



Visit Estes Park
The Destination
Marketing Organization
VisitEstesPark.com

Board of Directors Minutes January 19, 2016

Board Members Attending: Karen Ericson, Steve Kruger, Lindsay Lamson (via teleconference), Adam Shake, Scott Webermeier

Also Attending: Town Trustee Ron Norris
Kyle Patterson, Rocky Mountain National Park
Paul Fishman

Elizabeth Fogarty, President & CEO
Visit Estes Park Staff Suzy Blackhurst

Public Comment. None.

Board Comments. Chair Scott Webermeier asked that approval of the January 5, 2016 minutes be added to the agenda.

A. Action Items

1. Approval of Resolution No. 02-16 naming bank signatories
Adam Shake moved that Resolution 02-16 be approved. Steve Kruger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
2. Approval of Minutes from the January 5, 2015 Regular Board Meeting.
Kruger moved that the minutes from the January 5 meeting be approved. Shake seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

In related conversation, Chair Webermeier noted that the December 15 minutes included in the January 5 meeting packet were short form. Saying a more descriptive form had been requested, a longer version of the minutes from that meeting was distributed in advance of the January 19 meeting. Jon Nicholas, who was unable to attend the meeting, disagrees with portrayal of the meeting in the longer version of the minutes. Lindsay Lamson asked that Nicholas point out where the difference is or what he disagrees with in the December 15 minutes. Webermeier said the December 15 minutes would be included on the next agenda. Legal counsel has been asked to review the documents to make sure that the nature and structure of the document isn't problematic. Lamson asked for information as to how many meetings each of the members have failed to attend in person or via telephone. The chair asked staff member (per Elizabeth) Blackhurst to compile the information.

B. Discussion Items and Reports

1. Rocky Mountain National Park Report – Kyle Patterson

Patterson reported that weekend visitation is gangbusters. Parking lots at Glacier Gorge, Bierstadt, Bear Lake and at times Hidden Valley have been full. The Full Moon Walk with a Ranger also is booked. Information about December visitation will be released January 20, and will show that visitation in December was up 17% (93,784 in December 2015 vs 80,000 in 2014). RMNP saw record visitation every month except February and April. With visitation now over 4.1 million, the park is considering how to mitigate the effects of high visitation. Patterson said the media and the public are very interested. Park officials are reviewing the impacts from the level of visitation, including safety, operational capacity and visitor experience. Total visitation increase over 2014 was 21%.

While Rocky's visitation increase is among the biggest in the system, impacts are happening across the west, Patterson said. She said the park anticipates similar visitation in 2016 as campgrounds already are filling up, it appears gas prices will remain low, it is the park service's 100th anniversary, and the economy along the Front Range is up. One unknown, she said, will be the impact of construction on US Hwy 34.

2. Town of Estes Park Trustee Report – Ron Norris.

Norris announced that Larimer County Commissioners will hold a meeting on January 25 to discuss vacation rentals. The Estes Park Housing Authority has completed its needs assessment and will provide presentations on February 10 at 11 am and 2 pm. Topics to be covered at the Town Board study session on January 26 at 4:30 pm will be Fund Balance, Purchasing Policy, and a presentation by Wil Birchfield on vacation rentals. The Town Board meeting will include discussion of the Estes Park Medical Center Wellness Center, the Performing Arts Center, vacation home fees, the mayor's right to vote, and requesting CDOT use the Barnes Dance approach at the intersections of Elkhorn Avenue and Riverside Drive and Elkhorn and Moraine Avenues.

3. Review 2016 Committee Assignment Appointment Considerations.

CEO Fogarty reviewed a redlined version of the committee assignments, saying that she merely updated the outdated language and removed projects that were complete. Fogarty also stated that the board governance committee does have the longest list of assignments, but much of that work will be completed by her and staff, as noted throughout the document. Work done by Elizabeth will be presented to the board for action (policy updates, etc). Information being gathered by staff for the Revenue Task Force was pointed out. Shake said he found no further changes were needed, and board members concurred. Fogarty will provide a final rendition for Chair Webermeier's review.

4. Review 2015 Board Self Evaluation Document - Summary

Chair Webermeier noted that the evaluation summary distributed for the meeting was the same as that reviewed during the board's November retreat. He said one board member had a difference of opinion from the clear majority based on board self-evaluation survey results. He wanted members to use the document as a starting point once again, and he wanted it included in regular minutes. Webermeier asked board members to listen to the recording of the Executive Committee discussion from Jan. 4, 2016. He said an opinion was suggested that the VEP Board is not functional, and he would like to get past that point to agree if it is or not, and move on for a better use of everyone's time, including the organization. He said the issue will be reviewed at the next meeting.

5. Financial Report.

CEO Fogarty said lodging tax for November 2015 came in 30.65% higher than in November 2014. Year-to-date receipts are 20.82% higher which is the trend seen throughout the year. She said seasonal comparisons show that fall (September through November) showed a 28% increase over 2014, further evidence that VEP's marketing campaigns are having a seasonal impact throughout the year.

6. Key Performance Indicators.

Fogarty said media impressions continue to be strong, particularly as we continue to land on many of the “Best Of” lists. She said VEP continues to work with Turner PR and CTO resulting in significant international coverage. Average web session duration has decreased as a result in directing readers to specific content that provides users the information they are seeking. Jackrabbit referrals remain extremely high. Fogarty noted that town sales tax receipts, without the 1% increase approved by voters, are up 12% while the lodging tax is up 19.51%. Dining sales taxes are up 26%, retail is up 10% and Visitor Center traffic has increased 6%. She said information on number of lodging units, bedrooms and beds is being gathered via VEP and EALA.

