



**BRANDING STANDING  
COMMITTEE MEETING  
HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY  
Friday, October 12, 2023, at 1:00 p.m.**

**Virtual Meeting**

**MINUTES OF THE BRANDING STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING**

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	Blaine Miyasato (Chair), Sig Zane (Vice-Chair), Mufi Hannemann, Sherry Menor-McNamara
<b>MEMBERS NOT PRESENT:</b>	David Arakawa, Dylan Ching
<b>HTA STAFF PRESENT:</b>	Kalani Ka'anā'anā, Maka Casson-Fisher, Carole Hagihara, Daniel Nāho'opi'i
<b>GUESTS:</b>	Jay Talwar
<b>LEGAL COUNSEL:</b>	John Cole

**1. Call to Order and Opening Protocol**

Chair Miyasato called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

**2. Roll Call to Announce Name of Participating Board Members and to Identify Who Else is Present with Board Member if Location is Nonpublic**

Mr. Casson-Fisher did the roll call, and members were confirmed in attendance by themselves.

**3. Approval of Minutes of the September 27, 2023 Branding Standing Committee Meeting**

Chair Miyasato motioned to approve the minutes, and Mr. Zane seconded. Mr. Casson-Fisher did the roll call, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **4. Branding Standing Committee Chair Message**

Chair Miyasato said he realized a lot is on his plate over the past few months. On reflection, he recommended that he step down as the chair of the Branding Standing Committee and asked Mr. Hannemann to assume the role, which must go to a full Board vote at the meeting on October 26. He wanted to hand over the role to Mr. Hannemann as acting chair, effectively immediately. Mr. Hannemann said he has a lot on his plate and was content to be a member of the meeting, but he will try to do justice to the position and take over from here on.

#### **5. Presentation, Discussion and/or Action on the Branding Standing Committee's Brand Messaging and Positioning**

Chair Hannemann said two items on the agenda do not require votes. Mr. Ka'anā'anā noted that this item was to follow up on the desire of the full Board to add messaging to the committee's responsibility. The conversation went through the full Board, the committee, and then the Ho'okahua Standing Committee meeting. His understanding from the last meeting was that the Branding Standing Committee will develop a process by which they will consult the Ho'okahua Hawai'i Committee as they bring to frame the brand marketing plans and the items seen in the roles and responsibilities section. Ultimately, the final goal will rest with the Branding Standing Committee meeting.

Chair Hannemann shared the draft that was discussed in the other meetings. He said they could take it up with the next full Board meeting to add the green font and messaging to the Branding Standing Committee description when they amend the committee's leadership. Chair Hannemann invited comments from the committee. Mr. Miyasato clarified that he and Mr. Zane had spoken about moving that element to the other committee and establishing a process, but the entire decision would rest with the Branding Standing Committee. Chair Hannemann said this is a good addition to the Branding Committee description. He said it should go forward and get the full Board's approval.

#### **6. Presentation and Update on 2022 HTA Programs, Including Mālama Hawai'i Campaign Review**

Mr. Ka'anā'anā said that in prior discussions, Mr. Miyasato had expressed a desire for them to look back and understand what had been done in the past, to see what worked, and to rethink parts of it. He asked Mr. Talwar from Hawai'i Tourism USA to review their campaigns and what the Branding Standing Committee had done to inform the future Brand Marketing Plans at the Ho'okahua Standing Committee, Branding Standing Committee, and the full Board. He gave the floor to Mr. Talwar.

Mr. Talwar played four Mālama Hawai'i videos and said the HTUSA has done a lot of research to ensure their message has been expended in a way that makes sense for the state's investment. During March 2021, November 2021, and December 2022, they worked with an organization to test those qualitatively and quantitatively so they could be comfortable with the findings across the continent. DBEDT also engaged the same firm to look at the effectiveness of the advertising in the market. The first wave was in March 2021, prior to creating the communication. There was a statement that was a significant change, where they took a step off the path they had been on.

He read the statement:

"Everyone knows Hawai'i has pristine beaches, breathtaking natural beauty, and a welcoming aloha spirit. This is more than an invitation to visit Hawai'i. This is an invitation to reconnect. To rethink how we all travel. By slowing down. And really getting to know a place and its people. On your next trip to Hawai'i, what if you could spend part of a day helping locals and their community organizations mālama, or care for this place just as they do? Options are numerous and include helping community farms, native plant re-forestation projects, ocean-health beach and reef initiatives, or helping create a Hawaiian quilt for elders in the community, among many others. You'll have an incredible and meaningful experience working side-by-side with the people of Hawai'i, helping them sustain the pristine natural beauty of their islands."

