



Visit Estes Park
The Destination
Marketing Organization
VisitEstesPark.com

Board of Directors Minutes August 18, 2015

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

Also Attending: Town Trustee Ron Norris

Elizabeth Fogarty, President & CEO
Visit Estes Park Staff Suzy Blackhurst
Visit Estes Park Staff Kellen Toulouse
Visit Estes Park Staff Becky Gruhl

Kyle Patterson, Rocky Mountain National Park
Cyd Springer, Chair Estes Arts District
Craig Soderberg, Co-Chair Estes Arts District

Public Comment. None

Board Comments. Chair Bill Almond asked to add two items to the agenda: September meeting schedule and Vacation Home resolution.

President & CEO Elizabeth Fogarty introduced Becky Gruhl to the board as the newest member of the Visit Estes Park team. Gruhl has been hired to be Partner and Group Development Manager. Becky told the board that while she moved to Estes Park from Fort Worth, TX to accept the position, she has been visiting Estes Park since she was 8 years old. She and her husband have been coming to the community a dozen times a year for 20 years and it has been a dream to live and work in Estes Park. Becky's mom also resides in Estes.

Estes Park Arts District presentation

Visual artist Cyd Springer described the process being used to develop an arts district. She said the group started as a task force and in the last month has formed a steering committee. The steering committee has worked on finalizing the group's mission and values. Prior to that, the group studied issues such as sustainability and identity. The group is ready to file articles of incorporation, open a bank account and is writing bylaws. Craig Soderberg moved here two years ago and has worked with performance-based arts groups. He had been a friend with Dick Orleans, who worked with musicians mentoring and encouraging them. Since Orleans's death, Soderberg has been working with venues and providing locations where musicians can perform. He has identified over 200 performers in Estes Park and believes that number could reach a minimum of 750. Soderberg said performing art is being made in Estes Park now and he is working to showcase performers while increasing the quality of performances and increase their frequency. Soderberg is reaching out to businesses in town, trying to meet all the venues. He said having Estes Park be an arts destination would be good for everyone. Springer said the group has started a dialog with Rocky Mountain National Park to help provide more workshop opportunities and combine resources.

Springer also told the board that the idea of an arts district started in 2012. An initial filing with the state of Colorado for district designation ended with Estes Park being named 8th place in competition, when only seven communities were accepted. The state cited lack of a "home" for the district and lack of funding. She said the

state is looking for the district to be confined to a walkable neighborhood which the current group has identified as an area from the Elkhorn Lodge to Stanley Village and the Stanley Hotel.

Almond noted that there are 10 or 12 arts districts in the state, with Salida named in 2012 being the oldest. He said the formation of arts districts is a (Gov. John) Hickenlooper initiative. It was noted that state grants and financial assistance for marketing is attached to arts district designations. Soderberg noted that the group is working to encourage a 12-month economy.

Springer said Estes Park Arts District supporters are using the strengths of committee members' experience along with assistance from Marcy Erion, a business development specialist from Loveland hired by the state, to move forward with steps needed to become an official Colorado Arts District, including a sustainability plan.

Almond noted that destination product development is high on the Visit Estes Park board's radar, and arts are an important component. Almond encouraged the group to tap Elizabeth as a resource, since she has been on many boards and brings expertise to the table, especially in keeping strategies on track with realistic deliverables and efficiencies. Almond also stated that Elizabeth's time is fairly limited with all the other committees/boards she sits on, and to utilize Marcie in whatever way possible since her professional expertise will benefit the group.

A. Action Items:

1. Approval of Minutes from August 4, 2015 Regular Meeting

Scott Webermeier moved that minutes from the August 4, 2015 meeting be approved. Jon Nicholas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Discussion Items and Reports

1. Kyle Patterson – Rocky Mountain National Park

Patterson noted that visitation statistics for July just released show visitation is up 23.7% year-to-date. She said about 20% of the increase equates to almost 200,000 people, which has led to volume and congestion issues in the Park. Patterson said the Park continues to want visitors to have a positive experience when they get here, but they've heard more concerns this year than in the past. She said people are getting to trailheads earlier. In relationship to the coming fall season, she noted that weekend attendance is 50% higher on fall weekends than on weekdays. She said that entrance station cameras have been very popular this year and that it did help to spread that word that traffic is highest between 10 am and 2 pm.

The official rededication of Rocky Mountain National Park will be Sept 3 & 4. Glacier Basin Campground is the site for ceremony activities on the East side of the park. As part of the celebration Rocky Mountain National Park will be taking over the Department of Interior's Instagram account on September 4.

