

RIO DELL-SCOTIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD MEETING

DATE: April 6, 2018 TIME: 12:00 LOCATION: Chamber Office 406 Wildwood Avenue

EVERY MEETING: Need to sign checks

Board Members: Nick Angeloff, President; Tracy O'Connell, vice president; Sharon Holt, secretary; Jim Brickley, Susan Pryor; Eldon Whitehead, historian; Gabriel Smith

Non-Voting Positions: Melissa Marks, treasurer; Frank Bacik, emeritus

1. CALL TO ORDER: Called to order by Nick at 12:04
2. ATTENDANCE: Jim Brickley, Tracy O'Connell, Sharon Holt; secretary, Nick Angeloff; president Jenelle Palmer, Adam Dias, Heidi Kitchen, Michael Ward, Dorothy Johnson, and CalTrans representatives Richard Mullen, Dan Borman, Kim Floyd. (5 additional community members attended after call to order)
3. ABSENT: Eldon Whitehead, Frank Bacik, Susan Pryor, Gabriel Smith, Melissa Marks,
4. SECRETARY: Minutes of March have been approved by consent and sent to PSA.
5. TREASURERS REPORT: BALANCE AS OF 04/01/2018 Savings Checking: **No report**
6. COMMITTEE REPORTS/OLD OR ONGOING BUSINESS:

**ONGOING BUSINESS:**

Discussion ensued regarding the closure of the Bridge for maintenance and painting, and the economic effect on the business community. The representative business are requesting action from Caltrans to mitigate the economic loss of income due to the closure.

Caltrans is in the process of negotiating with the contractor to offer and enact ways to substantially decrease the duration of the closure. This includes a cost benefit proposal focusing on the increase of the method of the work and possible changes in the contract that will be maintainable and enforceable. Caltrans believes that the most effective method will be a second containment and the tenting of the entire bridge, bringing out a second crew to accelerate the time line. The work is currently on a six 10 hour work day schedule, weather permitting. Caltrans is now waiting for the contractor to make an offer.

The definition of "substantially decrease" is in dispute as the businesses would like to see a 50% reduction in duration and the contractor is reaching to provide a 17% reduction.

The businesses also want the bridge open during off-work hours, but due to quality control, worker and community safety, and the equipment on the bridge, this is not a likely option; and due to the type of maintenance, neither is night work.

With further discussion, several points were fore fronted.

1. The fact that the bridge will be closed during tourist season is unacceptable to the businesses.
2. The detour and highway signs are not adequate and are not informational enough to direct tourists, especially traveling north, which is where the majority of traffic enters Rio Dell.
3. How the closure will affect the previously scheduled tourist events.

Discussion continued with Caltrans agreeing to consider the possibility of:

1. Modifying existing signage to be more comprehensive as to the information exhibited; which includes:
  - A: Modify the digital sign on southbound 101 to include the tourist district information,
  - B: Modify existing signage to use Street name instead of, or in addition to, exit numbers for off-ramp accesses,
  - C: Modify the permanent sign on the northbound 101 to temporarily cover the Rio Dell access information from the Scotia exit,
  - D: Include additional signage at the Davis St & 101 exit to notify direction of tourist district,
  - E: Include tourist district signage at the Davis & Wildwood intersection, and Wildwood & Southbound off-ramp
2. Providing additional signage at specific locations.

Attendees also requested the consideration of:

1. A closed sign and road block preventing a right turn at the base of the northbound Scotia exit so traffic cannot turn north towards the closed bridge.
2. Additional tourist district signage on Wildwood Avenue near the Shell station, City Hall, & at Davis exit.
3. Signage in the median of Wildwood Ave directing to individual businesses.
4. Additional pictogram signage on the informational signs on 101.

Further discussion made note that Caltrans is unable to post signage on city or private property without a due process of application, which would out last the actual bridge closure, so the Chamber of Commerce will discuss the facilitation of additional directional signage for the downtown area.

Caltrans has already notified the contractor of the Special Events language and have begun to make arrangements to have the bridge open for bicycle traffic during the Tour of the Lost Coast, which will include the contractor monitoring the work site during the event as well as CHP to monitor traffic. Caltrans will also look into any other Special Events during the closure and coordinate with the contractor for access as needed. Note was made that the Wildwood Days committee has met twice and although discussion was included regarding the closure of the bridge, the committee did not have any recommendations for additional access and is proceeding forward with the preparations by generally working around the closure in regards to the activities.

At this point the discussion boiled down to the basic premise that Caltrans needs to facilitate driving tourists off 101 and into Rio Dell, and the Chamber needs to help facilitate getting the directional information to the tourist traffic.

