

**Hospitality Improvement District Meeting**  
Tourist Information Center - 100 Central Avenue  
Tuesday, September 1, 2015 from 3:00 to 4:00 pm

**MINUTES**

Present: Michael Grech - Sunset Inn, Ralph Felsing - Best Western The Inn and Suites, Andy Patel - Best Western The Inn and Suites, Tim McGill - Asilomar Conference Grounds, Mairead Hennessy - Asilomar Conference Grounds, Linda Casey - Lighthouse Lodge and Cottages, Victoria Arroyo - Monterey Peninsula Inns, Robert Boerner - Pacific Gardens Inn, Amrish Patel - Centrella Inn, Veronica Lopez - The Old St. Angela Inn, Cathy Bonnici - Borg's Motel, Inn, Don Martine - Martine Inn, Moe Ammar - Pacific Grove Chamber of Commerce

Public: Councilman Bill Peake

1. Moe called the meeting to order at 3:00 pm
2. Welcome and Introductions:
  - Kurt Vogel - General Manager/Director of Golf - Pacific Grove Golf Links  
Happy to be a Pacific Grove resident and working with the hoteliers.
  - Michael Crall- Managing Partner/Chief Development Officer - Domaine Hospitality Partners, LLC: new ultra luxury hotel at the American Tin Cannery location. This will be a 5 Star hotel with 160 rooms and meeting rooms and lots of open space. Goal is to be a LEED Platinum hotel. Plans are on their website: [www.domainehotels.com](http://www.domainehotels.com)
3. Motion made and passed to approve the Agenda
4. Motion made and passed to approve the Minutes of June 9th meeting
5. Old Business
  - Report on Big Blue Live:  
Mairead - everyone seemed to be very happy staying at Asilomar Conference Grounds.  
  
Lisa Brown - that there were 5 Million viewers the first night. They were able to view a blue whale live for the 1st time in the United States on Sunday during the last 15 minutes of the filming.  
HID funded group's transportation
  - Update on social media campaign funded by the Monterey Bay Aquarium:  
  
Lisa Brown - 8 properties currently working with her on facebook. For an example the Martine Inn reach for the month of July was 650 and went to 10,600 in August. Don Martine is very happy working with Lisa. He gets the

visitors involved and gets his staff excited. Right now Lisa has been teaching the hotels how to test content without boosting. Nature does well. She will go back and tweak it and be strategic. Next they will learn how to boost posts and target audiences. Anyone can join in after Big Blue Live.

## 6. New Business

- Moe Ammar - reported that the City Council is leaning against a TOT increase for now.

Mairead Hennessy - City Council individually wanted to pursue Admissions Tax. They will go back to do a survey to determine which tax would work better, % rather than flat fee

Michael Grech - Council leaning more toward Admissions Tax. They have bills to pay and did not close the door on TOT increase

Victoria Arroyo - Council understood they made a promise to hoteliers and it is a moral issue as well

Ralph Felsing - TOT hurts business

Everyone thanked Don Martine for presenting the history of TOT to the Council

- Moe Ammar - reported that there is a Moratorium on new AirBNB and VRBO until bids come in for a company that will verify current usage. Moe reported there are currently 174 vacation rentals/AirBNB licensed and registered. Estimated 160 are not. Moe pointed out that almost 1/2 million dollars in TOT is generated from legal vacation rentals

Don Martine - HID needs to present a position paper regarding AirBNB and home rentals.

Mairead Hennessy - need to be deliberate and careful about freezing it

Bill Peake - encouraged hoteliers to attend 2 meetings on short term rentals. Also, Mark Brodeur is working on a report

Position was not taken on the vacation rentals and AirBNB. This was tabled until Jan Leasure gives her report.

- Moe Ammar - reported on the status of the Pacific Grove Inn. The owner is David Spence of the Beachcomber Inn. He will be going to the lessor who decided to declare bankruptcy. The chamber is finding accommodation for displaced visitors

- Discussion on winter promotion options:  
Moe Ammar - recommended not to do a discount but strictly branding.  
Recommended not doing the \$20 off in print. An ad in VIA magazine is \$3,200.  
The chamber would promote \$20 off if you stay in Pacific Grove at the Tourist Centers only

Mairead Hennessy - build out package on individual websites. Each individual innkeeper needs to do their own promotion. Chamber to help drive the clicks to the inn.

- Recommended that everyone attend the China Ready program by MCCVB on Friday, September 18th from 9:00 am to 11:00 am.

7. Adjourn at 4:00 pm