On July 25, the hiker shuttle ridership set a record in July of 8,772. Shuttle use on the Bear Lake route has increased by 36%. More than 70,000 have ridden that shuttle. Campgrounds have been full all the time, and there have been a number of nights when back country sites also are completely full. Patterson noted that carrying capacity of the park is being taxed, saying increasing users by 400,000 in one year impacts the resources. She also said that increasing the number of trails is unlikely, particularly because Rocky Mountain National Park is 90% wilderness.

2. Ron Norris, Liaison from the Estes Park Town Board

Trustee Norris noted that the Planning Commission has discussed possible code language for vacation rentals; an update will be presented to the Town Board on Tuesday, Aug. 25. Norris noted that the goal is to vote on language by the end of the year.

Norris said there has been very little conversation about the Loop since the last Town Board meeting. The town still is in conversation with federal officials and the state concerning the doubled costs of the project and is hoping to find a feasible alternative. Input from Visit Estes Park will be very important, he said.

3. DMAI REVIEW BY STAFF

Kellen Toulouse and Suzy Blackhurst presented information they learned from attending the DMAI Convention in July. Notes used in providing verbal reports are attached.

4. CEO Update

Fogarty distributed an overview of important dates related to the operating plan and budget. She also thanked the board for its support with the Loop discussion, saying the community feedback she hears includes an appreciation of EALA and Visit Estes Park for taking an advocacy role. Larimer County recently found three homeowners on Pole Hill in violation of county regulations because they were renting their homes on a short-term basis as vacation rentals.

The Economic Development Corp. Executive Committee has reinforced keeping the loop committee on pause until NEPA study results are released. Product development work will proceed as Visit Estes Park works with Mitch Nichols and the EDC works with Avalanche. The hope is both come together with similar strategies so the Town, VEP and EDC can work together to implement the plan.

The first Service Level Agreement (SLA) meeting with the town was held and focused on the Visitor Center. Some items (primarily who will be filling the rack cards) are being tabled. Fogarty said the SLA conversations with the town will affect the request for funding support, however the SLA will not be completed until January, per town staff.

Approximately 70 homeowners with vacation home rentals have organized. Some of them have met with Fogarty and Town Planner Phil Kleisler to discuss recommendations for the town as it discusses vacation home rental regulations and enforcement. The homeowners provided Fogarty with their suggestions Tuesday just prior to the Visit Estes Park board meeting. A letter of support for the homeowners' position paper is being requested of VEP and EALA. Included in the proposals are:

- Regulating occupancy by relating it to number of bedrooms (2 ppl) in the home, plus two.
- Allowing parking on established parking areas for the home, but not including lawns.
- Agreeing to commercial utility rates, but not to reclassify as a commercial property.
- Posting a license and permit are encouraged
- Agreeing with the new town ordinance on trash
- Assessing licensing fees similar to what has been discussed by the town.
- A request for increased enforcement.
- The group agrees someone should be available 24/7, but not requiring official property management company representation
- Insurance to cover guest use of the home.
- Grandfathering provision

A separate proposal outlined the homeowners' vision for a complaint process.

The consensus of board members was to discuss the issue and vote at a special meeting including a conference call in meeting at 10 am Friday, August 21, 2015.

5. September meeting

Bill Almond announced that due to a conflict with the Colorado Tourism Conference, the second meeting in September will be moved to a special meeting at 2 p.m. September 22.


Suzy Blackhurst, Recording Secretary


Bill Almond, Chair

8/18/15

1. Update to Disruptors

Embracing Disruption

- The least of our worries are AirBnb and Uber - if you want to lament about disruption, we also need to thank those disruptors for growing the travel industry (just like the internet has disrupted the travel agent, that is now doing that for OTAs etc.)
- Flight websites have disrupted the airline website - but also opened up the world to travel.
- Vayable is taking over for tour operators - from a local perspective. For \$75 Joe will take you on a local tour of Austin "off off Broadway" music experience. People are seeking unique and different experiences. It costs Joes probably nothing, but DMOs don't know anything about it and now Joe is in the tourism industry.
- People are going to small local places - "I didn't discover Paris, but I did discover all the small towns around it"
- GoGoBot - Travel planning and local discover application(5th most visited travel planning site in US)
- There are websites out there that are taking control over us. Sometimes they make our cities look good, sometimes they don't.

