



Visit Gilroy Board of Meeting Minutes

Hilton Garden Inn

Thursday, December 16, 2021

Call to Order

- Vic Vanni called the meeting to order at 8:06 a.m.

Report on posting of the agenda

- ED Howard announced the agenda had been posted on Friday, December 10, 2021, at 5:00 p.m. at the California Welcome Center, 8155-6 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020

Roll Call: Board Members Present:

- Board Members Present: Vic Vanni, Karine Decker, Zach Hilton, Don Delorenzo, Kurt Michielssen, Michael Fulcher, Dave Peoples, David McLoughlin, Jeanine Olsen, Sara Lira (8:41 a.m.)
- Board Members Absent: Tom Cline, Mike Patel, Adam Sanchez, Mark Turner, Brent Bonino, Nancy Maciel
- Staff: Executive Director Jane Howard; CWC Manager Pam Gimenez; Tourism & Community Engagement Coordinator Madeline Martin
- Guests: Jason Raby and Katherine Felice

Public Comment:

- No public comment for all items on or not otherwise on the agenda

November 2021 Google Analytics Report: Jason Raby reported on the October Analytics Report

- Top webpages: Homepage, 33 Things to Do, Hotels, & Gilroy Gardens.
- Users dipped down 19% from October, due to Gilroy Gardens Halloween event and the Northern California Renaissance Faire.
- Top traffic sources: google organic, direct traffic, & Gilroy Gardens.
- Up 6.29% in users from Nov. 2019, a large contribution from Gilroy Gardens page.
- New CCTC Pinterest ad campaign; it has 3 components.
 - Currently we are running the first, winter phase, with an ad on the larger CCTC Pinterest page, promoting Gilroy Gardens and garlic as a holiday gift idea.
 - In Jan. we will do the second ad, focusing on East Coast visitors looking to get away from the cold.

- Expedia campaign is running through January, and we should have a report for Feb. meeting.
- Ads submitted for Jan. 2022 winter issue of *gmhToday* and a couple ads for Dog Trekker.
- Top posts on social media:
 - Facebook: Dining locally, with picture and description of the Gilroy Taco Trail.
 - Instagram: Picture and description of the Bay Area Travel & Adventure Show.
- Update on the 2022 Stay Spicy Visitor Guide: first draft ready in a couple weeks. Goal to print by Feb. 2022
- Digital Influencers Summary Report (3 influencers sponsored by Visit Gilroy)
 - Reached: just under 24,000 people
 - Cost: average cost of \$.14 per reach
 - Palm Trees and Pellegrino was the most organized, professional, and delivered the most content for the cost
- ADA Website Audit & Remediation Summary Report
 - 90% of the project has been completed.
 - Need new plugins to update the Events Calendar and embedded Google maps.
 - Should take an average of 15-25 hours to finish at an estimated cost of \$2500-\$3500.
 - Processed over 100 PDFs to make them ADA Accessible, added alternative text to images, and added closed captioning to all videos and on our You Tube channel videos.

Consent Calendar: Approval of November 18, 2021, Board Meeting Minutes and September 2021 Financials-MSA approved unanimously.

Old Business

- CWC Gilroy Operations Update: ED Howard reported our updated hours are going well for the holiday season: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily.
 - GM Gimenez reported new hours in January 2022 will be Mon. – Sat. from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sun. from 12-5 p.m.
- GEDP Initiatives Update: ED Howard reported:
 - No updates on the San Jose Sharks proposal.
 - The 536 Plan is still in negotiations with the Santa Clara County and should wrap up by mid-Jan. 2022.
 - Gourmet Alley grant has been submitted; should hear in March.
 - BM Decker reported the Ad-Hoc Committee will be started in Jan.
 - No updates on the Visit California Stewardship Planning Guide. Should be getting new policies in early 2022.

New Business

- 2022 Gilroy Tourism Business Improvement District budget draft
 - The Executive Board reviewed it.
 - Revenue is strong and is up to 90% of the 2019 levels.

