



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes  
Thursday, September 19, 2024  
Hampton Inn & Suites

Call to order: 8:03 AM

Report on posting of the agenda: ED Johnson announced the agenda was posted on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 5 PM at the California Welcome Center, 8155-6 Arroyo Circle, Gilroy, CA 95020.

Roll Call: Brent Bonino, Cameron Childers, Chantelle Mace, Danny Mitchell, Dave Peoples, Eric Gebhardt, Mark Jacobson, Kurt Michielssen, Mattie Scariot, Michele Campbell, Mike Patel, Tom Cline, Trevor Van Laar.

Absent: Don Delorenzo, Sarah Lira.

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

Board Advisors and Guests: Jason Raby- Articulate Solutions, Jane Howard- Gilroy Chamber of Commerce, Victoria Valencia- City of Gilroy, Jimmy Forbis- City of Gilroy.

#### Public Comment

City Administrator, Jimmy Forbis: Presented to community leaders on the proposed 0.25% sales tax increase ballot measure, aimed at strengthening Gilroy's Public Safety infrastructure. It is a fact that staffing and infrastructure has not mirrored the population growth of Gilroy over recent years; It is critical for the community and its leaders to be informed. Further on, there will be a meeting to address the improvement of entry points to Gilroy along HWY 101.

August 2024 Google Analytics Report and August Marketing Activities – Jason Raby: Website Traffic- a 4% decrease compared to prior year. The current Ad Campaign running is for the Tamale Festival and Car Show, and soon with be La Ofrenda Festival launching next month.

#### Consent Calendar

Approval of August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, Board Meeting Minutes- Motion to approve: Trevor Van Laar, Second: Mark Jacobson. Approval of August 2024 Financial Reports- Motion to approve: Kurt Michielssen, Second: Trevor Van Laar. August 2024 Minutes and Financials approved unanimously.

#### Old Business

Website, CRM and Branding update: The database of our new website is being populated with data-rich content for our partners, updating records, and formatting for the front-end of the website.

\*Branding Acceptance\*: Board Members reviewed presented logos intending to make a final selection.

Motion to accept option #2 as presented today for the new Visit Gilroy logo: Trevor Van Laar. Second: Tom Cline. Opposed by: Dave Peoples. Motion Passed.

#### New Business

Hotel Staff Orientation of Downtown: Frank gave a tour of Downtown Gilroy to staff of Best Western Forest Park Inn. BM Patel points out the importance of them knowing what Gilroy has to offer, since they are some of the first people in town that visitors talk and interact with.

History Blog: Included for Board Members to review is an article written by the Gilroy Historian that underscores the reality of Gilroy as a hub of trails throughout history to the present day. This is a unique article to have as an asset on our website in a different way than our usual blog articles.

Point of Sale Update: We've been looking at different POS vendors for months, but the particular reporting needed for the Welcome Center isn't always offered. We will stay with the current system for now.

Review/Audit Update: Although taking longer than originally anticipated, the first review is complete. The accountant reports that a second review is no longer necessary and plans to move forward with the audit.

Sharks update: A general encouragement to follow along with the Sharks, as they grow their presence in Gilroy leading up to the opening of the Sharks Ice Center in a couple years. Ahead of the 2025 season opening, some players and staff toured around select Bay Area cities with "Sharks Around the Bay", coming to Gilroy on 9/14 and interacting with the community, and out of town people who came for this meet-and-greet. BM Cline gives insight into additional seating plans incorporated into the building plans, more than originally forecasted.

Marketing Company Workshop: Representatives from Verdin will be joining us for our next meeting in October to personally meet Board Members and see more of Gilroy and our local businesses firsthand.

Agritourism Field Trip Update: Thank you to those who came out on the Terra Amico field trip to learn more about offerings relating to local agriculture and food, as well as group-booking opportunities.

#### Staff Reports

Visit Gilroy Executive Director August 2024 Report - Frank Johnson: It's the time to think of places for our annual holiday party, any suggestions welcome. After hearing the presentation regarding the .25% Sales Tax increase for public safety, ED Johnson made the point that public safety is absolutely critical to tourism.

