



Visit Estes Park
The Destination
Marketing Organization
VisitEstesPark.com

Board of Directors Minutes April 21, 2015

Board Members Attending: Bill Almond, Karen Ericson, Lindsay Lamson, Jon Nicholas, Adam Shake, Scott Webermeier

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

Kyle Patterson, Rocky Mountain National Park

Public Comment. None

Board Comments. None

A. Action Items:

1. Approval of the Minutes from the February 17, 2015 Regular Meeting.
2. Approval of the Minutes from the March 3, 2015 Work Session.
3. Approval of Minutes from the April 7, 2015 Special Meeting.
Adam Shake moved that the minutes from the February 17, 2015 Regular Meeting, the minutes from the March 3, 2015 Work Session and the minutes from the April 7, 2015 Special Meeting be approved.
Karen Ericson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
4. Board Governance Policy #19 Amendments.
Advocacy Committee member Adam Shake explained that the amendment to the original governance policy expanded on the definition of types of enhancements that could be included in support and added point #4, which would allow the Advocacy Committee authority to grant endorsements upon request. Jon Nicholas moved the amended version be adopted; Shake seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The revised policy is attached to these minutes

B. Discussion Items and Reports

1. Rocky Mountain National Park Report – Kyle Patterson
Kyle announced that statistics for March were due by the end of the week, but early indications showed that there would be an increase of 20% over March, 2014 and that weekends continue to be busy, even when snowshoe conditions not optimum.

Lindsay Lamson questioned whether the Park could consider new routing to the Hwy. 34-Fall River entrance in light of the loop discussions. Kyle explained that improvements to the Beaver Meadows entrance were made in the early 2000s. The ability to make similar changes at the Fall River entrance station are hindered by the size and configuration of the property. She said changes being considered include an automated pass lane, and discussions with federal highways as to how to do that have occurred. A recent news story in the Loveland Reporter Herald about congestion provided erroneous information that received widespread coverage, along with many corrections. Congestion in the park is area and day specific and addressed using electronic signage.

Kyle also detailed news coverage received by the park in UK Traveler, Midwest Traveler, American Cowboy, Redbook and an upcoming USA Today insert featuring Rocky Mountain National Park on the front page.

2. CEO Report

WEBSITE PRICING, PLACEMENT & LOTTERY:

We had three website committee meetings with hotels, motel, condo, suite and cabins represented.

DTN went through each listing and evaluated pricing compared to other markets (no increases w/ the old site, launched the new site at a low price, no increase post flood and so we are still trying to get the pricing fair to market value and conversion value).

The committee agreed unanimously to the pricing, placement and lottery.

DTN will be here (Lia and two others) for a week next month – MAY 18 – 22ND

NEW STAFF

Michael Bodman – Office manager starts tomorrow.

Lauren Hewson found her dream job in Denver, now we are starting from scratch with Partner Dev. Position.

IN MARKET

Mobile visitor center booth - Duck Race and event center grand opening

Touchscreens – Narrowing down to best company to work with.

Beer can – Oskar Blues – Still trying to connect.

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Citizen Information Academy – Adam and I graduated!

Bo and I meeting once per month now. We are in front of his team 2 x per month for staff updates.

We came up with a solution for the Town's leads system by programming a new portal via our CMS system.

I will be presenting to the Community Services Committee that Trustee Ericson, Phipps and Holcomb sit on. I will be detailing out how we spend ¼ of our budget on events.

Website – Spoke with Bo and Frank – Agreed to give us a list of wants in order or priority, --with regard to their interest in setting up event websites via the Town.

EDC AND AVALANCHE – Stated several times in their presentation that they will keep the VEP mission and vision close and in mind when creating the Econ. Dev. Strategy for Estes.

They take a very holistic approach and just don't strategize diversification, so I've shared quite a lot of our data and research to make sure we don't stray from the strategy we are currently incorporating, including DPD.

ASSOCIATION FORUM – 17 updates and agreed to work on code of conduct.

ARTS DISTRICT - Staying involved & provided input in the last meeting for the mission and vision statements.

WORKING WITH ED PETERSON AND VACATION RENTALS

Intend to join EALA.

We are looking into creating pages on our website to support vacation rentals separate from management companies.

EVENTS

VEP sitting in on committees and event meetings that are new or expanding (that need additional VEP support): Duck race, Western Art, Rodeo, Estes Park Sports and Fitness Cooperative, Job Fair.

DBP – Attended meeting and walked downtown to meet and greet

ROCKY RIDGE – SO YOUNG – New Partnership

Destination Produce Development

MITCH and I connected and he will have that one page document soon.

We are also starting to discuss next steps, and the pros and cons of each of the options, from VEP, to EDC to a separate commission.

