was 14.22% with a benchmark of 7%, click-through-rate for YouTube was 1.72% with a benchmark of 0.90%, and click-through-rate for display was 0.86% with a benchmark of 0.50%. Paid search made up about 50% of traffic to the Visit Buena Park website. Ad traffic for hotel page views was 58,384 with organic traffic at 3,054, travel guide page views was 48,940 with organic traffic at 3,755, and things to do page views at 12,464 with organic traffic at 4,443.

## **7. 2024 Budget & Marketing Plan Discussion – Sara Copping**

Sara began reviewing the 2024 Budget with changes having been made to the Consumer Targeting Strategy where the new military market has been added. A targeting strategy for B2B was inserted in the budget that addresses the media conferences, travel trade events, AAA travel offices, military travel offices and events, and familiarization tours that contribute to B2B sales of the destination. Karina explained that the content strategy was also updated to lead consumers through the process of being educated and inspired, taking action, being in the destination, and sharing post-visit. Javier suggested posting QR codes throughout Beach Boulevard with information about Buena Park.

Karina went over how earned social will be covering the main pillars of food, family, friends, couples, and new niche angles for the destination. Original content, short-form video, user-generated content, and optimizing for search engine results will be focal points. The budget for the earned social is \$1,200 for the search engine optimization software, SEMRush. Sara discussed the pay-per-click strategy which involves DCI continuing to handle the PPC campaigns and adding TravelZoo PPC campaigns. The budget for pay-per-click is \$156,000.

Sara mentioned that the four focal points for programmatic advertising moving forward will be display, video, social media, and native ads. Javier asked about targeting in other states. Sara explained that the targeting is very granular and gave the example of being able to target people in Arizona during hot summer months with relevant blogs about things to do in Buena Park.

Display ad strategy did not have major change with continuation of using DCI for display ads and working on Expedia Coop campaigns. The budget for display is \$498,760.

Video ad budget increased significantly to include Hulu ads. Javier asked if both line items in the budget are new. Sara clarified that YouTube has always been in the budget, overseen by DCI, but that Hulu is new. She also mentioned she decreased YouTube spend to be able to reach the

\$100,000 budget goal to work with Hulu and gain access to the trackable click-through data. Total budget for video ads is \$162,000.

Karina discussed the email marketing budget briefly, as the budget required is \$0 since the City pays for Constant Contact, the email marketing software used by the team.

Sara said the print advertising budget has been lowered significantly, with only budget going towards the California Guide, the OC Guide, and the Anaheim Guide. Javier asked about AAA and Sara said they are getting rid of most of their print. Total budget for print advertising is \$43,000. Social media budget is remaining high at \$162,000 with the new inclusion of TikTok.

Karina explained that the public relations strategy is to work more with local creators to obtain cost-effective content and obtain that content more often. The niche angles are of importance to garner the attention of individuals in a new and unique way. DCI's previous goal for hosting influencers was 5 per year which was bumped to a goal of 12 per year last year as the responsibility was transferred in-house. This year the goal is a minimum of 16 influencer visits which will include locals and out-of-state media. FAMs will also continue to be a key part of the strategy. Hosted media from this year has collectively reached over 1.17M from theme park enthusiasts to foodie fanatics with significant followings across social platforms.

Karina is also currently working on a media most wanted list for the next year – right now she has a larger list that she is narrowing down. The strategy also focuses on press pitching and content creation which has garnered a reach of over 615 million and advertising value equivalency of over \$2.9 million.

Broadcast opportunities continue to also be a focal point - like the "Top Picks" segment on PIX11 New York Morning News that reached over 7 million households in New York and New Jersey and has an average audience of 1.7M. Regarding the budget, the total for public relations would be \$152,900 and includes IMM and NATJA which are the same as last year's budget. Visit California's small market mission and Visit Anaheim's Mexico and Canada missions are also included. Karina expressed that Mexico and Canada are projected to be back to normal numbers in 2025 so its key to start rebuilding with those markets.

Sara went over Creative/Collateral Services that has a budget of \$56,700. She included an economic impact analysis to show the City and funds to do photoshoots for all the new hotel renovations. The hoteliers and Sara discussed coordinating timelines for hotel photoshoots.

Sara reviewed the overall budget as the following:

- Professional Services: Staff, Audit, Insurance, Meetings - \$60,000
- 4% Reserve Funds - \$48,000
- 1% Finance - \$12,000
- SEO Services - \$1200
- Pay-Per-Click - \$156,000
- Display Advertising - \$498,760
- Video Advertising - \$162,000
- Email Marketing - \$0
- Print Advertising - \$43,000

- Social Media Advertising - \$162,000
- Public Relations - \$152,900
- Creative/Collateral - \$56,750
- Marketing Misc. Funds - \$47,39
- Total Budget: - \$1,400,000

Sara projects we will come in at \$1.15 million and the budget was for \$1 million. Javier predicts that revenue will come in at \$1.2 million and stated that there is \$667,000 left of budget to use. Sara introduced the idea of the video software Waymark that uses AI to quickly render videos. The board supported the purchase of this software at \$10,000 for the year.

Sara inquired about increasing budget for staff. Both Don and Javier agreed to meet with the City Manager and Assistant City Manager to discuss the possibilities. Sara has also asked Finance to move the 4% Reserve Funds into a separate account, rather than the general TMD fund.

**8. Discuss Finance/Budget Review YTD – Treasurer, Javier Solis**

Javier stated that there is a surplus but the collections look good. As of right now, there is \$667,000 of budget left based on revenue at this point. Camilo asked what will be taking over the Buena Park Grand Hotel and Suites. Javier and Sara confirmed that it will be a Springhill.

**9. Public comment on matters on the agenda**

No public comments were made.

**10. Set Meeting Schedule – Chairman**

The next meeting will take place in June 2023.

**11. Agenda Items for Future Meetings – Board Members**

No agenda items for future meetings were discussed.

**12. Adjoust**

The board meeting ended at 1:15pm.