



**MINUTES
TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING**

February 2, 2023
Thursday
3:30 p.m

3:30 PM – REGULAR MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called 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, Alexander Grenier, John Jakubek, Kim Jensen, John Martino, Louise Smith, Vashti Wilson

Staff: Marketing Manager Cheryl Shallanberger, City Clerk Annamarie Porter

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Staff Shallanberger led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. CONSENT ITEMS

- a. **Approve order of Agenda as presented**
- b. **Approve Minutes of December 1, 2022, Regular Meeting**

Motion by Committee Member Grenier, to approve the Consent Calendar, as presented, seconded by Committee Member Wilson, and carried, 7-0.

3. PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS – NON-AGENDA - None

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- a. **Discussion to select Tourism Advisory Committee Chair and Vice Chair**

Staff Shallanberger reported the need to elect a Chair and Vice Chair for the TAC.

Committee Member Grenier nominated himself for Chair and listed his experience and qualifications.

Committee Member Jensen nominated himself for Chair.

Committee Member Beard nominated Member Wilson for Chair. Committee Member Wilson seconded the nomination and listed her experience and qualifications.

Committee Member Wilson nominated Member Grenier for Vice Chair.

Motion by Committee Member Beard, to approve elect Committee Member Wilson as Chair of the TAC, seconded by Committee Member Wilson, and carried, 5-2, with Committee Members Jensen and Martino, abstaining.

Motion by Committee Member Wilson, to approve elect Committee Member Grenier as Vice Chair of the TAC, seconded by Committee Member Smith and carried, 6-1, with Committee Member Beard, abstaining.

b. Discussion to receive The Abbi Agency's Report.

Connie Anderson, The Abbi Agency, narrated a PowerPoint presentation about the agency and with an overview of the services they provide.

Discussion followed regarding costs per click, comparisons with industry rates, goals and objectives, monitoring lodging data, opportunities to work with a partner such as a cellphone tracking data partner and get more sophistication in reporting, creation and launch of a landing page for the City's website. There was questions of the number of posts for restaurants and Restaurant Week, a missing linktree in the City's Instagram page and posting on Instagram about the new Solvang USA Facebook page. Discussion regarding all efforts to access the existing Solvang USA page have been executed and why the new Solvang USA facebook page was created and ensuring there will be no access issues with the new Facebook page.

Discussion continued regarding challenges in reporting related to the TAC meeting schedule and the importance of The Abbi Agency being ready with appropriate information during TAC meetings.

Public comments were invited on this item.

Esther Jacobsen Bates, Executive Director, Elverhøj Museum of History and Art, spoke about the Museum's contract with the City to provide historical content and information to support the City's roots, the City's tourism efforts and work with journalists and promoters; reported she works with the Danish Embassy in Washington D.C.; noted the importance of collaborating; expressed concern about the competitive nature of advertising (i.e., "We're only sweeter than Denmark"); spoke about continuing to see the uniqueness that is Solvang and using historical and cultural identities to bring visitors to the City; discussed being a safe, welcoming and modern City; asked the TAC to consider the approach when promoting the community and commented on Bakersfield and the Bay Area as target audiences. She spoke favorably regarding the goal of updating the website.

There were no other public comments on this item.

Discussion followed regarding The Abbi Agency's partnership with VSYV, working with them on the upcoming midweek promotion, collaboration with Visit California, being part of the Westways Co-Op and whether it is the best use of City money, emphasizing diversity and having compelling imagery as well as using stock photos.

Committee Member Beard offered access to the Chamber's professional photos.

c. Discussion to receive a 2022 Julefest Marketing and Public Relations Report.

Connie Anderson, The Abbi Agency, narrated a PowerPoint presentation with details of the 2022 Julefest Marketing and Public Relations Report.

Discussion followed regarding engagement and impressions and having the ability to correct incorrect information, quickly.

There were no public comments on this item.

d. Discussion to receive a report from Solvang Hygge Huset/Visitor Center operations.

Susan Lee, Solvang Hygge Huset/Visitor Center, introduced herself and provided a report on Visitor Center operations.

Chair Wilson suggested creating “Solvang bucks” for children/visitors to exchange for real dollars during the Julefest scavenger hunt.

Committee Member Martino spoke favorably about the Christmas Tree Lighting and the decorations on the gazebo.

There were no public comments on this item.

e. Discussion regarding Solvang USA website

Staff Shallenberger presented a report regarding the need for a new Solvang USA website; addressed budget requirements and asked the TAC to consider making a recommendation, as such, to City Council.

Discussion followed regarding the ability to go through an RFP process.

Public comments were invited on this item.

Brenda Ball spoke about her career in IT and her experience managing websites; discussed writing the previous RFP and the vendor selection process for a new Solvang USA website; noted the website has been unmanaged since 2019 but still benefits from the digital marketing efforts and felt the website is ready to be handled skillfully and updated.

There were no other public comments.

Motion by Chair Wilson, to recommend that City Council approve development of a new Solvang USA website, direct staff to proceed with an RFP and bring responses to the RFP to the TAC for review, seconded by Committee Member Jensen, and carried, 7-0.

COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS

Motion by Chair Wilson, to direct staff to present a review of the budget in terms of evaluating The Abbi Agency and the possibility of bringing those services, in-house, at the next regularly-scheduled TAC meeting, seconded by Committee Member Jensen, and carried, 7-0.

Motion by Member Beard, to direct staff to present an audit of The Abbi Agency , in-house, at the next regularly-scheduled TAC meeting, seconded by Chair Wilson, and carried, 7-0.

Motion by Member Beard, to direct staff to provide TOT information, broken down from weekends to Sunday through Thursday at the next TAC meeting, seconded by Member Smith, and carried, 7-0.

Motion by Chair Wilson, to request that The Abbi Agency provide a presentation addressing the issues of concern discussed today, seconded by Committee Member Jensen, and carried, 7-0.

Motion by Chair Wilson, to direct staff to add consideration of continuing to retain The Abbi Agency as a marketing company, in the future, to the next agenda, seconded by Member Beard, and carried, 7-0.

Chair Wilson commented on the operation of the Solvang Visitor Center and The Abbi Agency.

CITY STAFF COMMENTS

Staff Shallenberger spoke about an upcoming media mission hosted by Visit California, in May and mentioned the photographer hired by The Abbi Agency for March.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

DocuSigned by:
Brad Vidro
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Brad Vidro, Interim City Manager