



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 18, 2024
Hampton Inn & Suites

Call to order: 8:07 AM

Report on posting of the agenda: ED Johnson announced the agenda was posted on Friday, January 12, 2024, at 5PM at the California Welcome Center, 8155-6 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020.

Roll Call: Chantelle Mace, Cameron Childers, Don Delorenzo, Eric Gebhardt, Jane Howard, Kurt Michielssen, Mark Jacobsen, Marline Avelar, Michele Campbell, Mike Patel, Sarah Lira, Tom Cline, Trevor Van Laar.

Absent: Brent Bonino, Dave Peoples, Mattie Scariot.

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

Guest present: Jason Raby.

Introduced Cameron Childers, Manager of Tour and Travel, and Education, as the newest Board Member for Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park. The board recognizes and thanks Michael Fulcher for his years of service in collaboration with Visit Gilroy, and as a future resource of information.

December 2023 Google Analytics Report and December Marketing Activities – Jason Raby: Reports Website users decrease of 37% compared to PY. Top visited pages: Homepage, 33 Things to Do, Event Calendar, Downtown Gilroy Holiday Parade and Festival event page. The Hotel page is down 57% compared to PY. Restaurant and Wineries pages are increased compared to PY. Device users: 72% mobile, 24% desktop. Submissions: To The California Film Commission (an opportunity through the Poppy Jasper International Film Festival) – Submitted images of Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park and Downtown Gilroy as potential places to film movies or commercials. Social Media: Instagram – 29K impressions. Facebook – 79K impressions.

Consent Calendar

Approval of November 9, 2023, Board Meeting Minutes- Motion to approve: Don Delorenzo, Second: Tom Cline. Approval of November 2023 Financial Reports- Motion to approve: Kurt Michielssen, Second: Don Delorenzo. [No December 2023 Minutes- No Meeting Held]. Approval of December 2023 Financial Reports- Motion to approve: Kurt Michielssen, Second: Don Delorenzo. November 2023 Minutes and Financials, and December 2023 Financials approved unanimously.

Old Business

Holiday Party Update: Thank you to those that attended, it was the first combined Holiday Party with the Gilroy Chamber of Commerce Board and employees, and the Visit Gilroy Board, and a great opportunity to all get together and connect.

Welcome Center Meeting November 14-15: ED Johnson attended the meeting in Ukiah, California. Roughly 15 California Welcome Centers met to update and exchange new ideas. The use of software program was discussed with some feedback to consider.

Website Update: Of the RFP's sent out, four proposals have been received, and the last day to submit is January 20th. Two companies are local, the other two are from out of the area. Also, an RFP for Content Development, such as photos and video for the site, was received. The next step is for the Website Committee to review the proposals and make recommendations to the Board.

Chair Gebhardt reports that among all cities in the region, 2023 average daily room rates were within 2% of their prior year, noting the trend of numbers being down or static across the board. 2024 projection looks relatively similar.

New Business

New Blogs- Holiday's and Dine Around the World in Gilroy: Two blogs were published, one in December featuring the fantastic Downtown Gilroy Holiday Festival and Parade, along with successful Gilroy Gardens North Pole Nights. Another blog published in January focused on the International Cuisine offered in Gilroy for California Restaurant Month, and we revisited a past blog about Breakfast Spots in Gilroy.

California Welcome Center Kiosk Program: We were selected by Visit California to have a digital kiosk station in the Welcome Center, showcasing Gilroy amenities. Mary is doing data gathering and entry.

Behind the Beer: Similar to the Know Your Pourer series for the wineries, Behind the Beer will focus on the people you meet, and what different things they have to offer among the breweries and taprooms, creating a diverse craft beer culture.

New Employee: Virginia was recently hired to work 10-20 hours a month.

Staff Reports

Visit Gilroy Executive Director November and December 2023 Report - ED Johnson: A new One Sheet flier for tradeshow and various industry use is now complete, with top Gilroy information and amenities. A Quarterly Visit Gilroy Staff Meeting is this Saturday, and Staff Reviews will be taking place soon. ED Johnson gave a presentation to City Counsel in December, showing the Visit Gilroy year-end video, all updates were very well received. Attended strategic planning meetings by both the Gilroy Chamber of Commerce, and the Gilroy Downtown Business Association. He also attended meetings with several community leaders throughout the month. ED Johnson went to an event celebrating the Sister Cities visitors, where Board Member David Peoples was also in attendance, as he is a key part of the Gilroy Sister Cities Association. The Sister Cities program is a wonderful example of tourism and the relationships that come from travel and maintaining bonds across the world. The Visit Gilroy Employee Handbook needs updating; an updated version will be acquired with help from the Gilroy Chamber of Commerce.

CWC Manager's November and December 2023 Report - Susan Childers: For the year 2023, we are at 128.1% of the budget in Sales compared to 2022. November walk-ins: decreased 55%, resulting in Sales decrease of 16.7%. December walk-ins: increased by 8.4%, sales still decreased by 6.2%. Top International Visitors for November 2023: Mexico, Australia, and Singapore. Top International Visitors for December 2023: Philippines, Mexico, and Singapore. Quarterly report: Busiest days are still Sundays, followed by Saturdays. Quarterly Walk-in's: 3,900, down 4.8% compared to Prior Years Quarter. Quarterly Retail Sales: \$13,967, down 9% compared to this quarter last year. Top Vendors in the Welcome Center: California Welcome Center Items, Gilroy Logo Items, And Casa De Fruta.

