

PETALUMA LODGING  
ASSOCIATION

**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

Meeting Date: September 25, 2024 – Home2 Suites

- **Call to Order/Introductions:** Meeting called to order by Max at 3:11 pm.
- **Roll Call: Board**  
Max Childs – Home 2 Suites, Adrian Vasquez – Hampton Inn,  
Sara Martin – Hotel Petaluma  
Absent: Pauline Woods, KOA; Brad Calkins, Sheraton Petaluma  
  
**Staff:** Marie McCusker – Petaluma Visitor Program & Petaluma Downtown  
Association, Ann Hutchinson – Petaluma Visitors Program,  
  
**Guests:** Catalina Alcantara – Best Western Petaluma Inn (GM), Maria ? – Best  
Western FD Manager, Tracy Koch – Sonoma County Tourism (Community  
Engagement Manager)
- **Approval of Minutes:**  
Max motioned to approve Jan. 10, 2024, minutes; Adrian seconded; so, moved.
- **Officers and Directors' Positions and Confirmations:**  
Marie described the situation regarding personnel changes at hotels that affect  
the Board.
  - Max Childs left the Sheraton, and became GM of Home2 Suites, which  
was formerly represented by Ken Murakami
  - Director of Sales at Sheraton, Brad Calkin, is available to represent the  
Sheraton on the board  
Sara Martin moved that Max Childs remain as board chair, now representing  
Home2 Suites and that Brad Calkin be included on the board to represent the  
Sheraton. Adrian seconded. So, moved.  
  
Marie will investigate adding one more signatory to the account and report back.
- **AHP Certification Training Update**  
Tracy Koch of Sonoma County Tourism provided an overview and update on the  
program. The cost is \$45 for professionals and much less for students. Started  
three years ago at Analy High School in Sebastopol with a large donation from  
Kirk Lok.  
  
Tracy has been working closely with Dan Ostermann, College and Career  
Pathway Coordinator for Petaluma City Schools. She said 1 in 10 jobs in the  
county are in tourism. AHP program includes all aspects of hospitality, not just  
restaurant and front of house. And soft skills that can apply to any career.

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Classroom instruction, field trips and internships. Tracy shared a brief slide show and said she would forward a video to the board.

Tracy formulates experiences. For schools, the district requires forms be filled out by the receiving organization for internships. The district favors comparable wages across opportunities to avoid students making choices based on pay rate. Also, any venue can also host a class. Best to keep class size below 20.

Sara asked about junior high. Tracy is representing AHP at Petaluma Junior High School's career fair. More school opportunities can still be added for this school year.

- **Advisory Committee Meeting**

Marie reminded the Board that the committee must have a higher number of hoteliers than non-hoteliers and include a representative from the city. The purpose of the committee is to generate ideas for opportunities and relationships. For instance, providing more exposure to local offerings to FOH so that they have first-hand knowledge when speaking to guests. Marie mentioned industry nights to meet this need. Max asked if it could include the arts. Marie affirmed it can be anything. She also mentioned a referral card the PDA has used, that gets merchants referring and forth and helping one another. Meetings should be semi-annually. Committee meetings adhere to the Brown Act. The committee needs one more member. Committee members may work outside of meetings but must get on agenda to report back at meetings. Next Advisory Committee meeting will be at Hotel Petaluma on **October 7, 2024**, at 3 pm.

- **Financial Update**

Financials were circulated. Max asked about the Marketing budget. Marie will get that to him. Marie wants Ann to meet with hotel sales managers from to create connection and representation of marketing goals.

- **Upcoming Events**

Marie outlined upcoming holiday events, which include Santa's Riverboat Arrival, Shop Small Saturday, Downtown Holiday Market & Shopping Stroll, Tree Lighting and Festival of Trees (in old Seed Bank building). Got a block of radio ads at nonprofit rate to promote events and include 10 businesses (who paid to be included). Lumalce at fairgrounds from 12/13 – 1/7. Large, real ice; accommodates 230 people. Sara suggested the city talk to Enchantment about a partnership.

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Sara requested 200 holiday event fliers. Adrian and Maria said they could also use that amount. They will be putting them in their rooms, with reserves for those that get lost or damaged.

Adrian requested LumaGo fliers. Marie will put him in touch with Maria at the transportation department.

Downtown lighting discussed. Marie mentioned a silhouette type of lighting.

- **Board Member Sharing/Announcements**

Sara: Hotel Petaluma will do flurries again; volunteer decorating help welcomed.

Sara and Adrian reported problems with the Petaluma Historic Commercial District when trying to add awnings.

Sara said she wasn't getting wedding bookings from SCT.

Marie asked how many group bookings were coming in from SCT. Sara felt that Petaluma is overlooked. Lack of "one-stop-shop" aspect in Petaluma acknowledged, but still no excuse for lack of bookings from SCT.

- **Next Meeting:** November 13, 2024, at Hotel Petaluma at 3 pm location TBD
- **Adjourned:** 5:06 pm