



Visit Estes Park
The Destination
Marketing Organization
VisitEstesPark.com

Board of Directors Regular Meeting July 19, 2016 Minutes

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

Also Attending: Rocky Mountain National Park Public Information Officer Kyle Patterson, Town of Estes Park Trustee Cody Walker

Elizabeth Fogarty, President & CEO
Suzy Blackhurst, Visit Estes Park (VEP) staff

The meeting was called to order by Chair Scott Webermeier at 2:10 pm

Public Comment: No one present.

Board Comment: Morgan Mulch said he appreciated CEO Fogarty's position and strategy on the closure of US Hwy. 34 that recently was included in a Trail Gazette newspaper story. He said from a business standpoint, it was the right position. Chair Webermeier agreed.

A. Action Items

1. Approval of Agenda: Karen Ericson moved to approve the agenda; Steve Kruger seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.
2. Approval of Minutes from the June 21, 2016, Board Meeting
Jon Nicholas moved the minutes from the June 21, 2016 meeting be approved. Adam Shake seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with Ericson abstaining due to being absent.

B. Discussion of Items and Reports

1. Town Board Liaison Report – Cody Walker
Walker said there were no town activities that would affect Visit Estes Park's mission or authority to tax.
2. Mediation Update
Webermeier announced that the mediation group met two weeks ago, and that progress is being made. Next meeting will be Monday, July 25.
3. Finance Report
Fogarty reported that cash on hand is close to \$1 million with lodging tax receipts in May being up 5.07% over those received in May, 2015. Receipts for the spring season (March, April, May) were 9.36% ahead compared to the same season in 2015.

DTN receipts are currently pacing \$25,000 ahead of web sales in 2015. Fogarty reported that first and second quarter receipts are up 36%. The annual audit has been continued to the end of July because of delays experienced in completing review of the Town of Estes Park financials, and Visit Estes Park expects no material weaknesses in the VEP report.

Fogarty presented the P&L report, noting that variances described last month have not changed. Fogarty said trends showing in the Key Indicator Report are similar to those seen during the last several months. As anticipated, Jackrabbit lodging referrals have recovered from the switch to a responsive site and again are pacing upwards. Town sales tax numbers were included in the report, and dining numbers continue to pace strong. Rocky Mountain National Park attendance continues to outpace 2015 visitation – visitation last month was up 11.49 percent while in May, the year-to-date visitation was up 10.96%. In discussing Rocky Mountain Lodging Report statistics, Nicholas thanked Fogarty for her efforts in encouraging greater business participation in the reporting.

4. Rocky Mountain National Park Report – Kyle Patterson

Patterson noted that visitation in June was up 15% from last June, and reflects an 11% increase year-to-date, and an increase of 220,000 people over the total of guests who visited in 2012. She shared a graph depicting budget allocations to the park that showed receipts have not bounced back since the 2013 sequestration, and is lower than the budget allocations in 2010 when the park had 3 million visitors. She also showed several photos showing traffic congestion and high visitation since July 3. To assist in providing better guest experiences, including a safer environment, Patterson noted that the park has implemented a short-term restricted vehicle access program, usually Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday. July traffic is tracking the same as previous months with the highest level of visitation coming between 10 am and 2 pm. She noted that the Town of Grand Lake restricted access on July 4 because of parking and emergency concerns, and because restaurants there had run out of food. The park is working on long term planning that incorporates business, Visit Estes Park and consideration of operational challenges. She reminded the board that August 25 through August 28 are fee free days in honor of the National Park Service's Centennial celebration.

5. CEO Report

- Fogarty recently attended a meeting of the county-appointed vacation home task force and asked Lamson, a member of the group, to provide more information to the board. Lamson detailed some of the task force's recent work, which has included revisiting how the committee voted on each topic discussed. Lamson said the group essentially is an advisory group, and his belief is that if a consensus is not reached on a specific topic, the commissioners should see how the issue was addressed and understand the commentary.

Trustee Walker said he has asked that an action item dealing with code enforcement be placed on the agenda for the Town Board meeting Tuesday, July 26. Walker said he wants the board to discuss whether the city wants to enforce ordinances on houses with four bedrooms or less. He said his goal is to have the board discuss whether to enforce the current code or not.

- Staff will soon start work on the 2017 Operating Plan. Fogarty encouraged board members to relay any suggestions so the feedback can be incorporated in the plan early in the process. She reminded the board that the executive summary of the plan, as well as the Operating Plan is posted on visitestespark.com.
- Two interns have been working with VEP this summer. Both are talented and valuable, although one is available beyond the summer season and has captured full time housing. This may allow for some reorganization of duties, thereby benefitting the ongoing strategy of the organization.
- Staff member Brooke Burnham attended the recent local Hwy 34 meeting which Frank Lancaster organized. It focused on employee commutes and VanGo primarily.
- Suzy Blackhurst has been representing Visit Estes Park on the Centennial Committee and on Monday, July 18, presented an overview of VEP to Community in Bloom and America in Bloom judges. Suzy provided a brief update on both.

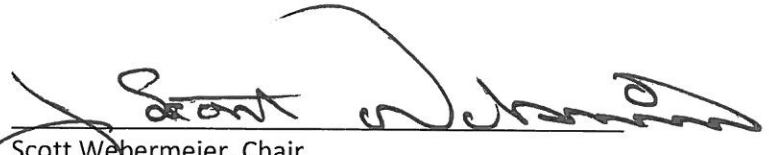
- The next Travel Buzz is scheduled for Wednesday. Topic this month deals with branding, and board members were encouraged to participate if possible, since it includes strategic direction of DMO's.
- Fogarty will be attending the CDOT Hwy. 34 informational meeting in Loveland on Wednesday evening, which means that she can't attend the Town Loop Meeting.
- A second round of Recover Colorado Disaster Relief Program grants for both businesses and tourism will be forthcoming. VEP plans to apply for funds to assist with tourism issues surrounding the Hwy. 34 closure.
- At 3:30 pm, Fogarty called in to the Colorado Tourism Office Conference call and webinar for the 2015 Economic Impact of Tourism State Report incorporating the Longwoods Study, Dean Runyan and SMARI data. Fogarty stated she would send all data and talking points to the VEP Board as well.

C. Adjourn

At 3:50 pm, Lindsay Lamson moved to adjourn, Steve Kruger seconded and those present (Lamson, Kruger, Webermeier and Ericson) all were in favor.


 Suzy Blackhurst, Recording Secretary

DATE: 8-16-2016


 Scott Webermeier, Chair

DATE: 8/16/16