Tourism and Engagement Coordinator November and December 2023 Report - Mary Gurries: Three Business Focus Articles written for the Gilroy Chamber of Commerce: November- "Gilroy- A Destination for Business Retreats and Team Building". December- "The Power of Local: Smart Shopping for Stronger Communities". January- "Gilroy 2023 Travel in Review". Submissions made to Visit California: Downtown Gilroy Holiday Festival and Parade, Gilroy Gardens North Pole Nights, Holiday Shopping at Gilroy Premium Outlets, Gilroy Gardens New Years Eve Celebration, "Best Trails" – Gilroy Taco Trail, "Professional Meetings & Events" – The Neon Exchange. Top ongoing projects: Kiosk data gathering and entry, Know Your Pourer series, Behind the Beer series. Attended 9 committee and board meetings with various partners: Holiday Festival & Parade Committee, Wineries of Santa Clara Valley Board, Gilroy Downtown Business Association Board, Articulate Solutions planning meeting via zoom. Webinars attended 4: Future Partners & Miles Partnership – State of the American Traveler Stewardship Edition, State of the American Traveler for November and December, Bandwango Strategic Data Management. Collateral Distribution of Gilroy visitors guides to Hotel and RV parks: 1,144 Pieces of collateral were distributed in November 2023. Social media: monitoring social platforms, sharing various posts to Stories, creating 17 posts, and 5 videos.

Board Member Reports

BM Michielssen – Thank you to Jane Howard for her article in Gilroy LIFE newspaper, talking about the partnership between the Gilroy Economic Development Corporation and the Gilroy Chamber of Commerce, and the effort of the EDC makes to assist the Chamber in bringing business and economic development to Gilroy.

BM Mace – It's the slow season for the wineries, also the time for renewing memberships, and open to associate members as well.

BM Campbell – Reports that a new new logo for the re-imagined Downtown Gilroy Wine and Art Walk is complete; "The Heart of Gilroy Festival" will be in Downtown Gilroy April 2024. The permit process is still in progress.

BM Delorenzo – As reported in the November Meeting, Gavilan received a grant from First Tee for some improvements, so new signage has been installed throughout the course, with more upgrades for the driving range to come when the rain allows. An adult/JR event at Gavilan scheduled for the end of February. Tournament planning is in full swing for the Springtime at Gilroy Golf Course. Eagle Ridge is starting the PGA Junior League, a first for Gilroy.

BM Lira – The Holiday Shopping Season at the Outlets was very successful, especially the Black Friday event. Things are starting to look “pre-pandemic” again, which is nice to see. The newest store opened is Columbia Clearance store in building A.

BM Van Laar – The Garlic Festival Association will be involved with the Heart of Gilroy Festival, bringing the spirit of Gourmet Alley to Downtown Gilroy for this event during National Garlic Month.

BM Patel – Hotel reports show a steady 2023, with 2024 forecasting a similar trend. He notes that although the inflation rate is over 5%, and we are not seeing the same increase in bookings. Getting ready for things to pick up in the Spring.

BM Cline – Updates on City discussions regarding Restaurant Parklets in Downtown Gilroy. A closed session discussion with Gilroy City Counsel will focus on the three topics of Fire Station staffing, the Glen Loma Ranch project, and the 536 project next to Gilroy Gardens Family Theme Park. The Sharks on Ice project is in the Design stages, with completion scheduled for June 2026. For detailed updates, refer to Gilroy City Counsel Minutes and Meetings.

BM Avelar – There was a Groundbreaking Ceremony last Friday for the new pickleball courts at CordeValle that began construction November 2023, with completion target of August 2024. CordeValle was nominated by Travel and Leisure for Best of Awards 2024.

BM Jacobson – Reports restaurant closures for A&W and KFC on Monterey RD, Chili’s, King Eggroll, and Sweet Sicily. A new restaurant, Pizza My Heart, has begun construction.

BM Childers – Wrapping up final numbers for the 2023 season at Gilroy Gardens, with a record attendance set for the Halloween Big Boo event, and another record attendance success for their inaugural North Pole Nights Holiday event. Moving into 2024, the operating calendar is complete, with the first public opening day being March 23rd. Premium Members Day will be March 16th, followed by Gilroy Residents Day on March 17th. For the Education Foundation; Curriculums for Natural Science Days are being updated, 5 days dedicated to school field trips, with schools traveling from as far as Fresno.

BM Howard – Reports on the ongoing work for the Economic Development Corporation and working with The Retail Coach. A current focus regards Downtown Gilroy, with a proposed Property Business Improvement District (PBID). The Monthly Chamber Breakfast will move from the third Wednesday of each month to the fourth Wednesday of each month to accommodate the Chamber of Commerce Board meeting times. The next Chamber of Commerce hosted event will be at CordeValle on February 8th. Update on the Co-Op campaign with Visit Gilroy, City of Gilroy, and Chamber of Commerce, Ad focus will be promoting shopping at the Gilroy Premium Outlets, with hopes of a February launch.

Adjourned: 9:27 AM