



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 16, 2023
Hilton Garden Inn

Call to order: 8:03 a.m.

Report on posting of the agenda: ED Johnson announced the agenda was posted on Friday, February 10, 2023, at 5 p.m. at the California Welcome Center, 8155-6 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020.

Roll call: Kurt Michielssen, Nancy Maciel, Mike Patel, Michael Fulcher, Don Delorenzo, Vic Vanni, Dave Peoples, Jeanine Olsen, Brent Bonino, Tom Cline, Luca Rutigliano, Chantelle Mace, Mark Jacobsen, Victoria Valencia, Sarah Lira, Trevor Van Laar, Eric Gebhardt

Board members absent: Mary Pastorini

Staff present: Executive Director Frank Johnson and Tourism & Community Engagement Coordinator Madeline Martin. Staff absent: CWC Manager Susan Childers

Guests: Jason Raby and Mike Conrotto

Public comment: Mike Conrotto. Discussion of possible addition in Gilroy of an electronic billboard on his property just south of the car dealerships and north of town. Downtown Gilroy would get a small percentage of free advertising and sales tax revenue. Content will be controlled by the owners and subject to any contracts with the city, CALTRANS, and Mr. Conrotto's contract with the sign company.

January 2023 Google Analytics Report, November Marketing Activities: Jason Raby reported we heavily promoted our Gilroy restaurants for California Restaurant Month. Website: traffic up 23% over PY, Top pages: Homepage, 33 Things to Do, Garlic Festival, Event Calendar, Hotels. 67% mobile traffic. Advertising: stories to VCA, content for co-op spot in CCTC for their map, large window clings at the GPO for Fantastical Flowers at Gilroy Gardens, Expedia campaign: \$10,000 buy, VCA matched it with \$2,500, ran Nov. 20-Jan. 20. Generated gross hotel bookings of \$28,800, return rate of 2.89%. In winter 2021-2022, ad ran 45 days longer, grossed \$61,000 in hotel bookings. CTR: Over 600,000 impressions with a .06 CTR. SM: 63% increase in engaged users on FB. Top posts: BBQ food.

Consent Calendar

Approval of January 19, 2023 board meeting minutes. Motion to approve: Dave Peoples, Second: Don Delorenzo. Approved unanimously.

Approval of January 2023 financial reports: Motion to approve: Vic Vanni, Second: Dave Peoples. Approved unanimously.

Old Business

New Treasurer: Trevor Van Laar

New Secretary: Dave Peoples

GEDP Initiatives Update: ED Johnson reported the Sharks Initiative is very close—just awaiting City Council’s approval. The EDC focusing on Workforce Development. BM Valencia shared the GEDP is still working on three initiatives brought forward in December 2022, as there were still some concerns around those with the city. For now, the GEDP will focus on the original three initiatives: the Sharks Ice, Gourmet Alley, and the Hecker Pass Gateway land, which is going through the Surplus Lands Act for Gilroy Gardens to be included in the original land portion.

New Business

New Board Member: Mark Jacobsen, owner of Gilroy Poki Bowl, to replace Adam Sanchez on the Board. Motion to approve: Vic Vanni, Second: Dave Peoples. Approved unanimously.

Proposal to move VG Board Meeting to 6 p.m.: No action required as no motion was made to change. Will keep meetings at the same time.

Proposed employee handbook revision. Would partner with the Chamber of Commerce to do this through attorney Kevin Courtney. Our cost: \$1,250. Most recent employee handbook from 2016. Motion to approve: Luca Rutigliano, Second: Victoria Valencia. Approved unanimously.

Discussion on Strategic Plan: ED Johnson reported we have some carry-forward money (about \$80,000) that can be used for future endeavors, such as a website update. Need to schedule a Strategic Plan (SP) meeting. Last SP was 3 1/2 years ago, during the pandemic. A SP meeting would be about \$6,000 for the meeting of 5-6 hours, reaching a total of just under \$15,000 for the finished SP with Carl Rubideau (spelling?) who did our last one. Motion to approve moving forward with a SP meeting: Victoria Valencia, Second: Dave Peoples. Approved unanimously. ED Johnson will send out some potential dates.

