



Visit Estes Park  
The Destination  
Marketing Organization  
VisitEstesPark.com

# Board of Directors Regular Meeting March 21, 2017 Minutes

**Board Members Attending:** Steve Kruger, Charley Dickey, Lindsay Lamson, Adam Shake, Cody Walker (Town Trustee Liaison), and David Ciani.

**Board Members Absent:** Morgan Mulch

**Also Attending:** Mark Holdt, Brian Wells, Teri Salerno, Michelle Hiland, Art Messal, Paula Scheil, Ken and Carrie Arnold, and Kyle Patterson.

Elizabeth Fogarty, President and CEO, Visit Estes Park  
Michael Bodman, Finance & Administration Manager, Visit Estes Park (taking minutes)

The meeting was called to order by Chair Steve Kruger at approximately 2:00 p.m.

## A. Action Items

### 1. Approval of Agenda:

Kruger proposed adding an action item to the agenda on formalizing the process for vetting board candidates. Lamson moved to approve the agenda, as amended, Ciani seconded, and the board approved 4-1 with Dickey opposed. Due to scheduling constraints, Lamson moved to relocate discussion items one and two to the beginning. Lamson moved to approve the agenda, as amended, Ciani seconded, and the board approved unanimously.

## B. DISCUSSION ITEMS AND REPORTS

### 1. RMNP Update – Kyle Patterson, Management Specialist/Public Affairs Officer:

Visitation is down 11.8% year to date through February and down 6% compared to last February, according to Patterson. However, to put things in perspective, since 2012, visitation is up 59.3%. Fire danger continues to be a concern, especially since Boulder County is going through a wildfire situation. With the new presidential administration, there is a hiring freeze in effect, and there's a 12% proposed budget decrease for the Department of the Interior, which is the parent agency for the National Park Service.

Lamson asked if RMNP has the flexibility to move people from other areas to visitor entrance station gates, and Patterson replied that the park could not do that. RMNP is working with Denver International Airport to create an RMNP display in the main terminal. Lamson suggested that a future agenda item could be communicating with federal officials about the importance of National Park Service funding.

### 2. Town Board Liaison Update – Trustee Cody Walker:

Walker extended a thank you to Karen Ericson and the Ericson family for their service to the community, and Walker asked the Visit Estes Park Board to extend that thank you to the Ericsons. Walker and Mayor Jirsa will be on the recommendation committee for the interview process for the current vacancy on the Visit Estes Park Board. The Town Board is working through issues related to the vacation rental cap and business license deadline date, and the parking garage project is moving ahead on schedule. Walker noted that the Town Board

appreciated Visit Estes Park's recent input; he further noted the value of Visit Estes Park's participation and VEP's input carries a bit more weight than public comment as far as representing an organization is concerned.

**A. Action Items (continued)**

**3. Approval of 2/21/2017 Board Meeting Minutes:**

Shake moved to approve the minutes, Lamson seconded, and the board approved unanimously.

**4. Approval of revised 1/17/2017 Board Meeting Minutes:**

Dickey moved to approve the minutes, as revised, Ciani seconded, and the board approved unanimously.

**5. Confirmation of VEP Board Representative for Estes Park EDC Board Seat:**

Ciani confirmed that he is interested in serving as the board representative on the Estes Park Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Board of Directors. Lamson moved to approve Ciani, Ciani seconded, and the board approved unanimously. Shake recused himself from the vote due to his employment with the Estes Park EDC.

**6. Policy 12 – Addition of Out of District Birding Tours:**

CEO Fogarty presented the case that birding tours were not being represented within the District by any business based on outreach and research by staff, and asked the board to consider amending Policy 12 to accommodate this, similarly to what is afforded to out-of-District rafting companies. The Board discussed how exceptions can be made for representing businesses located outside the District when local businesses do not exist or do not fulfill demand. The proposed amendment to Policy 12 would allow for an additional exception covering birding tours. Some administrative edits were made to Policy 12 as well. Shake moved to approve the edits to Policy 12, Lamson seconded, and the board approved unanimously.

**7. Formalizing the Process for Vetting Candidates for Vacant Board Seats:**

The Board discussed the pros and cons of recommending board candidates, and whether to endorse someone at all. Dickey asked if a better vetting process, such as people with specific skills, not just interest in serving, would be helpful. Lamson noted that policy based governance could be explained to candidates, so they understand what they are (and not) getting into.

