

July 12, 2007 AgriTourism Association Meeting

Attendents:

Oahu

Donna Ching - CTAHR
Toni – Alii Kula Lavender
Lani Weigert - Alii Kula Lavender
Mark Takemoto – Dole/Castle and Cooke
Kent Fleming - CTAHR
Robb Anderson – North Shore Community
Jill Coryell – Hibiscus Lady
Robbie Kane - HTA

Molokai

Brenda Kaneshiro - Molokai Meli

Lanai

Alberta de Jetley

Kona

Gloria Biven
Nancy Ginter-Miller
Deepa
Ken Love
Diane
Randyll
Lorie

Current Status of Organization – Diane Sands

- Registered trade name: Hawai'i AgriTourism Association
- Tried to open checking account, but will need articles of incorporation, by-laws, accounting system (e.g. 1 or 2 party) and business plan.

By-laws – Robbie Kane can set-up w/ her attorney

What would Robbie's attorney need to put this together?

- No. of board members
- Primary mission
- Work with a few people to put the by-laws together
- How often to meet, rules etc.
- Can make it really generic

Discussion of Structuring Organization

- Number of Board Members? Want to have someone from each island...be assured to have someone from each County.
- What is the MINIMUM?
- Suggestion : 7 members (2 from Oahu; 2 from Maui (includes Molokai and Lanai); 2 from Hawaii; 1 Kauai) quorum of 5...can be expanded to 9. Represent counties rather than islands.

- Suggestion to quit talking about the structure and move forward instead of having more meetings!
- Are there things that we can focus on e.g. what is required to start association and figure out the details at a different meeting?
- By-laws & Articles of Inc. are important; officers will be mentioned in by-laws
- Need to answer the question of “how do the officers get elected?”
- Identify the titles for the officers and board members. Officers don’t need to be part of the board and we should look at an Executive Director position (paid).
- Robbie talked to her attorney...he said we need the titles of Board Members (e.g. president/vp) and titles of Officers (e.g. chairperson, etc).

Officers: (needed to create Board first to be in the by-laws)

- President – Lani Weigert
- Vice President – Mark Takemoto
- Secretary – Nancy Ginter-Miller
- Treasurer – Deepa Alban

Board:

- Maui – 2 (Lani, Carlos,)
- HI – 2 (Kent F., Jim R.)
- Oahu – 2 (Mark, Jill)
- Kauai – 1 (need to find someone, Lani will try to recruit either Fred Atkins from Kilohana Plantation or Ruth Hashisako from Kauai Cookies)

Chair –

Vice Chair-

Discussion of Structuring Organization con’t

- Suggest having 2nd Vice President as well to divide responsibilities.
- Attorney also would want to see commit
- Suggestion to keep it simple with 7 Board Members and delegate other tasks to committees
- According to Robbie’s, attorney these officers need to have titles...could have same titles
- Because Secretary & Treasurer have to be working closely w/ Diane...we should have someone from Big Island. Deepa was asked if she would you consider being secretary or treasurer. She said she would consider being the Treasurer and Nancy volunteered to be the Secretary.
- Where does Kent fit in to this? Kent was put on the board as one of the HI board members.
- Carlos will be approached about becoming a Board Member and representing Maui county.
- It would be great to have 1 more Maui rep so that either Brenda or Alberta can be on the Board.
- Alberta thought one of the bigger farmers (e.g. Chuck Warner) would be better than her...need heavy hitters to get this started. Need a major grower.