The businesses expect the tourist trade to be down at least by half during the tourist season and do not anticipate a full return of business traffic in the foreseeable future. They also predict that a percentage of Rio Dell businesses will permanently close as a direct result of the bridge closure.

Discussion then turned to the potential of monetary reimbursement of claims for affected businesses and the possibility of applications for hardship funding. Caltrans provided forms for Notification of Right to Claim Loss of Business Goodwill and the City of Rio Dell has sent out information on the Department of General Services Compensation. Caltrans Claims for Construction are for damage claims and not loss of business. There is not a project specific pot of money for loss of business (monetary) claims.

Discussion then moved to the task of rebuilding the tourist trade after the re-opening of the bridge. It was suggested that the Bridge, at the time of re-opening, be commemorated as the "Shortest California Highway" to be promoted by business and advertising, perhaps generating a photo opportunity for tourism. Note was made that this would have to be done by legislation known as a Concurrent Resolution which would be introduced by either the House or Senate. It was noted that there are currently no designation signs on the bridge; *on further research it should be noted that all designation and commemorative signage is the monetary responsibility of the sponsor of the designation requestor.*

The businesses also presented discussion for:

1. A ceremony for the re-opening of the bridge ,
2. Advertising funds for tourism,
3. A campaign for "Shop Local: incentives,
4. A billboard style map for RV turnaround locations,
5. A possible water rate reduction/discount to help mitigate loss of business income,
6. Collaboration between Caltrans and the Chamber of Commerce to maintain the businesses and keep them from closing before the end of the closure,
7. Immediate application of any encroachment permits for events relating to the bridge. (Specifically in relation to the lighting of the bridge for the Holiday Lighting Festivities.)

Meeting recessed at 1:04 at the conclusion of the discussion of the Bridge and resumed with the following regular agenda items:

**FACILITIES:**

The Chamber office and Visitor Information Center will relocate no later than May 31, 2018 to 440 Wildwood Avenue. Preliminary task assignments related to the move:

Tracy O'Connell: research and secure P.O. Box

Jim Brickley: coordinate the removal of the Visitor Center Sign and confirm with Gabriel the removal and storage of the Holiday Lighting equipment and supplies. (Complete removal as available)

Sharon Holt: Coordinate (with Jim) removal and relocation of conference table, office equipment and brochure display. Proposed transfer date either Friday May 11 or 18, afternoon.

### **COMMUNITY GARDEN: No Report**

**DECORATIONS:** (preparation begins January & February):

Lighting Eagle Prairie Bridge: Pending

Laser Lights for Bluff: Laser Lighting for the bluffs will be tabled for further discussion. Feasibility for 2018 is not possible.

Military Service Flags: Replace hangers. Discussion opened with the Fire Dept. on the signage and possibility of changing flagging throughout the year.

**RENT:** NO REPORT

**MEMBERSHIP LETTER:** (preparation, stickers, begins September, letter approval October, distributed December):

Stickers: Will be ordered

**NEWSLETTER:** Completed by Harry Pulver. Harry will continue subbing for Nick indefinitely.

**ADVERTISING LETTER:** (December) NO REPORT

**ART ON THE BOULEVARD:** NO REPORT

**WILDWOOD COMMITTEE MEETING REPORT:** (preparation begins January)

Sharon reported the Wildwood Committee accepted the parade theme. RFD is looking into purchase of banner to span Wildwood Avenue. They also are interested in the military/seasonal flags for the existing poles/brackets. Sharon presented Saving Hallowed Ground proposal for memorial tree and recognition on national register. Jim Brickley will contact City Hall about placement in Memorial Park, and procure tree; agreed by consent that it should be a flowering variety, so it will be showy before the foliage breaks out on the existing trees. Sharon will pursue the monetary donation (\$110.00) to get the tree on the national registry and order the memorial plaque through the registry. Sharon will update the parade application.

**Parade theme:** 1918 Armistice LEST WE FORGET. RED POPPY SYMBOL.

Grand Marshall: Rio Dell/Scotia Veteran. Pending

Potential participants:

Dixie Gators...Dixieland Band, Chamber Float (Confirmed); Weekend Warriors; Sons of the Golden West; VFW... all posts; Mounted Posse; Color Guard; Flag Display; Shriners

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS/DIRECTORS:** (August) NO ACTION

**WEB SITE:** NO REPORT

**SCHOLARSHIP:** Tracy will follow up.

**AVENUE OF THE GIANTS SIGN:** (June, payment due Sept) NO REPORT

### **NEW BUSINES:**

Internet & Phone Service: Discussion continued. Want to keep current phone number.

Flat Track Proposal/report: NO REPORT

Parade Awards & Judges: Susan

Staging of parade: Sharon & Jim

Next meeting May 4, 2018

Adjourned 1:47

Submitted by Sharon Holt, Secretary