

**Promotional Coordinating Committee
Minutes – Special Meeting
Wednesday, June 15, 2011
4:00 pm
Council Hearing Room**

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Marco Rizzo

PRESENT: Fidler, LeMieux, Cox, Palazzo, Billing

STAFF PRESENT: Brigitte Elke, Principal Administrative Analyst

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. SWOT ANALYSIS & COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The Committee Chair introduced Jim Seybert, the facilitator for the special meeting. Mr. Seybert went over the agenda and how he envisioned the retreat to unfold.

Below is a summary of the questions asked and feedback provided by the committee.

1. What is the problem/challenge with the current plan or situation?

- Lack of defined direction
- Changed environment
- Different purview
- Fiscal constraints
- New Committee Members =strength, re-energizing

The commissioners were faced with a new situation as no guidelines were given and no pre-determined commitments needed to be considered. It was an opportunity to change the old norm. They concurred that an in-depth review of the program should be done periodically. They saw the special meeting as a way to stimulate discussion and ideas.

2. What needed to be considered?

- Less resources to work with
- Perceived historical obligations
- Need for a cohesive work program
- Return on investment
- Work legacy with contractors
- Quality of life
- Entitlement & dependency on funding from PCC.
- Substantial community need, little funding
- Time constraints due to monthly meeting
- Big picture approach
- Reactive nature of program
- Target Audience
- Definition of objective for program

Next, the commissioner defined the meaning of each SWOT component, so all commissioners had the same terminology and meaning in mind. They went on to define the SWOT analysis itself.

Strengths of San Luis Obispo:

- physical setting
- county seat
- a safe place
- people want to live here
- proximity to activities
- publicity on happiest place
- multitude of cultural and recreational events for all ages and family friendly
- something for everybody
- not pretentious
- accessible government.
- CalPoly & Cuesta with cultural and intellectual implications, offering a workforce and creating a legacy link with SLO.
- proximity to SF & LA
- historical setting
- budget friendly
- desire to relocate
- unique natural and romantic setting
- center of coast
- walkable distances
- wineries
- accessibility
- quality of live
- outdoor activities
- food offering
- friendly community
- no traffic
- not in-your-face- tourism
- not yet fully discovered
- small enough to actually do something

Weaknesses of San Luis Obispo:

- homeless population
- no ethnic diversity
- not open for business (early closing)
- expensive air service
- no directional signage
- cold evenings
- very shallow talent pool
- no real golf offering
- no car alternatives
- individual city centric
- expensive housing
- lots of the same types of bars
- no easy access to airport
- lack of taxi service
- divide through grade
- small job market
- issues with weekend college crowd
- no downtown hotel
- lack of convention center(s)
- lack of shared assets.
- dark streets at night
- high gas prices
- cold ocean
- lower wages
- lack of demographic diversity

The committee then eliminated the line items they have no control over such as gas prices, ocean and evening temps, demographic and ethnic diversity, cost of housing etc.

Threats to San Luis Obispo:

- Sundays parking fees
- changing weather pattern
- Hwy 1 closure
- affordability to live here
- bad press
- increased promotion for Monterey & Santa Barbara
- charging for parking
- economy
- loss of more air service
- cost of gas
- growing community and hence loss of quaintness
- higher fees (utilities, etc)
- violent crime frequency

During dinner, the commissioners were assigned the task of defining the five top strengths of San Luis Obispo:

- J. LeMieux: legacy Cal Poly, weather, stuff for all ages, proximity to SF/LA, downtown/ old town
- D. Cox: physical setting, center of coast, downtown, weather, outdoor activities
- M Rizzo: downtown/old town quaintness, surrounding area, center of coast, CalPoly legacy, weather

T. Billing: Downtown/old town, walkable, activities close by, physical setting, stuff for all ages
M. Fidler: center of coast, mix of outdoor & culture, multiple price point, weather, downtown/ old town
S. Palazzo: outdoor, wineries, friendly community, physical setting/weather, quaint small downtown but close to urban setting (best of both worlds).

The next exercise defined the items yielding the best ROI and hence where to concentrate or focus future efforts:

- Downtown enhancements
- outdoor activities
- weather (good weather festival / month or week of best weather)
- promoting heavily during times where weather is terrible elsewhere and comfortable in SLO
- spontaneous reaction to bad weather elsewhere in form of an opportunity plan
- Cal Poly: alumni connection
- Establish relationships with bus companies ease of access. Limo service example of wineries,
- SLO – attractive area and access point for recreational and cultural activities. = play on central place
- Consider these stipulations for guidelines for grants
- Best of both worlds attractive for people living here and those visiting
- Partnerships with Downtown to enhance experience
- Lighting to encourage visits to the neighborhoods.

The specific partnerships to encourage and nurture were defined as:

- Realtors for open house tours for people looking at housing
- Cal Poly Alumni & Advancement –offer to provide gifts to bring out
- Trained guides through Cal Poly – with one or two unit credits
- Cal Poly viticulture, dairy department,
- Non profit organization – extend event duration, - tap into national arms of organization
- Downtown merchants - need incentive, make it easy and work has to be done for them

If money were no object, the commissioners defined the following ideas:

- Create a wish list of individual companies to attract to the area, but creating a “Visit SLO on us” package.
- Close 101 from Monterey to Downtown
- close Higuera Street to create a pedestrian zone
- provide free transportation to activities and events
- virtual dream itinerary
- air shuttle to LAX & SF
- faster train service
- horse-drawn trolley
- pay for extra visitors to come to the weather festival
- wrap a tour bus that travels the up and down the coast
- food truck up and down the coast with local produce
- give discounts to boutique shops downtown
- create a permanent Farmers’ Market
- support the local shops (check into Amex offerings)

- give a bicycle to everybody and have bike day
- build bike trails all around the City
- provide gas voucher to all visitors
- sponsor business planning for downtown bar
- provide free babysitters for a parents' night-out
- move bars to Foothill
- create a walks mimicking the Riverwalk in San Antonio.

The committee then defined the next steps in the process:

Define the desired benefits, who will be the main recipients of the benefits, and how can the return of investment be measured.

The commissioner felt it important to emphasize that the plan and program set forth cannot fail. The endeavour will be a precedent and play out in a public manner.

The following comments were made regarding the components of the plan:

- Pursue a strategy plan rather than a marketing plan
- The plan needs to incorporate concrete guidelines, funding, and execution
- Money needs to be spent on the highest priorities such as downtown enhancements and experience, benefiting the constituency (target audience), create partnerships, weather related message and event, SLO centric messages and activities
- Definition of ROI

Commissioner M. Fidler volunteered to create a draft of the strategic plan on which the RFP will be based. Staff is to set up a meeting to provide all material necessary to do so.

The July meeting should be mainly dedicated to the review of the draft and the definition of next steps. Staff is to structure the agenda accordingly.

Incorporate in mission statement the most important elements.

The meeting adjourned at 7:50 pm