



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, October 19, 2023  
Hampton Inn & Suites

Call to order: 8:04 AM

Report on posting of the agenda: ED Johnson announced the agenda was posted on Friday, October 13, 2023, at 5PM at the California Welcome Center, 8155-6 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020.

Roll Call: Brent Bonino, Chantelle Mace, Dave Peoples, Eric Gebhardt, Kurt Michielssen, Mark Jacobsen, Marline Avelar, Mattie Scariot, Mike Patel, Trevor Van Laar, Victoria Valencia, Michele Campbell, Sarah Lira (8:10).

Absent- Don Delorenzo, Michael Fulcher, Tom Cline.

Staff present: Executive Director Frank Johnson, CWC Manager Susan Childers, and Tourism & Community Engagement Coordinator Mary Gurries.

September 2023 Google Analytics Report and September Marketing Activities – ED Johnson: Highlights – Our website numbers are doing well, the top traffic source is Google Organic search with 11,720 sessions, followed by Google CPC, and Direct Search. “Spice up your September with a great getaway to Gilroy” Facebook post had a 21K account reach. Social media pages: views and users are up, which shows public interest in things happening in Gilroy. We’ve put money towards promoting the Tamal Festival & Car show, the Downtown Gilroy Beer Crawl, and the Wineries of Santa Clara Valley. The Beer Crawl AD’s impressions of nearly 800K, With 1,025 conversions to the GDBA event site. Our highest visited page is our blog page. We recently hired a blog writer, one of the first articles will be about the food scene in Gilroy. BM Valencia referred the writer to us, and we are looking forward to this partnership.

#### Consent Calendar

Approval of September 21, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes- Motion to approve: Dave Peoples, Second: Mattie Scariot. Approval of Financial Reports- BM Peoples had a question about TBID numbers being down \$7,000. ED Johnson sent in the last bill we received, and funding should be received soon. Also, some vendor checks are still un-cashed; Susan Childers is following up. Motion to approve: Victoria Valencia, Second: Kurt Michielssen. September Minutes and Financials approved unanimously.

#### Old Business

Audit Update: Auditor, Johnathan Youngberg, is still preparing paperwork for the accountant. The accountant has filed for an extension.

Agri-tourism: New additions are slowly being added to our website, Moose Mountain is the latest.

San Jose Mercury News Co-Op Ad Campaign: With a combined budget between the City of Gilroy, the Gilroy Chamber of Commerce, and Visit Gilroy there will be an Ad launching in print and digital form in the San Jose Mercury news. The first Ad will celebrate new businesses and opportunities.

Visit California Steering Committee: Working with Visit California as they take stock of our resources, they are looking for more industry representatives from Gilroy. Several Board Members are on the Committee already, and others are offered to be a part as well.

Website update: RFP is finished and will be sent to the website rebuilding committee. This will be compared to other sites with desirable qualities. Once approved, the RFP will be sent out. New branding and logo for Visit Gilroy is being heavily considered.

IPW: The convention is in Los Angeles in May 2024; we are hoping to collaborate and share booth costs with some of our partners such as Gilroy Gardens; plans are not set yet. ED Johnson is going to CCTC conference in Buellton next weekend, meeting with other Central Coast cities discussing what goes on in their respective communities and developing strategic marketing plans.

#### New Business

Fishing Blog Update: The blog submitted by an outside writer was not aligned with current or accurate fishing resources in or around Gilroy, so we will not be pursuing this blog at this time.

National Parks Ad: Visit Gilroy is putting an Ad in with the National Parks Magazine showcasing the Pinnacles National Park, appealing to outdoor enthusiasts. Chairman Gebhardt comments that since the pandemic, the Pinnacles is one of the main reasons that people come to stay in Gilroy hotels.

Downtown “influencer”: We collaborated with a local social media micro-influencer, having 2.5K followers; she did 3 beer crawl promo videos and had a drone fly over downtown during the event. Smaller local influencers may be a good way to motivate and engage with their following to reach Gilroy visitors.