LOOP

NO negative response to our advocacy to finish the NEPA process.

There was some confusion on another board member's statement, but I cleared it up.

STATE TOURISM

I may be speaking on the Adventure Travel Trade Assoc. – for CTO at Snowmass June 7–8.

The first-ever AdventureELEVATE is a two-day intensive educational and networking conference that brings together industry thought leaders and practitioners for inspiration, education and insights into the trends that shape the adventure travel industry year-round.

WELLNESS TOURISM - Wellness Summit Review

REGIONAL TOURISM - GEO CACHE Update

GRAND LAKE AND CENTENNIAL COOK-OFF

We are working to finalize details of the Centennial Cook-Off where restaurants in Estes Park will compete with restaurants in Grand Lake in each of 3 categories: main course, drink/cocktail, and snack/dessert.

Met at intergovernmental meeting and spend time with - County Manager Linda Hoffman

MARKETING PLAN

ADVERTISING

New Video!

Shared Print and evolution of our creative brand

CREATIVE ASSETS

We have partnered with Joe Pyle, local photographer.

We are currently negotiating with James Frank as well.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

THE 20 BEST SMALL TOWNS TO VISIT IN 2015 - ESTES PARK #1

MEDIA RECEPTION AT HISTORY COLORADO

Will be hosting in conjunction with Grand Lake to celebrate RMNP centennial.

Thank you to staff, while we are short-handed.

3. **Best practices board/staff communications:**

Following a lengthy discussion, a consensus about board practices/staff communications included:

- Attempts to obtain information directly from staff could be perceived to be a directive.

- If Visit Estes Park is discussed in any manner need to talk with Elizabeth, either before or after, --whatever is appropriate at the time.
- Board members are always board members; they never "take their hat off."
- If a staff conversation involves Visit Estes Park, then a conversation with the CEO should take place.
- Board members who are unclear about a staff member's role should ask the CEO.

Elizabeth was asked to share her thoughts:

If there is confusion as to what is Visit Estes Park related, then the best guide is the Operating Plan. If it's in the Operating Plan, then it relates to Visit Estes Park.

If you are not sure what a staff member does, then ask the CEO for clarity.

The LMD Board is tasked with long term strategy, not operations. Nonetheless, I do share a wide variety of detail in my CEO report to keep you all informed.

In terms of advocacy, we discuss this at the board meetings, or I share talking points to consider when out in public. If the board disagrees with those talking points, then the board meeting is the time to discuss it, --prior to self-adjusting out in public.

A Visit Estes Park community committee is an extension of staff.

If you are having a conversation about our VEP plan, strategy or mission, then I would hope your comments support the VEP board's direction. If not, then I would hope the conversation would be first shared at a VEP board meeting prior to reaching a decision or opinion publicly. Otherwise VEP organization becomes disjointed.

4. Governance board best practices re: public perceptions

Following a similar discussion, a consensus was reached on the following premises:

- No board member speaks for the board as a whole.
- Individual board members will support the vote or preference of the majority.
- Board members always "wear their Visit Estes Park hat."

5. Website Pricing

Elizabeth noted that she had created a website committee to obtain input, and eventually come to the board with a website committee recommendation and staff recommendation. The committee agreed to continue the lottery and to expand from 10 to 15 featured listings in areas where there was a waiting list with the 10 featured spots. Pricing will be based on analytics, conversions, and how priced nationally. Each line item was through that filter and priced accordingly. There will be no separate mobile cost as it's included now in responsive. DTN will meet with each business and discounts will still apply. One committee member suggested a community meeting to roll out the pricing which is being considered. Lia Wik, and two others will be here for a week. Price adjustments range from 10% to 30%. Two items are 30%. Some went down 30% from prior year.



Suzy Blackhurst, Recording Secretary



Bill Almond, Chair



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Governance Policy #19

Title: Supporting Destination Enhancements
Adopted: August 20, 2013
Amended: April 21, 2015

The Visit Estes Park Board of Directors will consider endorsing the concept of a destination development/enhancement project if:

1. That concept will enhance or improve the guest and resident experience in Estes Park;
2. It diversifies the guest and resident experience in Estes Park through new and unique experiences.
3. It aligns with the Visit Estes Park ***mission**, ***vision** and community Brand Strategy.
4. Grant request endorsements may be considered by the Advocacy Committee who could ask to have it moved to an agenda, if the committee desires further input.

***Mission:** Attract guests to the District through effective and efficient destination marketing and management in order to drive year-round economic growth.

***Vision:** To be a year-round tourism, group and event destination that supports our healthy mountain village with a balance of financial success, positive and memorable experiences for guests and quality of life for our community.