- Other Maui farmers who might be solicited to sit on the board were Paula Hegley from Tedeschi Winery and Tina Rasmussen.
- Paula is largely interested in how this association moves. Lani is interested in her & Chuck b/c they are largely vested in agritourism. Tina wants to do AgTourism but she hasn't been able to do it yet.
- Group encouraged to keep it simple...initially 7 Board Members, 4 officers & then committees. The Board Members can be liaisons w/ committees.
- Carlos will be recruited for the other Maui board seat. If he turns this down, then Lani can find someone else.
- We need to get someone from Kauai...any suggestions? It may not be necessary to make it a requirement to have Kauai b/c they haven't shown up for the other meetings. Kauai should be included. Ken Love also suggested other people.
- Lani will recruit Board Members (Deepa & Nancy can help, too). Group was reminded that this is just a start.
- After the discussion of the initial board members, we went through the list to determine what the group needed to talk about next.
- The committee working with the lawyer was reminded to initially keep it simple and broad with the by-laws.
- Diane, Lani and Nancy will form a By-Laws/Incorporating Committee to work with the lawyer to do the Articles of Incorporation, By-Laws, Legal Structure, non-profit structure (5 or 6).

Finance Committee

- Budget/finance process = how about creating a finance committee? Deepa - as Treasurer – let's work on finance Committee – we took volunteers for the Finance Committee & assigned tasks.
- Deepa, Diane, Alberta and Gloria volunteered to sit on the Finance Committee.

Membership Committee

- Next, the group talked about Membership piece
- What about pledge \$\$
- \$500 is a little steep for a small farmer
- Larger operations may only see this as a business expense and have a bigger bottom line than small farmers.
- What do we need to do to attract small farmers, too?
- Suggest a Tiered level to include the small farmer & the big operations
- Can we leave this as a Task for the committee to do? Tiered system where large agribusinesses pay more than smaller operations and individuals...all would be voting except for "friends of association".
- Don't think should be penalizing a large organization. Should be able to pay the same fee as the other farmers.
- Full Membership should be voting membership. Large organizations can also donate large money.
- For small farmer w/ 1 employee - \$500 would be a lot of money. Seems more fair that small farmers pay less b/c proportionately benefit would be different.

- In his experience: keep the membership fee nominal for everyone, then go to the bigger organizations for seed money or donations. Downside of making it too expensive upfront is that you exclude...be more inclusive right now instead of exclusive. Like any organization, people will fall out as we go. Once we get the Non-Profit status, people will come to the table with more money, but if we force it at the beginning people will say no and then go somewhere else. Can't expect the membership dues to pay the expenses for a year. Keep it nominal...then seek out larger company.
- Keep the fee lower and get more farmers instead of a high fee with low membership.
- Been involved with many discussions w/ organizations across the state. In Australia, the gov't. matches industry money to do research & marketing for their Ag industries. Every commodity organization has to have a way to tax itself...if the industry can put up 1/2 the money then the gov't. matches their contribution. #1 – User of services should put something into the association #2 – created a fair system that has always been a problem in Hawaii. #3 – an excellent point was made about the proportion of the benefit – it's scaled to the benefit of the Big End Users, Medium users, Small...everyone will get a benefit proportional to the farm.
- Regarding membership...deepest intention to keep an agricultural base w/ farmers who have strong intention for AgTourism. We are talking about committed, entrepreneurial farmers. We are speaking about a niche market of farmers...not everyone. One suggested amount is \$60. We need to focus on *who is coming to the table*. This is a TRADE industry [association?], and to be respected and viewed at that level, has a lot to do with the degree of benefit and the degree of commitment, too. Basically, people will be making a decision of their own whether or not to fit into the association...this is a niche market for value-added & agtourism. The cost to do business in this particular industry is very expensive compared to the regular farmer. As a result, it must be backed up by quality. Smaller farmers must be represented in this association so that they have a voice...otherwise, the big operations will take it over. We're looking for low impact, high quality experiences. The membership we are looking for is quite specific.
- In reality, we are all somewhat in agreement. It's incorrect to assume that the financial situation of a farm is based on its size...not fair to judge from the outside looking in. It takes a different kind of commitment to do agtourism. We should focus more on something akin to Ali'i Kula Lavender instead of Dole...that's the kind of size that we think is appropriate. We have to figure out the budget for the association and then we fill it in from the back. We want students to be a part of this association, too. He agrees with the different levels but he doesn't want the association to be exclusive.
- We already have \$500 pledges from people...what about having founding member pledges or Charter Member whose names get put on the letterhead?
- Corporate agritourism: if your goal is to support agritourism, you don't want to limit or exclude people.

