

Coronado Tourism Improvement District (CTID)



Minutes from Advisory Board/Board of Directors Meeting January 2, 2014, Council Chambers, Coronado, Ca.

1. Call to Order. The meeting of the CTID was called to order at 2:06 p.m. The following CTID Advisory Board/Board of Directors were present: Claudia Ludlow, Andre Zotoff, Mary Ann Berta, Nusrat Mirza, Eddie Warner, David Spatafore and Phil Monroe. Denise Schwab was absent and Brian Johnson's arrival at Loews Coronado Bay Resort has been delayed until late February.

Also in attendance: Executive Director (ED) Todd Little, Assistant Coronado City Manager Tom Ritter, Janet Francis of Coronado Visitor Center and Karen Finch of the Coronado Chamber of Commerce.

2. Approval of Minutes from November 7, 2013. *Motion for approval: Spatafore. Second: Berta. Approved 6-0 (Mirza was not on Board in November 2013.)*
3. Staff Discussion and Updates. The ED thanked Nusrat Mirza and Andre Zotoff for completing some additional compliance paperwork for the City Clerk. Nusrat was sworn in before the meeting.

The ED mentioned a few of merchants have not provided their data for the Local Marketing Study, but during November businesses averaged a 10% growth YOY while the CTID campaigns were active. The ED will measure ROI for December and provide a complete update to the Board once all data is tabulated.

The ED has met with both Ideaworks and Robert Arends to investigate options for the community grant program. He has collected examples of how other destinations use events to build occupancy. The Board will get a full update at the Annual Meeting.

The ED referred to the Board packet that included the latest assessment update. In October, \$46,544 was collected, just \$451 off the total for October 2012. During FY14 \$245,545 has been collected, which is 3.3% over last years total. +3% is good because the Board projected flat growth during this fiscal year.

The ED provided a chart to track how the assessments collected during calendar year 2013 were pacing compared to calendar year 2012. The pacing was almost exact with

nearly-identical highs and lows. The ED was hopeful the November and December dips seen in 2012 were not repeated in 2013.

Finally, in calendar year 2013 the Visit Coronado mobile app was downloaded and updated 8,517 times. (In 2012 the app was downloaded/updated nearly 10,000 times.) The ED is still working on the tablet version of the app, which will be far more robust and will be aimed at guests planning their trip to Coronado in advance.

Phil Monroe asked how the app is being promoted. He was told that local merchants have promotional stickers in their windows and a QR code appears on the print ads in San Diego Magazine, San Diego Home & Garden and Performances. There has not been any promotion of the app from our national marketing efforts with San Diego Tourism Authority (SDTA.) The Visitor Center website also features a high profile download link. The ED said there has not been a specific campaign to market the app. David Spatafore suggested developing some sort of contest to raise interest and increase the number of downloads. He also asked if it was possible to track how guests obtained the app (via QR code, iTunes or organic search.) He was told iTunes only tracks downloads by country, not browsers or search methods. Mary Ann Berta asked if guests arriving via Old Town Trolley (OTT) could be given a promotional brochure (or something similar.) The ED has been told that OTT discourages the distribution of materials because it is an open-air vehicle and a litter concern. Eddie Warner asked why the app has not been supported by SDTA. The ED was unsure, perhaps it was seen as a tool for guests already in Coronado and not valuable in attracting guests considering Coronado as a destination. He felt their lack of promotion was something worth pressing in FY15. Andre Zotoff recommended the use of new GPS-based technology in taxis for promoting the app. It provides real-time tracking to educate guests on what amenities surround them. He felt highly-targeted digital strategies are more effective than print ads. Nusrat Mirza suggested an account review with SDTA so they are on-board and pro-active with the promotion of the new tablet app. The ED added that the tablet app was actually a responsive website (that looks and acts like an app) but adjusts the size of the content to fit the device reading it. Developing a responsive website liberates the Board from retrofitting the app each time a new tablet/device is introduced.

4. Oral Communications. Karen Finch of the Coronado Chamber thanked the Board for the \$4,000 grant they received to promote Snow Mountain and the Holiday Parade/Open House. They are collecting data to measure the impact and have contacted the City to gather traffic statistics for that weekend. She feels the event continues to grow, to the delight of the local merchants.

Janet Francis of the Visitor Center voiced concerns with the discussion about the responsive website, fearing it duplicates what the Visitor Center had produced in their new website. The ED felt there were some similarities, but the responsive website would be a more robust version of the existing Visit Coronado mobile app the Visitor Center currently promotes. Eddie Warner asked if SDTA would push back on promoting the app because it would compete against their hotel booking capability. She was told by the ED the responsive website will use the same hotel booking agent (ARES) used by SDTA

but SDTA would not get credit for the booking. Eddie then asked if the Visitor Center is promoted in the app. She was told it was, in fact all Coronado businesses are linked within the Visit Coronado app.