CWC Gilroy Manager's August 2024 Report - Susan Childers: August Walk-in Numbers were down almost 29.6%, but retail sales were up 16% compared to prior month. We currently are at 120% of the Monthly Budget and 115% of the Annual Budget. California residents make up 64% of August retail sales. We're noticing a rise in local residents coming to the welcome center for merchandise

gifts and travel information. We had 193 International guests in August, representing 29 Countries. Top visiting countries were Germany, China, and Mexico. Following up on the welcome bags we gifted to the training team for the new Chick-Fil-A, some trainers came back to the welcome center to buy more souvenirs to take back home, and some staff came to buy gifts for their trainers too. We're seeing a lot of RV trippers in the Baby-Boomer generation coming through the welcome center. In August 656 pieces of collateral were dispersed fulfilling leads through Yosemite Journal Magazine, Hotel and RV distribution and other community outreach. We have a new staff member who is bilingual and engages well with customers and other parts of the job.

Tourism & Community Engagement Coordinator August 2024 report – Supplemented the social media calendar with 5 Facebook and Instagram posts, including 2 Reels. We ran a very successful Ad Campaign to promote Vine to Wine, the harvest celebration for the Wineries of Santa Clara Valley, who hosted their event off-site in Downtown San Jose this year. Frank and I did a content-shoot in Downtown Gilroy with some hired Renaissance Faire actors to promote our Gilroy hotels and businesses while in town for the month-long Faire. Attended and prepared monthly update reports for board meetings of the Gilroy Downtown Business Association, and the Wineries of Santa Clara Valley. Meetings and Committees: Zoom meetings with Simpleview INC., Wineries of Santa Clara Valley, Articulate Solutions and the Gilroy Downtown Business Association. Blog statistics- Blog users were up 12% over the prior month. Top Blogs: "The Many Roads to Gilroy – History Blog", "Gilroy Fruit Stands", and "Rodeo Spotlight".

BM Michielssen: The Economic Development Committee has a meeting scheduled with Jane Howard next week to discuss re-invigorating the EDC along with the Chamber of Commerce.

BM Scariot: Mill Valley Film Festival is playing some Poppy Jasper Film Festival in October. So far, we have 800 submissions for PJIFF 2025. At CMAP, the space continues to be upgraded, and they have a new member of staff.

BM Mitchell: The Chamber breakfast is next Wednesday at 7 AM. Our Spice of Life Awards event is scheduled for March 15, 2025, and we are currently looking for nominations. Our Business Expo at Gilroy Gardens will be on November 14.

Jane Howard: The Retail Coach will be representing Gilroy at the Palm Springs International Conference of Shopping Centers next week. Also, the recent grand opening of Chick-fil-A in Gilroy was the 4<sup>th</sup> largest grand opening event that the company has experienced to-date.

BM Jacobson: No Report.

BM Patel: Numbers are noticeably down, compared to this time last year, although the Renaissance Faire does help. Even with events happening in San Francisco, bookings remain low.

BM Childers: The first round of Carnival Nights, the new Friday-night event this year, is having its last night of the season tomorrow, then we move straight into Great Big BOO, the Halloween event. Our sales are already trending upward from last year, a record-breaking year for us, which is really nice. We had two articles featuring Gilroy Gardens come out recently; one in SFGate featuring just Gilroy Gardens, and another in Travel & Leisure which focused on the highlights of Gilroy.

BM Cline: Gourmet Alley is close to its final stages of completion. The Special Events Permits conversation is still being worked on, alongside the Food Truck conversation.

BM Peoples: November 2<sup>nd</sup> is our Old St. Mary Cemetary Tour, and we will have a clean-up day in mid-October. As a result of the tours, a descendant of several Solorsano family members buried in the cemetery has shown interest in enhancing the gravesite, so some activity will happen soon.

Victoria Valencia: The City of Gilroy is participating in the Cal-Train electrification events this weekend, with a booth at the Gilroy station from 11-12:30. We are also planning a ribbon cutting for Gourmet Alley in the first week of November, but the parking lots are just days away from being open and available for use. The High-Speed Rail is doing their Visioning Study, with community meetings in early October 9, and presenting to City Council on October 21.

BM Campbell: Not very much to report, but just noting the difficulty for downtown businesses during the weekdays; it's a struggle to get people out to the breweries, taprooms, and restaurants and numbers a very low, so support your downtown if you're going out, and share the word. The Gilroy Downtown Beer Crawl is October 26<sup>th</sup>, with more info to come.

BM Mace: This year's Vine to Wine was a huge success, and the most profitable event since before the pandemic. The downtown city venue in San Jose was very different and fun.

BM Bonino: Getting out of the dog days of Summer, we are looking forward to the grand opening of the Pumpkin Patch with a Fall BOO-tique event with vendors, food, and so many varieties of pumpkins, which really kicks off the harvest season for us.

BM Van Laar: No Report.

Chair Gebhardt: The Renaissance Faire started last weekend, running for 6 weekends which helps bookings.

Adjourned: 9:39 AM