Tomorrow's Disruptors

- Who needs Uber when there is a driverless car? Who needs parking lot when the driverless car just drops you off/picks up at work?
- Virtual travel disrupting actual travel? Yet to be determined
- Commoditize of travel experiences - gap stores everywhere reduce the exotic lure of travel. Gap stores and Starbucks makes everything look the same. "McTourism" overwhelmed locals and legislates restrictions in tourism.

Barcelona after Olympics did such a great job of marketing after - it started to become very cheap deals, they got volume, but not yield. Tourism was breaking down the culture. Now they are legislating against the tourism industry. Destination management will help see that problem and manage the growth.

Transparency of prices - everyone knows how much everything costs. put it out there in black and white

- Disintermediation - they have figured out how to get in-between you and the customer.
- reduced price of travel - has helped support the idea that it is affordable, focused on the consumer - it helps build industry but have to manager
- heightened choices and competition.
- -sharing economy
- reduced price of entry to tourism business
- local and authentic
- even more investment in booking travel - you can't try it on, you can't test drive it - you are also making decisions for your family, friends. Time/good chunk of money out of your pocket.
- expanding definition of what exactly in tourism industry.

Be the disruption of the big destination

Market like it is 2019 - not 1999.

Old school path to purchase - see advt, phone 800 number or go to URL, or get planning guide, then go to travel agent (they would be the one who could tell you an exp. price) If you liked it here - you would tell your friends. DMO were built on this.

New school. Social media, tv show content, lifestyle brands (H&G, travel channel - mostly sponsored content) new/traditional media, big data, personalization. Most of this inspiration comes when we are not looking to book travel.

sharing the experience on beyond just telling friends, Facebook, yelp, TA

Unique options for booking, campinmygarden.com

DMOs that are expanding as part of the industry will succeed:

1. deeply understand the millennial aligned travel (sharing economy, digital economy, is the grandma with all apple products. they understand it is a better way to communicate - so they learn.
2. hyper connected travel - are willing to give up part of their privacy to receive 100% personalized content.
3. Over indexed on experience, novelty, what's new, natures, culture and history

Millennial and technology users will dominate by 2030, seeking:

- local and authentic will rule - not same old same old. off the beaten path - boutique and curated destinations and experiences.
- massive growth will need to be managed strategically - less big agency, more micro campaigns
- marketing much more precise and less wasteful - find the exact customer in the world
- bring disruptors into the fold

Target the right customer:

- our technology allows us to be precise. what makes our customers tick?
- understand the unique selling points of your regional brand that matters the most. "Boulders, rocks and pebbles" Big Iconic experiences, important experiences, and the pebbles are the special bakeries and off the beaten path restaurant - the business might not even know they are in the tourism industry. People sometimes don't even mention the boulder experiences, but the pebbles.

It's all about content. Where your destination aligns with their lifestyle. Will they be reassured that they will have something to brag about with their friends when they are here.

Marketing organization will look more like a publishing company - who are your lifestyle writers, who are your instagramers, different paradigm shift

Source of content- community members, local rock climber, storytellers within the destination. a lot of it is sourcing the content to the digital areas that people are already going on.

- Focus on millennial while everyone else focused on boomers
- curate content to digital properties already getting the eyeballs - can't ignore all website, but stop obsessing over clicks -
- think customers and think over geography by go beyond tried and true sources
- consider digital tours to service visitor in the market.
- think local and unique experiences. bespoke and boutique destinations
- develop and authentic brand true to authentic and local

Why now? nothing will ever move this slowly again. Went through the growth of the internet - now we have to move faster. 5 year strategies are out the window.

Tourism winners tomorrow:

- embracing change, risk and tech for competitive advantage.
- seeking potential in international markets
- communicating role of tourism in economic development
- collaboration - rowing in the same direction - partners and customers and also disruptors
- destination differentiated by experiences
- understanding customers product and experiences

*Tactics for Estes Park to implement:

- First step is being aware and open to the idea of these disruptors – before it was fear, now it has to be collaboration.
- Moving in this direction with the kiosks at the visitor center and really paying attention to all the “app” chatter that is popping up. We have to strategically look for the good opportunities to partner with rather than compete. Embracing Vacation Homes and folding that content into our website – what value can we offer them (listings, high traffic, etc) in exchange for that valuable content on our website
- Research what is currently out there that we might not be aware of? Private guiding services, couch sharing, etc?
- Rethinking website – how can we move beyond traditional “listing” DMO sites. What can we implement now (redesign of homepage) and what is longer term (redesigning listings/listing pages for more content)

Work with partners to develop unique and authentic product experiences -boutique and curated destinations and experiences.