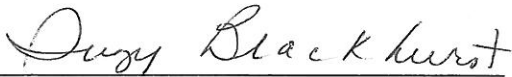
7. CEO Report.

- Fogarty has been in touch with Mitch Nichols and board members agreed that having a strategic plan document retreat meeting with Nichols on either Thursday, February 25 or Friday, February 26 would be best. Fogarty asked if anyone would like to donate lodging for Nichols’ next stay, to let her know.
- Fogarty recently participated in a conference call with the five marketing districts in the state where funding was a primary topic. Colorado Springs is seeking a ballot issue for a local marketing district (LMD) tax, just like the one that currently exists for the Estes Park LMD. Colorado Springs also is proposing an adjustment to the existing state legislation for all LMD’s that would also allow for an attractions tax to be included in the marketing district tax for any Colorado LMD. If passed, this would allow all state local marketing districts to vote on this locally and allow a better representation of the tourism district, besides just lodging, as well as provide an increase in budget and ability to be more competitive. The discussion will continue at the upcoming TIAC Board Meeting in Denver which Fogarty will be attending.
- Current survey and informal feedback through a variety of sources indicates Estes Park voters are more supportive of an increase in lodging tax, if it could help support destination product development. Although the current state LMD statute does not allow for capital expenditures, Elizabeth is looking into this, along with other small LMD’s in the state who suffer the same DPD challenges. July 29 is the filing date for a tax election for this November.
- Second interviews for the Visit Estes Park board seat had been scheduled for January 20, but have been delayed due to the passing of a Larimer County Commissioner’s mother-in-law.
- The board can use the Town Board meeting room for meetings on the first Tuesday of the month, but not the third. Webermeier said he envisions a quarterly meeting tailored toward information updates and public input. Shake agreed, saying he thought that type of meeting would be better attended. It was informally decided that the board would meet in the Town Board Room on March 1 and June 7. Trustee and RMNP updates were flipped with CEO update to accommodate the meeting location change.
- The winter marketing campaign is going well with digital ads out and billboards appearing by the end of the month. Other assets set to deploy as scheduled.
- The VEP team met with Kyle Patterson to discuss how to better communicate park messaging, film permits, activities, and aspects of the park. Patterson said the Park was beginning to see conflicts between different types of users such as snowboarders, skiers and snowshoers at Bear Lake. Fogarty said VEP would be adding more information to the VEP website to share the information the park deems helpful for them and visitors.
- Fogarty, Becky Gruhl and Blackhurst met with Travis Machalek and Visitor Center staff to further discuss the Service Level Agreement as related to rack card processes. Visitor Services was asked to stock and restock the brochure racks; all other activities related to the racks will be taken care of by VEP staff. Many of the tasks Visitor Services were doing were eliminated, as they were deemed not necessary. Machalek and Fogarty will be meeting in the near future on other points related to the SLA.
- Fogarty provided a presentation to the Kiwanis Club which went very well. Fogarty is also scheduled to provide the presentation to Newcomers on January 21. Staffer Brooke Burnham and Fogarty will present a library program in February as part of their centennial series for the public.
- Staff member Kellen Toulouse welcomed her baby girl Clare Ann on February 12.

- As Fogarty will be attending Tourism Day at the Capital, she asked if one of the board members would be able to speak on behalf of the Rocky Mountain Performing Arts Center at the Town Board meeting on January 26. She had already submitted a letter of support to the Planning Commission regarding the same topic. Chair Webermeier offered to assist. Fogarty will provide talking points.
- The EALA survey is available for anyone to complete, whether they are an EALA member or not (first question on the survey asks you just that). Fogarty encouraged board members to provide their feedback.
- At a shuttle meeting that Fogarty attended, Brian Wells outlined a grant opportunity that could provide one or two-day, year-round shuttle service. He will be presenting information to Town Board in the near future.
- Remainder of the 2015 Visitor Guides were sent to CO area 4th graders with a letter explaining the free park pass program. It's great to see the remaining guides go to good use, and not be thrown out.
- The VEP facebook video debuting the new 2016 Visitor Guide was hugely popular and generated over 500 guide requests overnight!
- We continue to follow up with our Enterprise Zone application with the County. No decisions yet.
- The Travel Industry Association of Colorado (TIAC) Legislative Reception is scheduled for January 25; 14 people from Estes Park plan to attend. Tourism Day at the Capital is Tuesday, January 26. Estes will be well represented!
- A county vacation home meeting will be held at Town Hall on January 25. Trustee Norris plans to attend.

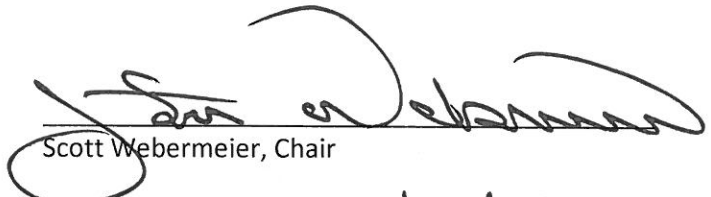
C. Adjourn

Adam Shake moved that the meeting be adjourned. Lindsay Lamson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.



Suzy Blackhurst, Recording Secretary

DATE: 2-2-16



Scott Webermeier, Chair

DATE: 2/2/16