

CITY OF SANTA ROSA  
CITY COUNCIL

TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: RAFAEL RIVERO, PROGRAM SPECIALIST,  
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUBJECT: SANTA ROSA TOURISM BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT AREA  
ADVISORY BOARD APPOINTMENTS

AGENDA ACTION: RESOLUTION

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RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended by the Planning and Economic Development Department that the Council, by resolution, appoint Vern Lakusta of Greystone Hotels, to the Santa Rosa Tourism Business Improvement Area (SRTBIA) Advisory Board.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Santa Rosa Tourism Business Improvement Area (SRTBIA) was established by Ordinance 3946 creating an assessment district on Santa Rosa lodging establishments. Per the ordinance, the SRTBIA Advisory Board (Advisory Board) is comprised of one Santa Rosa Metro Chamber employee, one City of Santa Rosa employee and three Santa Rosa lodging operators, at least one of whom is employed by a full-service hotel and one by a select service hotel. The Advisory Board has one vacancy to be filled.

This item supports Council Goal 1, *Create a Strong, Sustainable Economic Base*, in that tourism is one of Sonoma County's key industry sectors providing an important economic return to the City.

BACKGROUND

The SRTBIA was established by Santa Rosa Ordinance 3946 on August 3, 2010, creating a public-private partnership between the City of Santa Rosa, the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber, and Santa Rosa lodging establishments. The ordinance enables the City to levy a 3% assessment on guests staying at Santa Rosa lodging establishments; this assessment has produced an average of \$1 million annually since 2011. Thirty percent of the funds collected through this assessment is allocated to the City and managed by the Economic Development Division of the Planning and Economic

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Development Department. The remaining 70% is allocated to the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber for its Convention & Visitors Bureau and Welcome Center operations & services.

The Advisory Board is comprised of one Santa Rosa Metro Chamber employee, one City of Santa Rosa employee and three Santa Rosa lodging operators, at least one of whom is employed by a full-service hotel and one of whom is employed by a select service hotel. The remaining representative may be employed by either a full-service or select service lodging operation.

On November 29, 2018, the SRTBIA Advisory Board voted to support and recommend that Vern Lakusta of Greystone Hotels be appointed to the Advisory Board to replace former Advisory Board member Tony Bucklen, who recently resigned.

#### PRIOR CITY COUNCIL REVIEW

On July 27, 2010, the City Council, by Resolution No. 27690, appointed the first Advisory Board for the Santa Rosa Tourism Business Improvement Area.

On August 3, 2010, the City Council, by Ordinance No. 3946, established the Santa Rosa Tourism Business Improvement Area.

On March 8, 2011, the City Council, by Resolution No. 27848, appointed a full service hotel representative to a vacancy on the Board.

On July 29, 2014, the City Council, by Resolution No. 28524, appointed a full service hotel representative to a vacancy on the Board.

On October 24, 2017, the Council, by Resolution No. 2017-205, appointed a full service and at-large representative to a vacancy on the Board.

#### ANALYSIS

SRTBIA Advisory Board members are required to utilize their expertise in the hospitality and tourism industries to advise the Council on the amount of the Area's assessments and on the services, programs and activities to be funded by the assessments.

The Board has most recently experienced a vacancy with the resignation of full-service hotel board representative Tony Bucklen of Hilton Sonoma Wine Country.

Vern Lakusta of Greystone Hotels holds the necessary expertise in the hospitality industry, and full-service hotel industry, to participate in the activities required by Ordinance No. 3946. Vern Lakusta will join board members Donna Renteria of Best Western Garden Inn (a Select Service Hotel), Todd Anderson of Best Western Plus Wine Country Inn & Suites (an At-Large Hotel), Raissa de la Rosa of the City of Santa

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Rosa, and Peter Rumble of the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber.

FISCAL IMPACT

Approval of this action does not have a fiscal impact on the General Fund or the SRTBIA Fund.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This action is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because it is not a project which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, pursuant to CEQA Guideline section 15378.

BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

NOTIFICATION

Not applicable.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1- Ordinance No. 3946 Establishing the SRTBIA
- Resolution

CONTACT

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