

San Mateo County Event Center
Board of Directors
Strategic Planning Meeting
August 27, 2022

Those Present

Leonard Iniquez
Steven Wong
Roseanne Foust
Thomas Ames
Kari Foppiano
Carole Groom

Raymond Juballa
Reyna Poti Meafua
Jim Tucker
Theresa Faapuaa
Dana Stoehr

1. Welcome & Opening

A. The meeting opened with the members present sharing a memorable takeaway from the April 27, 2022 strategic planning discussion. Their thoughts are summarized as follows.

- We came together, in person, sharing our thoughts and ideas and it was a powerful experience. Coming together, feeling a sense of unity, family, forging new connections with one another and building the foundation of how we will move forward as a team.
- We experienced and came to understand the impact the SMCEC and San Mateo County Fair has on the county and the community. Our eyes were opened as to where we fit in the community. We are a part of the community past, present and future.
- The discussion of our identity and our inclusiveness, using it, living it so that all can say “this is our fair too.” Taking the essence of inclusivity, making it real so that it becomes a part of the SMCEC DNA now and into the future.
- Having strategic discussions and planning with a new and fresh sense of urgency, building momentum and nurturing creative thoughts, looking to how the SMCEC will continue to serve its community far into the future.

B. Board Role and Responsibilities

The board had a “refresher” discussion of their role as a board and their legal responsibilities. The following outline was discussed.

Role of the Board*

1. Determine the organization's mission, vision and direction.
2. Select, retain, review and when necessary, separate the CEO.
3. Provide proper financial oversight
4. Ensure adequate resources for the organization.
5. Ensure legal and ethical integrity and maintain accountability.
6. Recruit and orient new board members and assess board performance.
7. Enhance the organization's public standing.

* Board of Directors Roles & Responsibilities, Sutherland-Edwards.

Legal Responsibility of the Board

The three D's:

Duty of Care

Duty of Loyalty

Duty of Obedience

These are the collective duties that adhere to the entire board.

Duty of Care

Be responsibly informed about activities, participate in decisions, make good decisions with the care of a "prudent person." Ensure that the organization has adequate funding and makes prudent use of assets, including Good Will.

Duty of Loyalty

Act in the best interests of the organization, putting aside personal, professional or other interests. Disclose any conflict of interests. Advance the purpose, mission, values and vision of the organization.

Duty of Obedience

Requires that you comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws; and adhere to by-laws and policies set by the organization and remain a faithful guardian of the mission.

Financial Liabilities of Board Members

Fair Board members are generally responsible as individuals for exercising their corporate powers with the same skill and care as an ordinarily prudent person would in her or her own business.

1. Approve annual budget
2. Ensure good business decisions are made with respect to purchasing and contracting.
3. Make sure organization and board is adequately insured.
4. Adopt risk management policy and safety program for organization.
5. Adopt cash management policies and procedures.
6. Engage in strategic planning.
7. Review annual Statement of Operations or Year-End Report
8. Engage annual audit or financial review.
9. Comply with Conflict-of-Interest Laws.
10. Comply with training requirements.

2. Stating the Purpose of the SMCEC

The concepts describing the San Mateo County Event Center purpose, as identified during the April 27th board of directors planning session, were shared and reviewed by the board.

Purpose Concepts.

- 1) Providing a place where joy, laughter, and belonging can occur for everyone.
- 2) Being an organization that responds in real time, generously, and exceptionally to immediate needs of its community, during times of emergency or crisis.
- 3) Playing a role in family traditions and supporting generational interaction and memorable experiences.
- 4) Serving as a place of learning where a person can progress in a safe environment, learning new skills, developing talents, being exposed to new concepts, and growing as a responsible human being.
- 5) A place that encourages, motivates, inspires people to be their best self.
- 6) A place that provides access to incredible people, extraordinary experiences, beauty and excellence.
- 7) A place where one can belong and feel a part of the community and the larger good.
- 8) Representing “home” and “wholesomeness” for the community.
- 9) Providing new experiences, innovation, and imagination in an inclusive, friendly manner, allowing our community to live through change in a healthy, positive manner.
- 10) To support causes that are important to our community members and allow for fundraising and educational outreach.
- 11) Creating unique, exceptional experiences to be shared with others.
- 12) A place where I can be the #1 Auntie!

In reviewing the 12 concepts, members present were asked to identify what *values* are being expressed, what *thoughts*, *feelings*, *perceptions* are expressed and what they witnessed being expressed during the annual county fair. A list of over seventy (70) values/perceptions were listed. The members present were then asked to individually select their top priorities. The collective results and priorities are as follows.

