

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes

Ventura County Fairgrounds

31st District Agricultural Association – 10 W. Harbor Blvd., Ventura, CA 93001

(805) 648-3376 Website: venturacountyfair.org Contact : Heidi Ortiz, CEO

May 14th, 2025

I. Call to Order

The meeting convened at 3:00 p.m., and called to order by Dan Long, Chair.

Directors present: Dan Long, Chair, Bill Ceja, Vice-Chair and Leah Lacayo, Member

Staff present: Heidi Ortiz, CEO, and Eryn Johnson, Office Assistant.

Guests present: Vincenzo Giammanco, Owner of CBF Productions

II. Public Comment

Public comments shall be limited to five (5) minutes per speaker. In accordance with Public Meeting Law, no action can be taken on public comments, unless they are identified elsewhere on the agenda. Public comments on items listed elsewhere on the agenda will be heard as that item is being considered.

III. Discussion and possible action regarding Surfer's Pint

Vincenzo Giammanco introduced the Surfer's Pint project, highlighting its potential to generate an estimated \$500,000 in first-year revenue for the Ventura County Fair. He emphasized his readiness to move forward and explained how he would work closely with Mr. Amelio to coordinate event scheduling, ensuring no conflicts with existing Fairgrounds programming by granting Mr. Amelio veto power over any conflicting events.

Director Lacayo asked whether the public would have access to the space when no events were scheduled, and Mr. Giammanco confirmed it would remain open except during private functions, with Lacayo suggesting adding seating to enhance community use of the area. The discussion turned to concerns about potential competition with Fairgrounds events, with Mr. Giammanco repeatedly assuring the board his venue would complement rather than compete with existing programming. Mr. Amelio noted past instances where Mr. Giammanco-initiated events eventually moved to Fairgrounds management, prompting Director Lacayo to insist on contractual language preventing any direct competition.

President Long inquired about regulatory approvals, and Giammanco clarified that while the Fire Marshal had approved initial concepts, final construction plans awaited board authorization, and the California Construction Authority hadn't been contacted yet. Infrastructure requirements became a focal point, particularly regarding power and water access. Mr. Giammanco acknowledged these would require significant investment but stressed the Fairgrounds would retain permanent benefits from these improvements regardless of the project's outcome. The modular shipping container design sparked

debate about its mobility – Mr. Giammanco emphasized its flexibility while President Long expressed skepticism about calling it "temporary" given the nature of the structure. Director Lacayo raised parking capacity concerns, questioning exactly how many spaces would be lost, with Mr. Giammanco arguing the revenue potential outweighed the reduction though President Long pressed for more concrete numbers.

Security measures and design elements received more discussion, with Mr. Giammanco detailing planned surveillance cameras and patrols that would enhance overall Fairgrounds security and describing the functional yet aesthetically pleasing ocean-facing windbreak design. Vice President Ceja asked about Coastal Commission requirements, with Mr. Giammanco asserting the project fell within existing permits, though CEO Ortiz cautioned that underground utility work might trigger additional review and potentially require an RFP process. CEO Ortiz also raised timing concerns related to the upcoming Master Food and Beverage contract ending and ongoing Surfer's Point development.

Financial considerations dominated the latter portion of the discussion. President Long requested revised revenue projections and expressed concerns about vendor overlap during the annual Fair, to which Mr. Giammanco offered to temporarily close Surfer's Pint during Fair weeks while maintaining it could capture revenue currently lost to off-site venues. President Long countered that the space might prove more valuable as premium parking during peak events. The conversation concluded with committee members acknowledging the project's potential benefits while identifying several unresolved issues requiring further clarification, particularly regarding competition safeguards, infrastructure approvals, and parking impacts, deferring any decision until these matters could be thoroughly reviewed.

It was decided that Mr. Giammanco would have an opportunity to present to the Board at the next meeting May 27th, 2025.

IV. Discussion and possible action regarding Naming Rights Policy

President Long asked CEO Ortiz to update the committee on naming rights progress. CEO Ortiz reported attending the Foundation meeting where naming rights for buildings was their top priority. The Foundation wants flexibility to direct sponsorship funds to specific projects like barn and stable improvements rather than general capital funds. CEO Ortiz consulted legal counsel Brandi Gragg, who confirmed sponsorships could be earmarked for specific equestrian projects, however, Ms. Gragg emphasized the need for a formal agreement ensuring the Foundation covers all administrative costs and coordinates repairs with the DAA.

President Long stressed the importance of clear boundaries - while allowing targeted equestrian sponsorships, Foundation shouldn't dictate funds regarding broader Fairgrounds spending. Director Lacayo suggested providing the Foundation with a prioritized list of improvements needed to guide their sponsorship efforts. President Long reiterated that agreements must be ironclad from the start to prevent future disputes as funding increases.

The discussion shifted to equestrian center upgrades, with the Foundation pursuing improvements to attract more events while balancing scheduling challenges and profitability concerns. Ongoing coordination is needed to align these enhancements with operational priorities.

V. Future Agenda Items

VI. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.