



Visit Estes Park
The Destination
Marketing Organization
VisitEstesPark.com

Board of Directors Minutes May 19, 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, Public Information Officer, Rocky Mountain National Park
Teri Salerno, Manager, Estes Park Visitor Center

Public Comment. None.

Board Comments. Two items were added to the agenda: Update on Board Position Opening and Rocky Mountain National Park App.
Lindsay Lamson acknowledged the hard work and dedication of the volunteer Ambassadors and Town staff at the Visitor Center.

A. Action Items:

1. Approval of Minutes from April 21, 2015 Regular Meeting
2. Approval of Minutes from May 5, 2015 Work Session

Scott Webermeier moved that minutes from the April 21, 2015 meeting and minutes from the May 5, 2015 work session be approved. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Discussion Items and Reports

1. Update on VEP Board Position Opening

Bill Almond read a note from Ron Norris that said he and Bob Holcomb will comprise the Town Board Trustee Interview Committee for the Visit Estes Park board vacancy. Three applications for the position have been received by the Town Clerk, however two applicants have not lived in the district for a full year. Norris asked the town to extend the application deadline until May 29.

2. Rocky Mountain National Park Report – Kyle Patterson

Information provided by Kyle Patterson included:

- Two articles about Rocky Mountain National Park, including "Style and Spirit of the West," a story in a German publication, have publicized Rocky and the centennial anniversary.
- The ability to open Trail Ridge Road by Memorial Day remains weather-dependent as another 10 to 20 inches of snow are anticipated along with a storm on Thursday.

- Visitation is up 24% from last year. Lindsay Lamson asked if the increase in visitation would provide a foundation for efforts to broaden and automate the north entrance. Kyle noted they were working with the Town of Estes Park and CDOT to have variable messaging signs installed as visitors approach the intersection of US 34 and US 36 to give visitors choices on entering the park based on destination.
- Kyle attended an Outdoors Conference in Keystone where attendees were told that 80% of the CTO budget is used for summer promotions, and Colorado ranks 5th in aspirational destinations. Majority of campers (63%) stay 1 to 2 nights. Most campers decide 1 month in advance and they tend to make reservations. 37% travel 51 to 150 miles 99% more likely to do it again. The camping industry is losing more consumers than gaining. In response to a question from Lamson, she noted that while camping capacities in Rocky Mountain National Park are maxed out, there is no Park plan to expand campground operations.

3. CEO Report

Elizabeth Fogarty noted the following:

- The Partner Development position has been posted on several national sites, including the local newspapers, and the salary range has been increased. Two part time employees will help bridge the staffing gap. Reghan Tank will be working one day per week, and Hallie Smyth, a tourism management graduate student, is working 2 ½ days a week. Another person has offered to volunteer who will be used as needed.
- The DTN team has arrived and will be here for four days to discuss website advertising contracts with stakeholders. While appointment times are filling in, it also is apparent that people are comfortable with their campaigns and want to review analytics. There have been no comments about price increases, and thus far, almost all stakeholders have increased their campaigns.
- Elizabeth provided a community services committee presentation to Town Trustees where she outlined to Trustee Ericson, Trustee Phipps and Trustee Holcomb event advertising expenditures by Visit Estes Park and the specific account breakdowns from the 25% of VEP budget that is spent on events.
- There has been no further word from the Events Department about what is wanted from Visit Estes Park or about their developing their own event websites. Elizabeth will be meeting with Assistant Town Administrator Travis Machalek the week of May 26 to begin discussions about a Service Level Agreement between the Town and Visit Estes Park.
- The VEP Annual Summit went extremely well. Breakouts were well attended as was the general session. Annual Reports were distributed and agency & staff presentations were well received. Elizabeth asked board members to thank the Stanley Hotel for their contribution to the Summit when out and about. Scott Webermeier asked whether staff presentations would be posted. He also complimented agency partners and staff for a extremely well done Summit. Elizabeth let the board know that presentations would be posted on the website in the Partners section. Adam Shake also commented that he was very impressed with the Summit.
- The Arts district continues dialing in on vision and mission and Elizabeth stated she continues to attend their meetings as her schedule allows.
- During a Rec. District Community Center meeting that Elizabeth was not able to attend, committees were formed and initial discussions about a mill levy were discussed.
- Elizabeth attended a Town a public meeting about vacation rentals. About half of those who attended were from the residential community; the others appeared to have vacation home rentals. Format of the

meeting included breakouts where all groups came to same conclusion that creating codes that will be enforced is most important. Elizabeth continues to meet with vacation home rental owners to help create partnerships with VEP and EALA, as well as rest of community.

- Elizabeth attended Nick Molle's movie at Historic Park Theatre. She and Brooke also met with Nick and Sean regarding their Dream Tour. They confirmed that Visit Estes Park will support the film & tour, through VEP PR and social channels.
- Elizabeth and Mitch Nichols have a call scheduled for 5/20. Mitch has reached out to Avalanche to get a read on the direction they were headed, so we could complement and support that. Mitch is working on the pros and cons of what type of platform is best for the destination product development strategy.
- An updated FAQ on the Loop was just released. The environmental analysis will be complete in late June or early July. Choosing an option for either moving forward or ending the process will occur one month after the NEPA Study is released. The Loop Committee will wait for the report and then assess the information and ask questions if need be. Elizabeth recommended that Jon Nicholas contact Tucker Hart Adams to evaluate the economic impact portion of the study, on behalf of the EDC.

Frank Lancaster is looking into the Town of Williams, AZ. They are a gateway community to the Grand Canyon which has implemented a loop through their downtown to assist with traffic congestion.