Before they spent money on producing the work, they wanted to ensure the statement resonated with the audience. The first thing they looked at was, since they are a mature, well-known brand, they wanted to see if they were closing the market or turning it off. The votes for "Does this statement make you more or less likely to want to visit Hawai'i?" were 4% overall. It was strong in "more" votes at 62%, with the "no difference" vote at 34%. There was a strong, positive reaction to the statement. They took advantage of the research through analysts to break down the audience based on their behaviors and desired behaviors and look at their values. They created different market segments based on who the people are and how they approach vacations. They then looked at their likelihood of visiting so they could understand the messaging of how to deliver the weight appropriately. Sustainers were the largest market segment. Relaxing vacationers want relaxing beach time, but the remaining 61% want something different. They want meaningful, unique experiences and connections with local culture.

Three of the four segments strongly react positively to the mālama concept, and all report an increased likelihood of visiting after viewing the statement. As long as natural beauty is included, the message will work across segments, including relaxers, and reinforce their interest in the destination. Based on that statement, they saw that as a

positive path forward, so they produced the work.

Then, in November 2021, they took the videos and, through a qualitative and quantitative analysis, had the target audience across the country view them. He showed a few slides with their reactions. Across the four videos, 65% of consumers indicated that at least one of the videos made them more likely to visit. There was a highly positive reaction to all four videos. They also look at geography, east and west. Even without looking at the videos, it is known that Hawai'i is an attractive vacation destination, so the numbers are high.

The videos resulted in a substantial lift in the likelihood of visiting. They also looked at the impact of the videos on first-timers or repeat visitors. They also got an insight into the four market segments identified under the mindful Hawai'i target traveler umbrella, namely sustainers, relaxers, indulgers, and engagers, and their desires.

In December 2022, as the world opened up, they needed to ensure the message resonated with the target audience. The research conducted in 2022 repeated the second wave of research to evaluate whether consumer attitudes regarding the Mālama videos shifted as travel returned to normal.

He showed a sample across the geography by age and income. Overall, they found that the likelihood of visiting Hawai'i in the next year dropped ten points from the revenge travel period without quarantine. Travel intent normalized following the wave of pent-up demand, but the reactions to the mālama videos were even more favorable than a year ago. The mālama videos lifted the likelihood of visiting by fourteen points because more of the audience wanted to volunteer on vacation. Sustainability is a significant factor in their lives. The reaction to the videos is positive overall, with a majority indicating they made them more interested in visiting.

From the four segments, overall, it was 41%- 55%. Sustainers were more likely to visit Hawai'i even before seeing the videos. That climbed thirteen points. There were similar point gains for relaxers, indulgers, and engagers.

He showed a video to share some of the comments from viewers with positive reactions. After that research, DBEDT did more research in April and July 2023 to see how the campaign was working, which was in a strong fashion. Those who had seen the videos were likely to visit up to 74% on top of 49% at a base level in the next year. They also checked it in again in July 2023, and it went up to 70% from a base of 50%, with similar gains.

Mr. Ka'anā'anā called something out on slide twenty. He said what is interesting to him

are the statistics for those who are "somewhat or very interested in doing an activity shown in the video." He said that is an important one because some of the criticisms they often hear is that they only show things visitors do not want to do. He said this is the data showing an interest, and they are building an interest in something like that. So, it dovetails with the programs they are doing with Kilohana and the community tourism collaboratives that are focused on developing new tourism experiences, so they have the product behind it. He said leading the work has been his privilege since July 2021. He thanked Mr. Talwar for the synopsis of that time. He called out the Hawai'i USA Tourism team, the Global Marketing Teams, and the Brand managers with all the HVCB contracts.

Chair Hannemann thanked Mr. Ka'anā'anā for his work in coordinating the staff's efforts and Mr. Talwar and others. He said the task had taken off well, the research was done, the videos were great, and they are getting results, but he says that messaging has to continue, so he asked Mr. Talwar what the next phase is.

