



**MINUTES
SOLVANG TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING**

March 2, 2023
Thursday
3:30 p.m.

3:30 PM – REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Wilson called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. in the City Hall Council Chamber, 1644 Oak Street, Solvang, California.

ROLL CALL

Present: Committee Members: Tracy Beard, John Jakubek, Kim Jensen, John Martino, Louise Smith, Vice Chair Alexander Grenier, Chair Vashti Wilson

Staff: Marketing Manager Cheryl Shallanberger, City Attorney David Fleishman, City Clerk Annamarie Porter

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chair Wilson led in the Salute to the Flag.

2. CONSENT ITEMS

- a. Approve order of the Agenda, as presented**
- b. Approve Minutes of February 2, 2023, Regular Meeting**

Kief Adler suggested changing the order of the agenda and moving the Brown Act Training to the end item. The committee did not support without the recording in place.

Motion by Chair Wilson, not to approve the minutes as presented and keep the order of the agenda, second by Member Beard, and carried 7-0.

3. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

There were no public comments on this item.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. Discussion to receive training on Brown Act/Political Reform Act/Public Records Act training from City Attorney**

City Attorney Fleishman narrated a PowerPoint presentation addressing the Brown Act, the Political Reform Act, Parliamentary Procedure Basics, Conflicts of Interest and the Public Records Act.

Brief discussion followed regarding being able to use electronic devices to access meeting agendas.

- b. Discussion to review TOT Numbers**

Marketing Manager Shallanberger reported the City gets monthly TOT numbers from hotels and

displayed the most recent data for the present fiscal year.

Discussion followed regarding TOT and adding 2019 data as a baseline, taking inflation into consideration and industry standards for normalizing data. It was suggested to add another column on TOT to show the numbers based on inflation. Discussion that there are other factors, such as rooms being removed from inventory due to remodel that can change the TOT.

Direction to staff to research best industry practices on creating baseline measurements moving forward.

There were no public comments on this item.

c. Discussion to review the next steps with the marketing agency's resignation

Marketing Manager Shalanberger reported The Abbi Agency's last day of service will be March 15, 2023 and recently had an off-boarding call with the agency. They will be providing all digital assets to the city, a final report, and a billing statement with the remainder media buy reconciled on the bill.

Questions regarding Solvang USA's Facebook page and discussion that Chair Vashti was able to gain full administrative access.

Discussion followed if there were deficiencies in deliverables in the number of social media postings from The Abbi Agency and additional considerations in the closeout of The Abbi Agency contract. Marketing Manager Shalanberger to work with the City Attorney's office regarding moving forward with The Abbi Agency contract closeout.

Discussion continued regarding the invoice audit agenda item was approved at the previous TAC meeting, but was not include on this agenda.

Marketing Manager Shalanberger continued with the report; suggested establishing an ad hoc subcommittee to review responses to proposals and discussed next steps.

Chair Wilson invited public comments.

Charles Warner spoke about the contract with The Abbi Agency.

Brenda Ball spoke about the Solvang USA Website.

Denise El Amin spoke regarding wasting taxpayer money.

Motion by Committee Member Jensen, to direct staff to do a line item analysis of what items can be recovered from The Abbi Agency, and provide a recommendation to the City Council to recover such items as can be recovered, seconded by Committee Member Martino, and carried, 7-0.

Chair Wilson and Committee Member Smith volunteered to work with staff to reconcile The Abbi Agency accounting.

Discussion followed regarding directing the Marketing Manager to work on a Marketing Plan and goals and provide to the TAC.

Marketing Manager Shalanberger offered to bring proposals she has received for the TAC to review at its next meeting.

d. Discussion regarding Solvang USA website RFP process

Marketing Manager Shalanberger reported that City Council gave direction to slow down on the

www.SolvangUSA.com website RFP process and provide more information.

Discussion followed regarding the current server environment making it difficult to manage the website, reviewing other City websites for best practices and establishing a subcommittee to help with the related tasks.

The TAC was advised to send all communications regarding website examples to staff.

Chair Wilson invited public comments.

Mayor Infanti spoke about the existing www.SolvangUSA.com website and felt it seems to be functioning well.

Marketing Manager Shallenberger noted the content is very outdated.

There were no other public comments on this item.

e. Discussion to receive the January Report from The Abbi Agency

Marketing Manager Shallenberger noted the January Report from The Abbi Agency was included in the TAC's agenda packet.

There was no public comment on this item.

f. Verbal discussion on Solvang USA Facebook status

Chair Wilson presented an update on the status of the Solvang USA Facebook page; discussed ownership of and access to the page; noted she gave rights to Marketing Manager Shallenberger; addressed postings by The Abbi Agency and stated ownership will be transferred to the City.

Chair Wilson invited public comments.

Brenda Ball spoke regarding the City's Facebook page.

City Attorney Fleishman reported there was a significant amount of work done at the staff level on the City's Facebook page and commented on giving ownership of the Facebook page to a designated officer versus staff.

There were no other public comments.

Chair Wilson stressed that ownership of the Solvang USA Facebook page should not be given to any City employee but to the City through a generic City account and offered to transfer ownership to the City Manager, the Mayor or the City Attorney.

g. Verbal discussion to provide TAC update to City Council

Chair Wilson talked about providing regular updates to the City Council on the status of TAC issues.

Committee Member Beard discussed needing to wait another month or so to present a report to City Council and suggested placing the item on Council's agenda for the second Monday in April.

There were no public comments on this item.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Committee Member Beard presented examples of flyers by the CVB; suggested that the Marketing

Manager develop similar flyers, spoke about cruise ships returning to Santa Barbara; asked about her suggestion regarding a \$ 100-midweek promotion stay in connection with VSYV and about representation at the upcoming Visit California event in Sacramento.

Chair Wilson reported receiving an email from a data tracking company; suggested having them make a presentation to the TAC and requested placing the item on the TAC's next meeting agenda. There was a consensus to place a presentation by a data tracking company Zartico on the TAC's next meeting agenda.

Committee Member Jensen spoke about addressing tourism; expressed concerns about overburdening the Marketing Manager and of not progressing and noted the need to address past issues quickly and move forward.

Committee Member Martino spoke about giving the Marketing Manager the tools to do her job.

Chair Wilson spoke about the need to build a foundation and to do due diligence and listed issues that need to be addressed in building the foundation, including developing a marketing plan and goals.

Committee Member Jensen noted the TAC is not an oversight committee and suggested focusing on tourism and letting the City Attorney's office handle potential litigation.

Chair Wilson referred to the TAC's duties and responsibilities.

Committee Member Beard requested adding a review of alternative contracts for marketing services to the TAC's next meeting agenda and spoke about needing to move forward.

The TAC directed staff to arrange a special meeting of TAC in two weeks to discuss proposals from the three other agencies for marketing services.

CITY STAFF COMMENTS - None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

DocuSigned by:
Brad Vidro
05E7D8E98104414

Brad Vidro, Interim City Manager