5. Fill Vacancies on Planning Subcommittee. The ED said that on February 6th the CTID will hold its Annual Meeting when the Board will discuss large-scale initiatives. Later this month the Planning Subcommittee will review a list of potential discussion topics and prune them down. The previous Brian Johnson and Tim Herrmann served on that Committee and the ED hoped to fill vacancies left by their departure. The commitment is minimal and the Committee helps the ED better plan the investment of the assessment. Phil Monroe asked what role hoteliers play in the make-up of the committee. He was told that, historically, two positions were held by hoteliers who pay the CTID assessment. Andre Zotoff and Nusrat Mirza volunteered to join the Planning Subcommittee.
6. Discuss and Possibly Approve Providing Opinions. On Tuesday December 17th City Council extended the bike corrals in Coronado with the exception of the rack at First & Orange. The week prior to their decision the ED was asked by several people if the Board had an opinion on the matter.

Historically, the CTID had not spoken as one voice, as an extension of the City of Coronado on such matters because a) City Council has not asked the Board for a position, b) the Board's primary objective is to bring guests to Coronado and c) the other civic organizations already take a stance on a multitude of topics. But because the ED has been approached so many times with the same question he wanted to confirm the Board wanted to remain neutral on City matters.

The ED felt every Board Member should be able to pitch an agenda item to the Chair and if that item was significant and pertained to hotel occupancy it should be discussed. He felt the Chair should be very selective on what matters are even discussed because submitted opinions could polarize the perception of CTID and open a Pandora's box. Thus, the Board would no longer be "under the radar."

His recommendation was to proceed with caution by empowering the Chair to determine if a letter to City Council is in the best interest of all businesses dependent on year-round tourism.

Mary Ann Berta felt a subject matter such as the bike corrals was worthy of a discussion. For her, it was a matter of safety as much as economics. She agreed the Board needed to be cautious with this topic. Eddie Warner agreed that great caution should be taken before ever submitting an opinion. She suggested the Board be made aware of agenda items City Council would discuss. She thought this topic was on the fringe of the Board's objective to deliver guests to Coronado. Andre Zotoff felt submitting unsolicited opinions was dangerous and the Board should stay away from it. He felt it was fair to discuss certain matters but opinions are very political and no matter what, someone would get upset. Tom Ritter of the City of Coronado said the intent of the CTID was to study conditions and marketing options then advise City Council on matters pertaining to

tourism. The Board is tasked with producing an Annual Report and prescribing change with matters related to hotel occupancy. In essence, providing opinions was not one of the reasons the CTID was established. Phil Monroe reminded the Board that at least once an opinion has been submitted. In that instance, it was a letter to support the Coronado Historical Association (CHA) and to outline the cooperation between and distinctions of the CHA and CTID. City Council found the letter to be very helpful and assuring. Eddie Warner felt that selected topics were worthy of discussions (way-finding, summer shuttles, etc.) but few topics would black and white (definitive.) Andre Zotoff added that the Board should be available if there was a need to clarify something but overall it was not the purpose of the Board. Phil Monroe questioned the recommendation to have a unanimous decision from the full board before an opinion letter could be composed. David Spatafore felt it was unfortunate the CTID was not set up to provide opinions because the makeup of the Board represented the community (and businesses) so efficiently. While he felt the CTID should have a voice in “the guest experience,” he agreed an opinion letter could create a backlash. He felt the Board could discuss matters then ask them to take to the individual groups/businesses they represent. Eddie Warner said Board Members of Coronado MainStreet (the group she represents) collectively discuss upcoming City Council agenda items then vote whether to register an opinion with Council. She suggested Board Members “keep an ear to the ground” on matters worth discussing. The ED offered to debrief the representatives of Coronado MainStreet, Coronado Chamber and Coronado Historical for potential discussion topics. Eddie Warner asked if the Board needed to vote on this topic and made a motion to “Allow the Chair to agendize a discussion topic at his/her discretion” but omit language pertaining to opinion letters for City Council. A second came from Phil Monroe. It was approved 7-0.

7. Adjournment: Before closing the meeting Tom Ritter reminded the Board members the new non-smoking ordinance was in effect and the City website offered clarification on the subject as well as signage for their businesses. The ED briefed the Board on the Annual Meeting planned for February. He encouraged casual and comfortable attire because the environment at Glorietta Bay Inn was intended to produce relaxed and extended dialogue. The meeting closed at 2:59pm.