



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 16, 2024
Hampton Inn & Suites

Call to order: 8:03 AM

Report on posting of the agenda: ED Johnson announced the agenda was posted on Friday, May 9th, 2024, at 5PM at the California Welcome Center, 8155-6 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020.

Roll Call: Brent Bonino, Chantelle Mace, Cameron Childers, Dave Peoples, Eric Gebhardt, Jane Howard, Kurt Michielssen, Mark Jacobsen, Marline Avelar, Michele Campbell, Mike Patel, Tom Cline, Trevor Van Laar.

Absent: Don Delorenzo, Mattie Scariot, Sarah Lira.

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

Board Advisors and Guests: Jason Raby- Articulate Solutions.

April 2024 Google Analytics Report and April Marketing Activities – Jason Raby: Website Traffic- 18% decrease compared to prior year. Top pages visited: Homepage, 33 Things to Do, Gilroy Garlic Festival, Event Calendar, PJIFF. The Restaurant page is down 37%, and the Wineries page is down 28%. Device usage for April: Mobile-68%, Desktop-31%. New window-clings are up in the Gilroy Premium Outlets. April submissions to Visit California were for Hiking, Gilroy Gardens, and Garlic World. The Poppy Jasper International Film Festival Ads contributed many clicks toward the Social Media Ad Insights for April. The Car Show Campaign is now live. This coming Friday the next Co-Op Ad with the City of Gilroy, The Gilroy Chamber of Commerce, and Visit Gilroy will be published, focusing on the Wineries.

Consent Calendar

Approval of April 18th, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes- Motion to approve: Dave Peoples, Second: Mark Jacobsen. Approval of April 2024 Financial Reports- Motion to approve: Kurt Michielssen, Second: Dave Peoples. April 2024 Minutes and Financials approved unanimously.

Old Business

Website and Branding Update: The first meeting with the Simpleview INC. team was a few days ago via Zoom, and it went very well. They will be scheduling a trip to Gilroy in June for Immersion Planning, and we are getting advice on who to involve in the rebranding conversation from the community. Board Member Howard would like to meet with them to share findings from the Retail Coach.

New Business

IPW Report: Executive Director Frank Johnson and Board Member Cameron Childers engaged with over 50 people through appointments with travel brokers, bus companies etc. to pitch Gilroy's ideas of "hub travel", the Premium Outlets, and Gilroy Gardens. People were astonished at the number of wineries. Many brokers requested "elevated experiences", including art and Farm-to-Table options.

New Vendor Discussion*: A potential hat Vendor for the Welcome Center was found at a San Juan Bautista festival, selling various styles of branded hats/caps. More hat styles have been a common request. The display branding can be altered for Visit Gilroy purposes, with a small order of multiple styles.

Motion to approve new Vendor "Highway One Station"- First: Jane Howard, Second: Chantelle Mace. Approved with changes to the label to say "Gilroy" and "California".

Influencer Update: We've been working with Dan Bernstein who has an Instagram Reach of 255K followers mostly interested in hiking and the outdoors. He did a "Napa of the South Bay" featuring a few Gilroy wineries with outdoor spaces, with over 7K likes. Board Chair Eric Gebhardt talks about adventure travelers coming for the Pinnacles and Mount Madonna, staying overnight in a Gilroy hotel. Best Western Plus Forest Park Inn has also been doing a lot of social media content that is amazing, and we share when we can.

Morgan Hill Wine Trolley Discussion: A new business called the Morgan Hill Wine Trolley is opening up with plans to provide wine tours to the wineries on the Santa Clara Valley Wine Trail. Frank Johnson has a meeting with them and discussed the limited opportunities for partnership due to their current business name. There was discussion about additional trolley vehicles in the future.

Downtown Uber program: In an effort to help alleviate the parking availability in downtown, Visit Gilroy, The Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Gilroy have partnered to offer discounted Uber rides to downtown from within 20 miles. With sales tax in Gilroy down this year, it's reflective of the state of tourism lately. A poster with the Uber information will be given to hotels during collateral distribution.

BM Childers gives a quick update on Gilroy Gardens before stepping out: Memorial Day is coming up with many promotions running. The Empowered program with PBS is coming out that weekend, and the Science Field Trip Days are well attended. Board Member Howard shares the Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting event info. for the new Lakeside Splash water park for Gilroy Gardens on Friday May 31.

BM Cline: Gives a quick update on the completion of a privately owned parking lot now open for use in downtown.

Staff Reports

Visit Gilroy Executive Director April 2024 Report - Frank Johnson: Occupancy report: We are up .5% from last month, the first upward trend since November. Met with California Grown, and CA Secretary of Agriculture at Gilroy Gardens.