New Hire: ED Johnson said we will be hiring a new PT staff member. We lost two of our PT staff (when Madeline Martin and Susan Childers moved into their current roles.) No action required, just making the Board aware.

Electronic Billboard Discussion on Hwy. 101: BM Vanni suggested considering if it will benefit tourism in Gilroy. ED Johnson mentioned considering the aesthetics of the sign. The City Planning Commission didn’t approve changing the ordinance for the property owner to use his property for two signs (one at the south end of the city, one at the north end of the city.) It will go to City Council next. Visit Gilroy is being asked their position on it. After much discussion, the Board did not reach an agreement on any particular position, so no motion or action at this time.

Staff Reports

Visit Gilroy Executive Director January 2023 Report & CWC Gilroy Manager January 2023 Report: City Quarterly Lodging Review: \$74,774 from the City, \$12,000 more than PY. Dec. occupancy: about 40%, in line with PY, overall revenue increased 3% over PY. Met with the Silicon Valley Creates-a NP organization that promotes art through workshops, funding, and grants. Interested in investing in Gilroy, such as the Chalk Festival. ED Johnson suggested BM Valencia and GDBA Chair Orth meet with them soon to collaborate. Also creating and recording podcasts with CMAP for Visit Gilroy. CWC: Jan. slow, down 38% over PM, due to poor weather. For 2023, on track, close to PY.

Tourism & Community Engagement Coordinator January 2023 Report: Two blogs: “Moya Art Gallery & Studio: Bringing Art Lovers from Around the World to Gilroy” and “Discover More than Just Tacos along the Gilroy Taco Trail.” Blogs: 918 new users, down 3% from PM, up 29% over PY, Top blogs: the 2 Jan. blogs and “Unique Snacks at the Gilroy Premium Outlets.” Top traffic sources: Newsbreak app, Google/organic, and Direct. Monthly e-newsletter highlighted the restaurants, along with other activities and events. Gilroy Dream Wedding Expo Update: 28 vendors, 885 save the date cards distributed, some new partners doing free decorations—balloon business and a large marquee letters business. Doing social media post series on the wineries called “Meet your pourer” where we highlight a pourer at a local winery and share a little about them and what they love about their job. Getting a great response to posts so far.

Board Member Reports:

BM Van Laar: Not looking like we’ll get insurance soon for the Garlic Festival, so we’re focusing on being vendors for other events.

BM Jacobsen: Thank you to Visit Gilroy for re-posting Poki Bowl on social media.

BM Valencia: All Chamber events on our website. Garlic City Car Show on June 17, seeking vendors, can join committee. Workforce Development: one of the Chamber’s main focuses. Goal this year is to expose our workforce to opportunities in our city. On March 8, taking 20 high school students on a job shadowing day trip to CordeValle. New businesses are opening, including Settle Down Beer and Pour Me Taproom downtown.

BM Fulcher: First-time Gilroy Gardens is opening with an event in spring, Fantastical Flowers-celebration of spring and everything that blossoms. About 12 larger-scale displays of silk flower structures, education signs, etc.

BM Gebhardt: still slow. Less rain has brought back some weekday construction workers.

BM Peoples: You can follow the Gilroy Bowl on IG for updates on progress.

BM Mace: Busy getting ready for the Wine Auction on March 25.

BM Olsen: Doing stop-motion classes again in March, split into two youth age groups. Did some classes at Hollister High School, also.

BM Delorenzo: the Gilroy high school golf teams are back. Spring/summer events are coming back, some first time since pre-COVID. Lot of tournaments being booked. Mentioned the Gilroy Foundation is seeking a new executive director.

BM Maciel: The committees are already meeting for the Holiday Parade and the Wine & Art Walk. The board members are each “block captains” who are in charge of connecting with the businesses in their blocks. First upcoming event: Wine & Art Walk-May 20.

BM Patel: Slow, doing bathroom renovations. Super Bowl being close to Valentine’s Day may have affected hotel stays for that holiday.

ED Johnson: reported City of Gilroy is hiring a new Economic Development Manager, which he is on the interview committee for.

BM Peoples, Chair of Gilroy’s Sister Cities, reported they selected a local young adult, Abigail Reynolds, to represent Gilroy in Angra, Portugal, for a 10-day festival that celebrates St. John.

Meeting adjourned: 9:33 a.m.