Top Values

Tier One

- Safety, serving as a safe place.
- Family culture.
- Diverse cultures.
- Education – lifelong learning.
- Civic responsibility and service to our community.
- Responsible and responsive to our community.
- Always adapting.
- Memories created here.

Tier Two

- Making connections
- Inclusivity
- Honoring creativity
- A place of tradition
- Creating meaningful experiences

Tier Three

- A unique, one-of-a-kind experience
- A place for socializing
- Feeling “at home.”
- Available
- Evolving
- Resilience
- Sustainable
- Expanding
- Nurturing
- Trust
- Welcoming, inviting
- Opportunity
- Experiential impressions

3. SMCEC Critical Issues

- a. The board identified critical issues during the April 27th planning session. They reviewed and concurred on the following critical issues statements as representative of their April 27th discussion and adopted them as Direction Statements in their strategic planning process.

Direction Statements

- 1) Create a strategic communications plan that incorporates public relations, community relations, rebranding efforts, and plan for energetic, positive, thorough, and inclusive implementation of the plan.
- 2) Serving as an emergency resiliency center and space, invest in capital improvements and equipment for this purpose.
- 3) Intentionally plan for modalities, the annual county fair, events, activities, and other uses of the facilities and grounds that position the SMCEC as the place where the community can thrive as a whole.
- 4) Develop and support a business plan that ensures future stability, resiliency and good stewardship of the SMCEC.

4. Addressing Direction Statement #1: Strategic Communications Plan

The board used the following framework for further discussion and planning for a Strategic Communications Plan:

- Key Elements
- Key Resources
- Key Partners
- Financial Impact
- Direction
- Timeline

A. Key Elements of a Strategic Communications Plan.

The board reviewed the following outline of elements of a Strategic Communications Plan.

Key Elements

- 1) **Public Relations:** Activities, measures that affect public perception of the organization. Positioning in media, social media, web presence, etc.
- 2) **Community Relations:** Activities, measures that build and maintain a relationship between the organization and communities by developing programs that benefit the organization and positively impact the community. Positions the organization civically and ethically responsible in the community. Includes governmental relations. Fosters goodwill. Helps the community thrive as a whole.
- 3) **Publicity:** activities or methods devised to attract public interest. Use of communication channels usually NOT purchased time or presence in the media.

- 4) Marketing: Activities, methods or processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers. Purchasing of advertising, promotions, discounts, etc.
- 5) Branding:
 - a. Strong, positive perception of the organization, products or services.
 - b. Set of feelings and experiences that the audience associates with the organization.
 - c. Differentiating yourself from the competition. How is your organization unique?
 - d. *Brand Identity* represents that personality, as well as the values, experiences and takeaways you want your customers to associate with the organization.
 - o Brand needs to have a strong and consistent identity which will improve communication.
 - e. *Brand Platform* includes:
 - o Purpose of the organization
 - o Brand Promise – a summary of what you commit to doing so that your purpose becomes a reality.
 - o Brand Attributes – characteristics of your brand, non-negotiable values. This helps humanize your brand and connects with the customer.
 - o Positioning – understanding your market, what your customers need and want.

Engaging in a branding development process had been previously discussed as a board priority. The analysis and planning for a strategic communications plan focused on the brand development element.

Key Resources

The board identified key resources available to them as well as those needed to develop a strategic communications plan.

Resources Available	Resources Needed
The support of the County Board of Supervisors.	Partners who can help fund and financially support the SMCEC.
We have a rich story to tell. We are content rich.	Aligning with nonprofits and corporations whose values match with SMCEC in order to support larger projects.
Great property, facilities and grounds.	Staff hired to support SMCEC values, direction and culture.
Existing partnerships with local corporations whose values are aligned with SMCEC.	Staff dedicated to implement the strategic communications plan.
Engaged, resourceful, diverse board of directors.	Communicating our company culture and expectations.
Supportive community and stakeholders	Expansive, inclusive culture of outreach.
Dedicated, talented staff.	

Key Partners

The board identified key partners available to them as well as those needed to develop a strategic communications plan.