- Where in the open membership are you going to address “open membership”? How do you guarantee or sustain it with open membership? One person’s idea of high quality is different than another persons.
- Membership Committee – do all the things under #III, and take first crack at what the tiered system would be & discussion of what the benefits would be.
Lorie & Robbie, Ken Love, Randyll

Standards Committee

- How about creating a Standards Committee to address the issue of quality? – We have to create something to allow the smallest farmer and the larger farmer to feel equality with the standards of the association. What is Ag-Land use? We want to have some sort of insurance?
- Group reminded that in the past 6 months of conversations and meetings...a real important reason to have this association was to have standards. All we need is a few bad experiences to ruin the reputation. What is the “golden egg” that provides us with additional source of income? In the organization, concepts like “commitment” and “quality” will need to be defined. We don’t have to re-do the wheel...how about using the standards that AgVentures has already established?
- Suggestion: Based on this conversation--Need a Standards Committee
- Is this just a trade organization or an organization that certifies members?
- You can be part of the “friends”...
- Standards Committee – Randyll & Lorie

Marketing

- Let’s move the marketing item to the “Wall Space” for a future meeting.

Strategic Meeting

- Let’s plan to meet as a group one more time so that the small group committees can report back. In theory, the strategic meeting should occur at the time that we can include the general membership. This group is still too small to represent everyone...once we are incorporated it will seem more real. At the Strategic Meeting – we can show the future.

What are the deadlines?

1. Every committee has their report emailed to Diane so she can distribute it to the steering group before the next meeting.
2. We will meet together right after the reports are distributed via polycom.
3. Then, we will plan another meeting for the large group (e.g. membership meeting). At that meeting, we can discuss dates for the Strategic Meeting.

Someone will convene each group:

- By-laws/Incorporating: Diane is the point person
- Finance – Deepa is the point person
- Membership – Ken Love is the point person
- Standards – Lorie is the point person

NEXT POLYCOM MEETING – Thursday, August 9th – 10am-1:00pm

By Monday, August 6 – all reports emailed to Diane and then Diane will distribute to Steering Committee

NEXT GENERAL MEETING – Thursday, August 30th – 2:00pm-4:30pm

Plant Quarantine Meeting Room for general meeting. Donna has reserved (confirmed, 7/12) the entire room instead of just 1/2 the room.
Robbie – suggested we have a “save the date” email

.....
Other issues discussed:

- We need the email address of each point person.
- Teleconference works well
- What about paying Diane? Is there a committee in charge? It was suggested that the Finance committee tackle this issue.
- Diane will email everyone the draft mission.

Committee Structure

- Do we want to have standing committee in the by-laws or just say that committees are assigned “ad-hoc” ?
- Let’s just say all the committees are “ad-hoc”?
- It’s not appropriate to have all committees be ad-hoc.
- How about having Finance, Membership & Standards Committees as standing committees?
- It is possible to establish standing committees in the By-laws and make revisions/create new committees as needed.

Expanding Our Group/Network

- On the “Save the date email, how can we expand the circle even further? Expand our email list? Pass it on to other people.
- We need to do a broader email...
- Does Robbie (of the HTA) have more email addresses?
- The personal touch is always better....we can generate a “save the date” email that folks can send out.

What work at today’s meeting?

- Material sent out before the meeting was organized & kept the meeting going
- Established committees & got volunteers
- Good place to meet and good parking arrangements
- Facilitator kept meeting going & got a lot done
- Alberta - Polycom was good....saves 10 hrs of traveling & being away from farm
- Brenda??
- **Changes for the next meeting?**
- Create room in the time for more discussion