

Buena Park Hotel Marketing Association

Annual Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

Friday, June 3, 2022

11:30 AM – 1:30 PM @ Knott's Berry Farm Hotel

1. Call to Order - Chairman

An adjourned regular meeting of the Buena Park Hotel Marketing Association was called to order on Friday, June 3, 2022 at 11:36 AM, Knott's Berry Farm Hotel by Chairman of the Board - Don Prescott.

Roll Call

Present: Don Prescott, Javier Solis, Mariah Fritzges

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

Public: Aaron France, City Manager and Eddie Fenton, Asst. City Manager

2. Vote in New Chairman – Board

Javier made a motion to approve the renewal of Don's chairmanship for another year term ending June 2023; Mariah seconded it; approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes – Chairman

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

4. Public Comment

Aaron France passed on some updates from the City Manager's office regarding the entertainment corridor. The City is currently working on a settlement of the former Movieland site, with the ownership of the land to be transferred to the city within 60 days. Payment has been processed for the Aloft site, which will revert ownership back to the city within 30 days. The city currently holds the title for the Stanford site and they are reviewing the top 5 proposals for what to develop on the land. Staff recommendations for the site will be provided within 2 weeks.

Javier inquired if there has been sufficient interest in the discussed properties? Aaron responded that there has been interest for all the sites, including the Movieland and Aloft sites which have not had Request for Proposals released. Don asked what types of things might be developed on the Movieland site? Aaron explained it would be family-friendly entertainment to get visitors of Buena Park to stay longer.

Aaron proceeded to update on The Source Hotel, whose owner has pulled building permits and tenant improvements. It has been estimated that the Hilton branding will be added and completion of the hotel will occur within 6 months. 70% of The Source is occupied, with the owners working to fill the spaces.

Sara asked if there is any update on Best Host Inn paying their Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) and Tourism Marketing District (TMD) penalty fees and interest? Aaron explained that they have stopped paying their monthly TOT catch-up payments, in addition to their TMD. The city will proceed to revoke their Conditional Use Permit (CUP).

Javier asked what approach is being taken to prevent funding issues with hotels, like The Source and Stanford Hotels? Aaron responded that the city is no longer offering a buy-back provision in contracts to avoid time-consuming legal disputes. They are also looking for established individuals with capital equity.

5. Autism Program Discussion/City Updates – Eddie Fenton, Assistant City Manager

Eddie discussed Mesa, Arizona becoming the first Autism Certified City in the U.S., which allowed them to market as a tourist spot for families with children or adults with autism. The city underwent training and campaigns to gain this title. Council is considering getting Buena Park Autism Certified and has set aside budget to train city employees. The city is looking for hotelier feedback on potentially implementing the program in their businesses.

Don shared that Cedar Fair has required staff to undergo autism training in the past. Mariah explained that there is a week where Knott's Berry Farm offers shows with reduced sound and quiet areas. Sara asked if Knott's touts being an autism friendly park? Mariah said it is not advertised, that it is only shared with specific organizations.

Javier posed concern for implementing offerings that may not be used, similar to the hearing impaired and ADA offerings that Holiday Inn has. Mariah also posed concern for other causes that may not be represented. Don echoed this sentiment and further expressed legal issues that might arise.

Don asked how Mesa became Autism Certified. Eddie explained that there is an agency that certifies after a certain amount of businesses have enough employees who have undergone autism training. He also shared that there are no current mandates for this potential program as the city is in the research stages.

Mariah noted that there is a portion of the autism spectrum that would generally not be comfortable in a theme park environment. Sara pointed out that the Knott's Berry Farm website states its accessibility offerings. Don suggested that awareness for the cause would be more

effective than marketing. Javier agreed with the suggestion. Eddie will report feedback back to council and requested to see the training Knott's Berry Farm has undergone in the past.

6. Executive Director Report – Sara Copping

Sara Copping introduced Visit Buena Park's new Marketing Specialist, Karina Diez and proceeded with department updates. She explained that they signed up for Muckrack, a media database that allows in-software messaging with media contacts. Karina began training for the program on Friday.

The Satellite Media Tour was completed with Monica Ortega, which included a video created by Monica, and interviews on morning TV and radio shows in relevant markets. The tour hit about 12 million people and was on 55 total broadcasts. Clips were used on paid social ads, with high watch-through and open-rates.

State Point Media was used to send out topics about Buena Park to media outlets throughout the state. 85 media outlets picked up the topic sample shown in the meeting. Seasonal topics are being sent out via the agency.

The host of Travel Now, a show under access luxury on Roku, was hosted by Visit Buena Park. The show will air in 2 weeks in Canada, Mexico, U.K., U.S., France, and Germany. The videos will be 2, 4, and 6 minutes long. The videos will also be posted on YouTube, which should get at least 50,000 views per video. The videos will also be posted on social media, which is expected to get around 750,000 impressions.

Sara went to the Expedia Summit and shared that low guest experience ratings will remove hotels from search results. Good value, but low guest experience rating will still rank low in search results. This will require hotels to advertise to make up for the lack of placement in the results.

There is a current partnership with Metrolink, where Buena Park has a listing on their site with discounts offered for Knott's Berry Farm. Sara suggested that the hoteliers use the program as well to offer discounts.

Buena Park is participating in the first Expedia Co-Op Campaign, running June through September 30th. Buena Park is the #1 spot in the beta-testing of this 4-month program, which is open to all of California. The markets are Canada, Mexico, U.K., Germany, France, and Australia. Expedia will be adjusting the \$25,000 budget for higher performing markets.