New CDOT signage is going up at Hwy 34/36. The Barnes Dance will be instituted this summer on a trial basis.

- CTO is sponsoring an adventure travel conference in June that Elizabeth has been asked to attend. A portion of her registration fee is being paid for by the state. Elizabeth plans to attend if she has time in her schedule.
- Elizabeth met with Karen Nicholson and Brian Herwig to discuss wellness tourism. They asked Elizabeth if VEP could manage implementing wellness into the community and really owning that (getting businesses to add wellness services, etc). Elizabeth shared that Visit Estes Park could not "own" the wellness topic with regard to full integration into the community, but would be able to work with an individual at EPMC to help do a bit more than just marketing. Elizabeth also shared with Karen and Brian that the Association Forum could be an avenue to assist with wellness integration into the community.
- We are partnering with Grand Lake for a Centennial Cook-Off where restaurants in Estes and Grand Lake compete in 3 categories (main course, cocktails and appetizer/dessert). The losing destination will be serving the winning destination a meal.
- Visit Estes Park is officially working with James Frank to obtain photography creative while we shoot the video series with CTO and AIM.
- On 10/21, Brooke will be attending a media reception at History Colorado aimed at promoting travel to Rocky Mountain National Park.

4. Rocky Mountain National Park App

A request to display a rack card at the Visitor Center promoting a National Park app field guide celebrating 100 years of Rocky has been received. As the requestor is an out-of-town business, board approval is required. According to Jackie Williamson, the consensus is that because he will not cross town limits to conduct business, no town business license is required. Lindsay Lamson moved that the staff be given the flexibility to recommend variances in

guidelines to the policy, if it is deemed to benefit the community as a whole and there are no other challenges preventing the exception being made. Adam Shake seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Governance Board Roles & Responsibilities: Guidelines for Board Member conversations with Stakeholders and Public at Large

Select pages from the Town Board's Code of Conduct, as suggested by Trustee Liaison Ron Norris, and attached to these minutes, were distributed and reviewed. Chair Bill Almond led the discussion saying while it would be wonderful to adopt some version of the document, although doing that was not as important as understanding what the parameters are. Almond stated that the board needs to understand that all members are influential in the community, and board members' words tend to carry a lot of weight. He said the board agrees that it doesn't want individual actions to further complicate work that Elizabeth, or her staff, are charged with doing.

Adam Shake said the board should concentrate on private communications, and conduct with staff. A lot of the Town's document is not applicable to Visit Estes Park. Shake said he wouldn't want to adopt anything today.

Jon Nicholas said the board should not set a standard that it adopts the same thing as the town, but noted the town document could be utilized this for ideas. For example, he said the section on conflict of interest applies to Visit Estes Park board members.

Scott Webermeier said the section of private conversations applies to the board. He stated that although Visit Estes Park board members are not elected (they are appointed), there is good material in the document.

Elizabeth said she assumed the board would pull from the town document, that which would enhance the board's guiding principles.

Almond was concerned that Lindsay feels censored. Lamson said it would be helpful to know what is deemed being an extension of staff versus community input structure. He asked if the website committee was truly an extension of the staff. Nicholas asked if there is a distinction between a community advisory committee and the association forum. He suggested that it brings a question as to whether a board member should serve on an advisory committee. Webermeier mentioned that when he served on the former advertising committee he wasn't representing the board.

Elizabeth noted that conversations can be made without influencing deliberations. For example, she said on the website committee, the goal was to allow the community to come to its own conclusion. Then the board was going to do the same. And lastly, the VEP staff recommendation as well. So all three parties should have had the opportunity to reach a conclusion without interference from any of the other groups.

The question was asked what the best venue is when a board member has a concern about what is happening operationally. Webermeier said the first step is to go to the CEO. If necessary, it can be escalated to the executive committee or called to the table during a meeting of the whole board.

Lindsay asked why opinions can't be stated if the group is an advisory committee (as in the website committee). It was explained that the board had the same opportunity to share their opinion during a board meeting. Fogarty said once the board communicates with a community committee organized by the staff, having a board member insert themselves is a two-fold problem. It taints the committee because the board is trying to influence them, and a board member is getting directly involved in operations.

Elizabeth added that another example is when EALA was going to include all area events on their website. She had conversations about the pros and cons of that, but she didn't insert herself as an EALA Board member or Visit Estes Park partner. Instead, she said she encouraged conversation between the two organizations, even though she had a strong opinion. There is a way to share information, without inserting an opinion that could harm any of the organizations at the table.

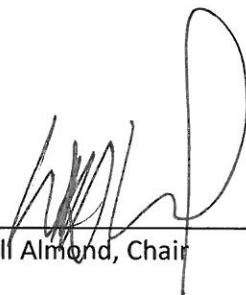
For future topics of the board, if they are divisive topics or could be on a community level, it would be ideal to first discuss them at a board meeting so everyone can understand the facts and discuss issues freely, she said. For a board member to share their opinion (wearing the Visit Estes Park hat) before that happens, is ultimately going to undermine the organization.

Lamson said the board needs clarity on what would be counterproductive, adding that he didn't want to feel gunshy. He also said there was no reason for him to serve on the board if he couldn't speak his mind.

Almond noted that comments can be misrepresented. Almond said if he receives a question about a specific topic, regardless of his position, he must keep his Visit Estes Park "hat" on regardless of his opinion. He added, and Elizabeth agreed, that topics related to Visit Estes Park are anything included in the Operating Plan.

Karen Ericson, as a member of the board governance committee, will attempt to create a document that the board can review regarding this subject. She said it might take over a month, but she said she would work on it with Elizabeth.


Suzy Blackhurst, Recording Secretary


Bill Almond, Chair