- MSC approved it.
- CWC Gilroy Vendor Application for Gilroy Ostrich Farm
 - GM Gimenez presented Gilroy Ostrich Farm products they would sell: ostrich, cow, other plushes, mugs, tote bags.
 - MSC approved of the new vendor.
- ED Howard presented a letter from Connie Rogers, President of the Gilroy Historical Society, requesting that the city contact CalTrans District 4 to request a California Landmark sign for our historic deodara cedar trees, 152 Tree Row, along Hecker Pass Highway. The trees were already listed in 2005 on the National Register of Historic Places and are listed on the California Register of Historic Places, also.
 - Connie Rogers asked the Board to also write a similar letter to the City Council.
 - MSC approved the Board sending a letter to the city.
 - BM Hilton offered to write and send it.
- Visit Gilroy Executive Director Succession Plan
 - ED Howard announced her plan to retire by June 30, 2022, after 17 years in her position.
 - Chair Vanni will be leading a Succession Plan Committee, which will include BM McLoughlin and BM Turner, with the addition of a couple more Board members, and they will meet in a couple of weeks to start the process of the succession plan.
- Report on Carmel, Indiana Mayor James Brainard's visit to Gilroy
 - ED Howard shared how Mayor Brainard brought Carmel from 1996 at 25,000 people to 102,000 people, and he completely transformed the downtown.
 - ED Howard, BM Turner, and BM Decker each spent time with Mayor Brainard on his visit, showing him around Gilroy and our downtown.
 - ED Howard met with BM Decker to discuss the next steps for improving downtown.
 - BM Decker reported that Mayor Brainard saw a lot of potential in downtown and had some suggestions for some resources for economic development that had not yet been utilized.
 - These ideas will probably first be applied to some small downtown projects.
 - ED Howard mentioned that there are plans to visit Napa's downtown to observe the changes that have been made there to improve it. Mayor Brainard advised Napa's officials for 17 years to improve their downtown.
- Visit California, U.S. Travel Covid-19 Update
 - 47% of travelers have postponed trips; 37% have canceled trips.
 - Visit Gilroy will move forward but be continuously cautious about how we do things.
 - We will want to bring visitation but make people feel comfortable while here, as we'll still be dealing with COVID for possibly the next 12-18 months.

Staff Reports

- California Welcome Center Gilroy Manage November Monthly Report
 - Gross sales: \$3.098
 - Top sellers: CWC and Casa de Fruta.
 - Walk-ins: 987
 - 42 international visitors, with England having the most visitors
 - 84 Deliverables: Yosemite Leads
 - Budget: 118% of budget; Overall 129% of budget.
 - GM Gimenez reported some points learned from Visit California Webinar:
 - Squaw Valley is now rebranded as Palisades Tahoe.
 - Axe throwing is a currently a very popular. We have 8 locations in the Bay Area, often used for team building, date nights, etc.
- Tourism and Community Engagement Coordinator November monthly report
 - Blogs:
 - 132% increase in visitation from October. 464 total blog views, up from 200 in October.
 - Top searches were from Google search and newsbreakapp.com, who picked up a blog from one of our social media posts.
 - Published all 3 “dog-friendly” blogs: “Stay Happy: A Guide to Dog-Friendly Restaurants and Wineries”, “Stay Happy: A guide to Dog-Friendly Hiking”, “Stay Happy: A Guide to Dog-Friendly Places to Stay in Gilroy” and “Dine Your Way Through Gilroy” blog.
 - Most popular blogs were “Dine Your Way Through Gilroy” and “Stay Happy: A Guide to Dog-Friendly Restaurants and Wineries.”
 - Edited and created new content for our 2022 *Stay Spicy Visitor Guide*. Goal: to publish it in early 2022.
 - Wrote content for Chamber of Commerce’s *Business Focus*: Update on American Travel Trends & Sentiments.
 - Wrote content for Visit Gilroy column in *Gilroy Life* newspaper: “Support Gilroy with Local Holiday Shopping.”
 - Passed out the new Visit Gilroy map that was just printed.
 - Reported on plans for Wedding Faire on March 27, 2022. Forming a committee that will meet next week, with plans to meet bi-weekly in January.

Board Member Reports

- BM Michielssen reported that the Economic Development Corporation is looking at the option of partnering with the Chamber of Commerce, perhaps as a subcommittee, possibly in early January. Considering have the Chamber handle their funding and economic development. Lawyers are looking at how to do this. They may still have to have their own separate board.

- BM Peoples reported that the *Gilroy Dispatch* painted their building front black and boarded up the front. Concern for the appearance and if it meets the city standards for a storefront appearance.
- BM Peoples reported that the Old St. Mary's Cemetery is looking awful, particularly a concern for out-of-town visitors who take the historical walking tours there. Discussion over who is responsible for taking care of it.
 - Chair Vanni added it to the agenda for the Jan. 2022 Board Meeting.
- BM Decker departed (9:06 a.m.)
- ED Howard thanked BM Hilton for helping at the City Council with issues with replacing the CWC sign and the Hecker Pass Gilroy sign.
 - BM Hilton said he will handle this project.
 - BM Hilton noted he will also be the City Council representative on our Board for 2022.
 - BM Hilton also thanked Jane for all her years of service.
- BM Mcloughlin complimented Pam and CWC staff for their friendly service and keeping the place looking great.
- BM Olsen invited the Board to set up a date for a tour of CMAP.
 - Chair Vanni suggested an afternoon tour in January 2022.
 - ED Howard suggested BM Olsen select a few dates, and she would send them out to the Board.

Next Visit Gilroy Meeting: January 20, 2022

Meeting adjourned: 9:14 a.m.