Tourism Summit, November 6: In Morgan Hill at HOHI Winery, the head of marketing for Visit California will be at the Tourism Summit, as well as other local industry panelists. ED Johnson will be panel speaker.

Welcome Centers Meeting November 14&15: The Executive committee discussed moving our November Board Meeting up one week early, to November 9<sup>th</sup>, allowing ED Johnson to attend a twice-a-year California Welcome Centers Meeting. Board members agreed to move our board meeting to November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

Historical Photos: Two new canvas prints are hanging in the Welcome Center, thanks to Gilroy Historical Society for allowing use of their original photos for ordering purposes. We put a sign up with a QR code leading to their website for interested visitors.

Kiosk Project: ED Johnson was sent a message about what is being pursued in Morgan Hill; they are looking to install a series of Kiosks throughout downtown, providing transportation schedules, tourism, event info, and advertising.

## Staff Reports

Visit Gilroy Executive Director September Report - ED Johnson: The Tamal Festival and Car Show was very popular and well attended. City Council Member Armendariz complimented Visit Gilroy and our partners for how we promoted the event. The Beer Crawl was also a very successful event, with about 850 tickets sold, feedback was extremely positive. The food Truck Fly-in at the San Martin Airport is coming up, with Gilroy Rotary hosting a Wine and Beer Garden. Visit California is partnering with Google and hosting a content strategy workshop at the Google Campus in Mountain View on November 1<sup>st</sup>. The City of Gilroy cleaned the sidewalks in Downtown, everything looks very nice and clean, and compliments are noted by out-of-town visitors. For December, we will have a Christmas party gathering, and no regularly scheduled board meeting. Members discussed locations and dates, to be scheduled soon. The Hilton Garden Inn Regional Sales Manager, and Sales Manager, stopped by the Welcome Center to introduce themselves for the first time since the change in management earlier this year. Encouragement for local businesses to keep hotels in mind, letting them know of deals and upcoming schedules for out-of-town guest inquiries. Christopher Ranch will be interviewing ED Johnson today, relating to garlic and tourism.

CWC Manager's Report - Susan Childers: Monthly Report- Walk-in's for the month of September: 1,465; up 40% over PY. September Gross Sales \$4,186.84; up 98% over PY. We are 143% over the monthly budget for sales, and 133% of our annual budget. Retail sales: 194, with 26 representing international guest sales. International visitors: 152, representing 30 different countries. Top visiting countries: Germany, England, and France. Deliverables: 85 pieces of collateral were distributed for leads and community outreach. Quarterly Report- Walk-in's: 5,182 visitors, with Saturdays being the busiest day of the week, followed by Sunday. Retail Sales: \$12,543, up 15.4% over last year's 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. Top vendors: California Welcome Center, Gilroy Welcome Center, and Casa de Fruta.

Tourism and Engagement Coordinator September Report - Mary Gurries: Gilroy Chamber of Commerce Business Focus Article: "Downtown Events Build a Better Gilroy". Social Media numbers are up; Facebook: up 172%, Instagram: up 240%, and Paid AD's: up 100% over previous month. Blog users are up 3% over last month. Top Blogs: Dining through Time in Gilroy", "Moya Art Gallery in Gilroy", and "Dog Friendly Hiking and Parks in Gilroy". Top Blog Traffic Sources: Google, Direct, and SFGate.com. Updates on the committees and board meeting attended: Wineries of Santa Clara Valley Board Meeting, Third Friday Art Walk weekly zoom meetings, and Gilroy Downtown Business Association board meeting. Monthly Webinars: The State of the American Traveler - Traveler Segments Edition, and Traveler Survey Findings for September.

## Board Member Reports

BM Lira – Gilroy Premium Outlets update: A small-scale Halloween event will be at the outlets this year, with a photo-op and trick-or-treating at participating outlet stores. The Susan G. Komen digital coupon partnership is running through the month of October. Next focus is preparing for Black Friday.

BM Avelar – Cordevalle update: They will host a Media Press group next weekend, showcasing the culinary food and beverage program with the new Executive Chef that started in May.