Mr. Talwar said they put a lot of thought into that. As a baseline, the messaging has not worn out in the marketplace over the last few years. They have not had the budget for the media to wear out the messaging. The good news is that the messaging is still fresh with the audiences. The most recent research shows it is still effective. They have been working through a strategy brief process, working with the HTA Branding, research, and agency teams, and understanding two sides of the equation. One is what is going on with their target audience about their values, travel choices, etc. Two is what is going on with communities and their feelings towards tourism, etc., and how to create the bridge with the messaging between the two. They feel good about the strategy brief, which is now in draft form. They have the luxury to run the creative through the first part of the following year without it being worn out.

Chair Hannemann asked how they impress the same message on their residents so that the messaging will help attract visitors. He asked if they work with the Ho'okahua Standing Committee to drive this home. Mr. Ka'anā'anā confirmed that as correct. He said there are a lot of programmatic actions. Strategically, he encourages the Board to consider creating the same structure and resourcing from the staff level or budget to face their resident audience. Looking at the HTA budget, they have a nominal resident education or messaging budget, so that may be an area of opportunity moving forward. He also mentioned that the rebrand was one of the things that were cut. He said it is time to consider a brand refresh or to pause and look at it.

Mr. Talwar said the brand process is not done in isolation but with the communities. When they did the brand process previously, they went out across the state to each island and county and met with different stakeholders, which allowed them to feel

empowered and part of the process of how the HTA attracts visitors to their home.

Mr. Miyasato thanked everyone for the work on the presentation and said it is all about connecting with people around to find purpose instead of focusing on the tragedy. He asked who the audience was for this. Mr. Talwar said that when they had the Rooted Campaign at a different media budget level, they saw the mindful traveler over-indexed at particular cinema outlets. They could select the right neighborhood, market, and films with the video playing larger than life. It is not the most cost-efficient, so they are not in the cinema with the current budget level, but it is all digital and heavily programmatic. They can define their audience through multiple factors, and wherever they are, across their viewing habits, they are getting the videos in front of them.

Mr. Zane echoed Chair Hannemann's sentiment about how they reach out further to the local people. He agreed with what Mr. Miyasato said as well. He said they must work out how they can educate their local people and bring them up to par where tourism can benefit their lifestyles. It is a big picture, and once the HTA achieves that, there will be more harmony as there is a rift between many locals and tourism, and they need to better that position. He agreed with Mr. Ka'anā'anā on rebranding, as the industry is moving rapidly.

Ms. Menor-McNamara echoed what everyone said. She said there is a lot of emphasis on the responsible traveler. She asked if they are measuring that and how it changes the visitor behavior and residents' response to more visitors. Mr. Ka'anā'anā said they are not measuring resident sentiment against the messaging. The studies are costly, and because the budget for the kuleana videos is nominal, the study would cost more, so they try to be selective in the campaign effectiveness studies.

Mr. Miyasato said he was impressed with the videos and said they reinforced the message meant for visitors but also resonated with them and helped tell the HTA's story. He would love to see it playing locally to show what the HTA is doing. Chair Hannemann said he would like an inventory of all the examples they offer visitors. Mr. Ka'anā'anā noted they have some of that. Regarding the product, Ms. Anderson is on Maui with the East Maui partners for the kickoff meeting and stewardship activities. One of the things they are looking at is a product assessment that will help tell what kind of experiences exist. They are also working on a portal mentioned at the Hawai'i Tourism Conference in partnership, a volunteer dashboard on GoHawaii.com. This allows them to make their reservations and then will be able to track time and participation in those voluntourism activities. It will give data to show what visitors are contributing.

Mr. Nāho'opi'i said there were good points made for the staff to start tracking, especially

in understanding how residents have reacted to the changes in the industry. Looking at the bigger picture, they have a resident sentiment survey. As they are only two years into the project, there is already some change in the resident sentiment. As they continue to measure it, he is hopeful it will shift. This is just one portion of the change. The other side would be how the post-arrival discussions with the new Kilohana contract would help to aid in two parts, in the pre-arrival and post-arrival activities and other messaging they are doing to help change the resident sentiment.

Mr. Miyasato said if they can communicate before the visitor's arrival and encourage the visitor based on the nuances of the videos to choose Hawai'i, it will go a long way with resident sentiment. The outreach before they arrive goes a long way to getting the type of visitor they want in Hawai'i.

## **7. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sheillane Reyes". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Sheillane Reyes

Recorder