**Santa Maria Valley Tourism Marketing District (SMV TMD)**

Advisory Committee Minutes

June 14, 2023

11am Holiday Inn

DRAFT UNTIL APPROVED

Advisory Committee: Cherag Patel, Ketan Panchal, Seth Foster, JP Patel, Gilda Cordova, Jerry Patel

City Staff: Mark van de Kamp,

Chamber|Staff: Emily Kitts, Jennifer Harrison, Glenn Morris, Taz Dougherty, Cheryl Cuming

Guests:

KPS3 | Team: Rob, Brittany, Nicole, Sarah

**Call to Order** by Cherag at 1:04p

Roll call – all present.

**Public Comment:** None.

**Presentation:** None.

**Consent Calendar (minutes, STR, TOT and financials)**:

JP asked about pace of collections and Glenn noted we are significantly above budget with 3 months remaining in the fiscal year. If these months come in as projected, we will be well above last year at around $850,000 - $900,000. Glenn noted that the new 23 | 24 FY budget will be flat to 22 | 23 actuals. Mark said that the mid-cycle budget for the city TOT is at an historic high.

Motion to accept consent items: JP moved; Jerry 2nd. Motion passed.

**Business Items**

***Discussion & Action Items:***

**FY 2023 | 2024 budget and Marketing Plan, including Mid-Week campaign**

Advisory Committee asked that the Marketing Plan details be presented prior to considering the budget approval.

KPS3 Team reviewed marketing plan presentation overview, including Approach, FY24 Priorities, Goals & Objectives, Areas of Focus, and Budget Breakdown.

Highlights noted below and the full presentation is available:

Strategic Direction: content at the forefront including more video; focus on mini-campaigns; increase paid media spend; stick with top-performing channels like SEO, PR and paid social.

FY24 Priorities: Grow email database; increase our paid media spend; expand SEO efforts to a new category; secure more PR placements in top-tier target media.

Marketing goal: Increase overall awareness of SMV, its offerings, events and local flavor in an effort to attract overnight visitors.

Objectives: Increase website sessions by 9%

Increase total hotel referrals by 50%

Earn a minimum of 40 media stories

Digital Advertising: largest investment in SEM | paid search, followed by Social Media Advertising, campaign promotions, remarketing, native and influencers.

SEO: new focus on California Road Tripping and variations thereof like Central CA road trip and weekend trips in CA. Goal is to increase website visits generated by organic traffic by 10%, and maintain #1 rankings in branded searches, including wine and BBQ.

Social Media + Asset Curation: focus on Instagram and growing the video and photo assets by utilizing an in-market content curator.

PR: stretch goal to obtain 45 stories with an overall total of 85 stories/mentions. Jenn noted once stories are published, these details are shared in the monthly GM newsletter, monthly analytics report and at all AC meetings.

JP asked about working in cooperation with destinations North and South of us, and Nicole confirmed we are partnered with VisitCA, as well as Ventura, Highway 1 Road Trip and Monterey to take advantage of the VCA Gold Pass opportunities. Cherag also noted interest in working with the airport and Jenn noted that a proposal has been submitted to Allegiant. Gilda noted that our lodging restaurants should be noted first on the Where to Eat website content.

Creative Development: Noted shift to produce several mini-campaigns to improve development resources and decrease cost per campaign creative.

Fall Mid-Week campaign: objective to boost mid-week hotel occupancy in Fall 2023 through Winter 2024. AC agreed to incent via $100 gift cards and ensure the promo will benefit both small and branded properties. $75,000 was earmarked for this effort. A sub-committee was formed (Cherag, Seth, Ketan) to work with team to develop and launch by August 2023.

Budget breakdown reviewed and confirmed that total 23 | 24 budget for KPS3 is $693,000.

Motion to approve the marketing plan as presented by Seth; 2nd by Ketan. All in favor. Motion carries.

Glenn confirmed we budgeted $780,000 for 22 |23 and will end the current year close to $850,000. Recommended budgeted flat to current year actuals. It was noted that there is a 9% increase in projected income and a 12% increase in total expenses, with a larger percentage of our budget being invested into paid media. It was also noted that there are additional income line items in the 22 | 23 FY budget which includes: $60,000 required contingency (at 4%), opportunity fund $127,000 (for possible future events) and $75,000 (being considered for a mid-week campaign promotion). Jerry was excited to see that we had a sizeable amount of money earmarked in the opportunity fund for events.

Motion to approved the new 23 | 24 budget by Ketan; 2nd by Seth. All in favor. Motion carries.

***Information Items:***

**VB | TMD Director Report:**

Chamber Economic Vitality: Glenn provide presentation on the Performing Arts | Conference Center, share project goals, potential user markets, key takeaways, gap analysis and site evaluation overview (including Town Center West, Old Library, DMV site) and a marketing assessment. Ryan asked about number of overnight stay opportunities, and Cherag asked if this market amenities would support 600+ attendees? Gilda noted the feasibility study is in progress.

Glenn announced the Biz|Gov Roundtable on 6/29 at 4pm.

Jenn and Taz presented VB | TMD update:

* Citywide Event opportunities: location is key; event partner identified; considering Country music/beer/wine event and also exploring a hot air balloon festival
* SMV Airport: new flight from SLO to LV is driving interest to work with Allegiant; working on campaign presentation with KPS3; Ryan asked if current passenger load had room and Glenn confirmed that it did
* Jenn is participating on the Rural Marketing Committee with VCA
* Recent social media training with KPS3 had 20 attendees
* Both Visitor Magazine and Chamber magazine are being published
* Wine Trolley ticket sales are strong

**Updates:**

**Chairperson/Committee Member Reports:**

**Future Agenda Item**

* Alex Posada, Rec/Parks, Future Sports Venue plans
* Mid-week campaign plans
* Citywide Event Focus

**Adjourn** at 3:21

**Next meeting:**  September 21, 2023 11am – 1pm