BM Patel – Best Western Plus Forest Park Inn update: Things have slowed down a little heading towards winter. Weddings and the Renaissance Faire supplemented bookings lately, with many first-time comers from San Francisco for the Faire. Some renovations are still ongoing, bathrooms are being updated.

BM Peoples – Gilroy Historical Society update: Old St Mary Cemetery tour is November 4<sup>th</sup> at 10AM. One of our Sister Cities is having their 5<sup>th</sup> year anniversary with Gilroy, hosted in Japan, and BM Peoples will be traveling there for the celebration. The Japan Sister Cities group is hoping to plan a visit here sometime in Summer 2024.

BM Bonino – LJB Farms update: Finishing the end of the season with the few weeks left of the pumpkin patch, and the fresh produce sales. Planning for next year has begun, planting of garlic will be happening in a few weeks. ED Johnson asks if we can take some photos and video of garlic planting in the fields.

BM Scariot – CMAP and PJIFF: Applications for a new Executive Director for CMAP are being reviewed. For Poppy Jasper International Film Festival, nearly 1000 submissions for next year's Festival. El Teatro in San Juan Bautista will be involved this year with "Mexico y Tu". A culinary documentary "Forked", by Susan Feniger, will be showcased, and a dinner event for the local farm worked is in planning stages, sourcing local food and prepared by local chefs.

BM Mace – Wineries of Santa Clara Valley updates: Harvest Season is keeping everyone busy. The Vine to Wine event at the Mountain Winery on November 4<sup>th</sup> is coming up; ticket sales are a bit lower at this point compared to last year, we are hoping for a spike in sales closer to the event. Master Sommelier, Evan Goldstein will lead a VIP tasting, with live music and vendors at the event as well.

BM Valencia – Gilroy Chamber of Commerce: Findings are in from "The Retail Coach" retail trade marketing analysis; Gilroy doesn't quite yet meet the criteria for grocers such as Sprouts, Whole Foods, and Trader Joes. Chamber events coming up: Small Business Marketing Workshop at the Gilroy Library with KSBW. Amazon Web Services and Change X are dedicating \$100,000 to Gilroy non-profits, a Grant Launch Lunch is planned at the Neon Exchange for October 30. Gilroy Gardens is looking for additional staff support on Halloween Weekend.

BM Van Laar – Gilroy Garlic Festival Association updates: At the end of the budget year now, switching to "Grant Mode", \$15,000 has already been awarded, with another \$40,000 planned to be given out. The association is planning for next year and is open to suggestions.

BM Campbell – Gilroy Downtown Business Association updates: The Beer Crawl almost doubled ticket sales, compared to last year, making for a well-attended event last weekend. La Ofrenda is the next event on October 28<sup>th</sup>, and Small Business Saturday on November 25<sup>th</sup>. The Holiday Festival and Parade is on Saturday December 2<sup>nd</sup> in a more elevated capacity than previous years. The Wine and Art Walk will be April 20<sup>th</sup> with hopes of becoming a 2-day festival for the first time. A new admin has been hired for the Gilroy Downtown Business Association, and some Board Member seats will be available coming January 1<sup>st</sup>.

BM Jacobson – Poki Bowl and Restaurants updates: Dutchman's Pizza, and Ice Factory have closed their doors recently. Cold Stone Creamery is a new addition in the Gilroy Premium Outlets. The City of Gilroy is still restricting unlicensed street vendors. Lastly, note that fast-food workers' wages will be raised to \$20 starting April 1, 2024.

BM Michielssen – Pinnacle Bank and Economic Development Committee: No updates to report.

Board Chair Gebhardt – Hampton Inn and Suites and Hotels updates: September numbers were down a little bit from last year, October looks to be about the same; sporting events in Morgan Hill bring overflow

bookings to Gilroy which is nice to see. Winter bookings are heavily dependent on the weather, so we will see what comes. Construction workers still make up a lot of weekday bookings.

Next Board Meeting – November 9, 2023.

Adjourned: 9:29AM