Lamson further noted a satisfactory solution could be an annual mid-September board member candidate seminar, which could take about 30 minutes, educating candidates and the community in general about the roles and responsibilities of a board member. The seminar would be open to candidates and the public. Information would be provided and names of attendees would be passed to the Town Board but no specific endorsements of candidates would be made.

The Board agreed that a formal process is needed, and that Lamson's seminar would be an appropriate solution. But for the current vacancy it won't be possible. Holdt suggested putting a notice of the board vacancy on the VEP site. Kruger suggested striking this issue as an action item and moving it to the committee formation process and policy based governance development with Mark Holdt, and the board agreed without objection.

**B. DISCUSSION ITEMS AND REPORTS (continued)**

**3. Mark Holdt – VEP Strategic Plan:**

Holdt went through his presentation and the board contributed their thoughts as he went along.

4. Town of Estes Park Shuttle Advertising:

Brian Wells and Teri Salerno presented the Town of Estes Park Shuttle Advertising report. In the past, the town shuttle system cost \$425,000 a year to operate without any revenue. Sponsorships/advertising is one way to add some revenue to the mix: \$5,700 last year and expecting \$9,000 this year, according to Wells. June 24 - September 10 are the shuttle dates this year with one fewer hour per day due to budget cuts.

5. Finance Report, KPI Report, CEO Report:

Fogarty noted highlights from the finance and KPI reports, including lodging tax performance in the month of January at 11.5% when adjusted for late and missing payments. Fogarty warned that future visitation could be flat or down, and that Estes Park needs to act now to develop the destination product, services, upgrades, and infrastructure before challenges arise due to ongoing competition both state-wide and nationally.

Fogarty stated that a disaster grant relief program has opened for 2017 and VEP is applying for up to \$150,000. Michael Driver has been hired as a consultant to represent VEP at international trade conferences for 2017. Estes Park was listed number two in a recent *Money Magazine* article – *10 Affordable but Dreamy Destinations*, thanks to VEP's PR pitching efforts. Highway 34 is scheduled to open on time. Turner PR will be representing VEP in Washington D.C. at a CTO event and they will also attend desksides. Advance summer reservations are pacing ahead of last year, according to conversations had with lodgers.

**Public Comments** - Please state your name & address. We allow three minutes for public comment.

Michelle Hiland. 1767 Wildfire Road. Hiland took exception to the way she was treated at the last board meeting. She added that she still does not understand VEP or what it does for the community.

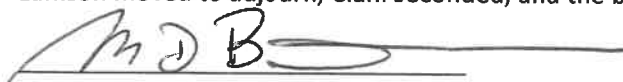
Art Messal. 1767 Wildfire Road. Messal maintained that VEP spending is ineffective and that the character of the organization is poor. Clear financials and objectives are needed, according to Messal.

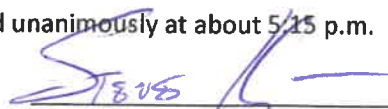
Carrie Arnold. 750 South Lane. Arnold disagreed with everything that Hiland and Messal said. She stated that she is tired of the way people are being mistreated by Art Messal and Michelle Hiland.

**Board Comments** - Lamson noted that Holdt's consulting work has been helpful. Shake stated that the Board should send a card or a gift to Karen for her work, and the board agreed. Ciani indicated that he's confident in the capacity of the board, especially with the policy based governance initiative under way. Dickey stated that he would like to see the signed 2013 bylaws that he stated was revised at a prior meeting because he said nobody seemed to know that they were amended in 2013. His board binder copy of the bylaws was dated 2011 and Dickey stated he had not seen a signed copy of the 2013 version before. He'd like to see a copy of the documentation proving what was done to the bylaws and whether the VEP Board is complying or not, claiming that what the board is working from isn't accurate. Dickey stated that it seems like things were not done right in the first place and the board should probably add that they were not adopted in 2011. According to Dickey, they were adopted in 2009 when Ken Larson signed them. Kruger and Fogarty stated that legal is reviewing everything from the beginning - 2009 to the present. Ciani noted that the board should spend less time trying to figure out past mistakes, if any, and more time doing a good job going forward.

**C. ADJOURN**

Lamson moved to adjourn, Ciani seconded, and the board approved unanimously at about 5:15 p.m.

  
Michael Bodman, Recording Secretary

  
Steve Kruger, Chair

DATE: 4-6-17

DATE: 4/4/17