CWC Gilroy Manager's April 2024 Report - Susan Childers: April Walk-in Numbers were down by 19.5%. Retail sales were down 8%. April Retail Sales: Gilroy-33%, other CA resident-39%, out-of-state -17%, International-11%, all equaling 143 total retail sales. We had 77 international visitors, from 21 different countries. 6 Groups from China, 2 groups from Germany, and 4 groups from Mexico. We are at 89% of our monthly budget, and 112% of our annual budget. Deliverables- 738 pieces of collateral were dispersed.

A discussion about Tour Groups and Busses covered a lack of incentive for tour leaders to interact for the Welcome Center. In the past, there had been a food voucher.

Tourism and Engagement Coordinator April 2024 Report - Mary Gurries: Supplemented the social media calendar with 7 Facebook and Instagram posts, with 2 videos. Attended and prepared monthly update reports for board meetings of the Gilroy Downtown Business Association, and the Wineries of Santa Clara Valley. Linkages and Partnerships within the Tourism Industry. Ongoing Projects include Know Your Pourer and Behind the Beer features. April Features were Ron from Cinnabar Winery, and Bryce from Pour Me Taproom. The Kiosk data entry is almost done and ready, looking ahead to getting the hardware into the Welcome Center. Assisting with itineraries and scheduling for influencers visiting Gilroy and Gilroy Businesses, and fine tuning the content before posting. I will be volunteering at the Show and Shine Chamber of Commerce mixer event at Gilroy Gardens. Other meetings include Wineries of Santa Clara Valley, Articulate Solutions, planning committee for the Heart of Gilroy Festival, the Gilroy Downtown Business Association mixer at Gilroy Bowl, Zoom meetings with Simpleview INC., and a day at the Central Coast Tourism Committee Retreat at Asilomar Conference Grounds. April Blog statistics- Blog users are down 14% over the prior month and up 25% over prior year. Top Blogs: "*Trails Near Gilroy Waterfall Loop*", "*Moya Art Gallery in Gilroy*", "*Gilroy Fruit Stands*", "*Breakfast Hot Spots in Gilroy*", and "*Dog Friendly Hiking and Parks in Gilroy*". Top Traffic Sources: Google/Organic Search, Direct/No Referral, Yahoo, and Bing.

Board Members Howard, and Avelar excused themselves early (8:56)

Board Member Reports

BM Michielssen: No report.

BM Peoples: Had an accident during a tour- a stumble over a grave marker leading to an emergency room visit. The cemetery got a nice "helping hand" from the Roberta Hughan Estate, due to the interest in the historical influence for the Gilroy community. There is great interaction between the Historical Society and the Gilroy Museum, coming off the heels of their annual interviews and luncheon, and thinking of having 2 luncheons per year now.

BM Jacobsen: The restaurants are really feeling the weight of inflated costs.

BM Patel: The Luxury and high-end properties in hospitality are doing well, but the budget/economy properties are struggling. We continue to see more last-minute bookings instead of longer planned-out reservations. They have removed some of the 2-night minimum restrictions for the summer, to be more available for tours and last-minute bookings.

BM Cline: The Sharks Ice plans have been published and aim to be operational by the Fall of 2026. This project will hopefully revolutionize Gilroy as a destination for hockey and other related events

throughout the year. The Gourmet Alley construction project in downtown is still ongoing, and the City of Gilroy is leasing the use of the private parking lot on Monterey and 4th St. providing free parking for the time being.

BM VanLaar: In the next couple weeks we will be serving food for the Day on the Ridge event, then we'll be involved with events every month of the Summer.

BM Bonino: Things are good, strawberries and cherries are going well now, and looking forward to starting more crops. The weekdays are slow, but the Pre-Mother's Day Saturday event with vendors and food was a great success, showing how people love getting out on a weekend. There is a lot of excitement looking forward to summer.

BM Mace: The annual Wine Auction event has been postponed due to rain, so it will be on July 27th at Clos la Chance. The annual Vine to Wine will be September 1st at a new location, San Pedro's Square in downtown San Jose.

BM Campbell: For events, Downtown Live begins on June 13th, and is extended to run 10 weeks this year, instead of 8 weeks. The events will run from 5-9PM every Thursday from June 13th to August 15th. The Heart of Gilroy Festival was moved to July 20th, working through the permit process. The website for the Heart of Gilroy Festival should be going live very soon, and we are excited to have a few key sponsors already. The Covale Taproom is now open, with the rooftop venue. Aldo's building is picking up momentum again, aiming to prepare to lease as a restaurant facility. Nacho Moya is making lots of progress in his second studio and looks close to being complete.

Adjourned: 8:20 AM