Sara will be attending the Student & Youth Travel Association (SYTA) conference in Washington D.C. She is also working with Saffire to update the Visit Buena Park website's hotel page, which now gets the 2nd highest amount of traffic on the site. The highest traffic comes from the homepage, and the 3rd highest traffic comes from the Knott's Berry Farm page. Pre-pandemic numbers were at 1 million unique visitors, with numbers currently at about 800,000. 1.2 million is projected for next year. 750,000 video completions, with cost-per-click at 8 cents, occurred this year.

Greenhaus finalized Halloween creative, which will be sent out to board members next week. Visit Buena Park is also working out a 3-minute summer segment on June 11 with LifeStyle Today. Visit California is doing a dedicated email blast on summer in Buena Park on June 14th to 300,000 subscribers. In early July, PIX11 New York is doing a 1-minute segment on Buena Park on their morning show, which will reach about 7 million households.

7. New Knott's Hotel Associate Program – Sara Copping

Luanne Miracle on the Knott's Berry Farm team created a landing ticket page that will allow Visit Buena Park to sell discounted Knott's Berry Farm tickets in a manner that gives more credibility to the park. Sara and Luanne would like to get together with the hoteliers and see how everyone can partner better by selling Knott's Berry Farm tickets in an easy manner. The two options to implement this collaboration with hotels would either be through a QR code or a ticket referral program through Discount Tickets-Tours in Anaheim. Javier asked if the QR code would identify which hotel the purchase is coming from. Sara said that could be possible with a custom QR code. Javier prefers the QR code option. Don suggested having a contest to see who sells the most tickets through the landing page. Javier pointed out that most people have already purchased their tickets by the time they arrive, but he agrees that there should be a Knott's community. Mariah noted that the most granular data from the QR code that could be accessed are scans, not the amount of tickets sold. Sara will discuss the capabilities of the page further with Mariah and Luanne.

8. TMD FY 2022-2023 Budget & Marketing Plan Presentation – Sara Copping

Prior to the presentation, Javier noted that Visit Buena Park has been underspending the budget. Sara explains there are \$150,000 outstanding invoices right now. The projection was \$700,000 and the reality is around \$900,000. The numbers for April outpaced 2018 because of a profitable spring break. The reserve is now down to \$200,000, instead of the usual half million.

Sara began the presentation and shared that the overall budget has increased by \$300,000 to reflect a conservative projection based off of current industry trends. The budget breakdown is \$1,000,000 plus \$750,000 in carryover, for a total of \$1.75 million. Administration and professional services have increased to \$50,000 from \$40,000 for Civitas annual reporting and staff benefits annual increase of \$27,000. Reserve funds have been increased by \$12,000 to match revenue increase, for a total of \$40,000. Finance fee has increased from \$7,000 to \$10,000 to match revenue projection.

The only change to the vision/mission statement is the updated logo created by Greenhaus. The staff description for marketing specialist was updated from digital to more public relations focused. The targeting strategy was also updated to reflect a drive centric market and national reach media strategy to target those demographics.

\$2,500 was added to the SEO budget, which was previously \$0. This is to include a new SEO software company to help increase traffic, rankings, and visibility in search results. Research is being done between two companies, Moz and Semrush. The pay-per-click (PPC) budget increased to \$160,000 from \$100,000 pre-covid.

The display ad budget increased by \$331,840 to \$545,850. An additional \$150,000 was included for the individual Buena Park Campaign. TravelZoo PPC campaign and Highlighted Destination promotion were added. DCI monthly management fee increased with the budget.

The video advertising budget increased by \$213,000 to \$318,000. More funds were added to social media video ads and YouTube spend was increased. Budget to Brandzooka TV was increased and \$36,000 in budget was added for Pre-roll.

The email marketing budget increased by \$45,000 to \$56,280. The city has been added back into AAA email blasts, TravelZoo, and Visit California. The department will also be testing out Statepoint Media for \$2,780 for the rest of the year. Optimonster has been added into the budget for \$600.

The traditional marketing budget has increased by \$45,000 to \$95,086. The city has been added back into AAA publications, but removed from LA Travel Guide as they no longer allow advertisers outside of Los Angeles.

The social media budget increased by \$20,000 to \$70,000. Pinterest ads have been removed, and more budget has been added to Facebook and Instagram. The public relations budget has increased by \$24,500 to \$134,500. The public relations agency fee has been removed. Hosting and broadcast fees, and media events for the new public relations specialist have been added.

The creative/collateral budget decreased by \$111,000 to \$52,500. Video and photoshoots, and creative ideation by Greenhaus have been removed. Video editing has been added. Airsage has also been added for \$12,000.

Javier made a motion to approve the TMD FY 2022-2023 Budget and marketing plan; Mariah seconded it; approved unanimously.

9. Present and discuss Finance/Budget Review YTD – Treasurer, Javier Solis

Javier explained the healthy financial state of the budget, due to cautiousness during the pandemic. The expectation was to have spent \$1.6 million, but the spending came in at almost \$1,000,000. There were two months where more than the monthly budget was spent, but for the most part there has been savings each month. Javier reiterated the issue of Best Host Inn not paying their TMD. Sara noted that they have been brought to Council regarding their lack of payments. The next step will be to take away their occupancy.

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 September, after Labor Day.

12. Agenda Items for Future Meetings – Board Members

No agenda items for future meetings were discussed.

13. Adjoust

The board meeting ended at 1:10pm.