Partners Available	Partners Needed
People who already love SMCEC.	More local politicians and elected officials aware of SMCEC and its value to the community.
Labor Council	More nonprofits engaged and aware of SMCEC.
Pacific Islanders	Consistent engagement and follow up with partners.
Farm workers.	New neighbors.
SAMCEDA/ Business Council/ Chambers of Commerce.	Year-round community relations, building a multi-faceted network of partners.
Event promoters.	Board members engaged in outreach and building bridges.
Master Gardners, 4-H	Youth and education partners
Competitive exhibitors at fair.	
County of San Mateo	
City of San Mateo	
Vendors engaged with SMCEC and fair.	

Financial Impact

The board identified the financial impact of developing a strategic communications plan.

- Include in annual budget.
- Addition personnel costs.
- Investing in outside expertise.
- Engage in focus groups, polling, surveys.
- Plan for the long-term and spread investment in the strategic communications plan over time. Create it, invest in bite size pieces of the overall plan.
- Look for collaboration and shared costs in creating the strategic communication plan.
- Wisely use board members as assets and resources in implementing the strategic communications plan.

Direction

In setting direction for the development of a strategic communications plan, the board focused their discussion on developing the SMCEC brand. They assessed and articulated elements of a brand platform, brand promise and attributes of the brand.

Brand Platform (What the board desires the SMCEC to be known for)

- A safe place
- A place for everyone
- A place to build community
- Enhancing education and offering lifelong learning opportunities

- Creating memories and connecting with others through exceptional experiences.
- Fiscally responsible and providing a positive economic contribution to the community.
- Ethical, strong, consistent, diverse pillar of the community.
- A place where everyone can explore diversity.
- We are the community.

Brand Promise (What the board commits to doing so that the SMCEC purpose becomes a reality.)

- The SMCEC facility and grounds are to reflect the values of the organization.
- Focus on adjusting, adaptability, and flexibility.
- Serving with honesty and integrity
- Consistent and committed to the SMCEC purpose, mission and values
- Purposeful and intentional budgeting each year
- Respect, appreciate, support staff resources, providing them with needed resources and training.
- Decision-making in the organization aligned with SMCEC purpose, mission, vision and values.
- A commitment to purposeful board development, training and accountability.
- Reflect, understand and respect our diverse communities.

Brand Attributes (Non-negotiable values.)

- *Safety*: cleanliness, security, proper construction, insurance, risk management, for employees, stakeholders and customers.
- *Accessibility*: physically, welcoming, inviting, customer comfortable, traffic management, parking, shuttles.
- *Reflect our diversity through understanding and practice*: equal opportunity, intentional connection, openness, sensitivity, spreading and seeding our openness.
- *Exploration in a safe environment*: a safe way to evolve, learn, innovate, appreciate beauty and excellence, enhance our collective experience.

Timeline

The board discussed and identified two phases for implementing a strategic communications plan.

Phase 1 September/October 2022

The 2023 Budget: include funds to

- Hire a brand development consultant
- Identify elements of the strategic communications plan that need funding and add to budget.
- Adding a director of communications to staff.

Search for a brand development consultant.

Phase 2 Quarter 1 of 2023

Develop the SMCEC brand.

Gather data and needs for strategic communication plan.

Recruit, select, train a staff director of communications.

Collect data, analytics and conduct surveys to support communications planning.

Begin initial steps of outreach.

5. Conclusion

1. The board identified **Next Steps** in their strategic planning process.

Action Steps	By Whom	By When
1. Prepare a request for funds for resiliency center. Discuss with county and others a long-term financing plan and potential partnerships.	Dana Supervisor Carole	Before 12-31-22.
2. Prepare 2023 Budget, including direction and goals.	Dana, Staff Finance Committee	Oct. 20, 2022 Full board review and adoption in late October or early November.
3. Discuss and further plan Direction Statement #4 – Creating a sustainable business plan.	Dana	Target January 2023.
4. Conduct new board member orientation and training.	Dana/Charlene Involve the whole board.	Following appointment of new board members.

2. As a concluding exercise, board members shared something new that they learned and/or something that inspired them in today's planning meeting.

Their insights were as follows:

- We have the potential to grow by leaps and bounds!
- We learned and began to understand what is involved in developing a brand for SMCEC. Most importantly we learned the value of being exact, focused, concise and consistent in expressing the SMCEC brand.
- The board understands and is in consensus regarding SMCEC's purpose, values, and direction for the future. There is collective commitment to the strategic planning process.
- Board members have a varied, expansive host of ideas and we are thoughtful, respectful and willing to openly share our ideas.

- Board members are true assets to the county.
- Excited about the board's collective commitment to collaboration, open discussion, and planning to raise the organization to the next level. It clearly is the right people at the right time committed to doing the right thing.

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 pm.

DRAFT