- Continue to think broader on a community wide level to develop unique true Estes Park experiences. What haven't we even thought of yet?
 - We have the park that is easy for people to brag that they were there with photos – what opportunities are we giving them to brag they are in Estes Park?

- What about the traffic and parking? Are we creating a solution to a current issue or do we need to be thinking about the future, driverless cars, where to put more electric charging stations, etc.?

2. Leveraging Brand Partnerships

Whole foods, apple, nike, amazon - cult brands that are hitting it off the charts with millennials.

Apple isn't about technology it is about empowerment

Nike isn't about exercise it's movement

Whole foods is a lifestyle

Amazon is a community

Las Vegas is an adult freedom

Las Vegas used band Imagine Dragons - Playing it forward. Street performances that donated money to music education programs. They didn't charge to do it - it was right before their album dropped. People pushed it out via social like crazy b/c it just happened.

Tap into the others popularity - pick the right brand. Las Vegas won't partner with Nickelodeon.

Put Las Vegas performers on Friday night flights to Vegas for impromptu performances. Partnered with Southwest airlines. Get people engaged, most flights have wifi - so people will talk about how they are on their way to Las Vegas and this cool thing happened

- Hero - big expensive projects - people want to feel something before they choose it. social heat map is coming out in the fall, take all generated user content to see where people are at - where is the social chatter coming from? This is an app that shows is. Opportunity to see what is going on where.
- Hub - high roller is new Ferris wheel - put 24 people in there with a bar, 48 without a bar. They put a band in there and no one knew it was going to happen, but it went great on social.
- Hygiene - make sure that you refresh, but is always there.

During the Electronic Dance Music Festival - put a famous DJ in an elevator. Through social stalking they found fans and DJ Krewella offered to do it. Superfans had no idea it was going to happen, but it was carefully coordinated. They had to pay for the music rights. Filled with go pros. Pushed out via MGM, Las Vegas and Krewella all pushed on social channels. Made sure that they target people who like EDM - they do that nice experience 2/3 a month.

#1 influencers for millennials is a friends photo (that was #6 for Gen X)

Travel influencers aren't what they used to be. anyone with a cell phone and an audience is a potential influencer.

Las Vegas approach is not unique - this in an approach can be scaled to fit your needs. Make sure you have the appropriate partner. If you never ask for anything free, you won't get anything for free. Make it relevant to your consumer. Everyone can do it and everyone can do it well.

Suzanne - Visit Florida

After the recession - 26% come to visit Friends or Family. Created an in-state spot - Invite your friends and family to visit today. Share invitations.

Now in the social environment - now just show photos #LoveFL - their friends family will come to visit, don't have to ask.

Winter Campaign:

Flock to Florida for the warm winter weather. Traditional print, classic communication points about their weather vs ours. (the instate ad that told people to brag about the warm weather - "sharing your photos encourages visitors and help boost the economy" inspired by a weather promotion. Developed images for the non-technical or less funny people - able to share very easily"

#LoveFL microsite. Drive content supported by microsite.

Summer Campaign=

People don't really care about summer in Florida. 4 out of 5 people treat their pets like an equal family member. Pets give them an interesting way to tell the brand story.

6 second videos produced using go pros - had to be realistic and could be done #DogsLoveFL - partnered with Google to distribute. Broader impact - contacted Kelly and Michael TV show (or had more money they might have done a different promotions) they did a pet prize, getaway. 10,000 vacation for you and your pet - getting national reach 3.7 million - social footprint is 2.5 million. Reached out in FL to share why their dogs love living in FL. Partnered with cities to help spread the word.

When they put money into paid media out of state - it also reflects that and helps builds advice growth instate. DogsLoveFL was a 1/10th of the investment of the summer campaign.

#dogsloveFL also increased the use of #loveFL

Tactics for Visit Estes Park

- Build off our current partnerships (great example of how we worked with Backbone to develop partnership with AIM – Backpacker Magazine videos)
- Really explore options of how we can utilize our partners relationships with their other clients to produce native content

- We will be discussing at our 2016 strategy meeting at end of the month.
 - Nature Valley – they are creating a reputation for national park/outdoor adventure brand partnerships.
- Leverage the band names that are already coming to Estes Park – Leftover Salmon, Murder by Death (already sold out two shows) videos, content, etc. Work with Stanley to connect.
 - Might not be able to pull off a Krewella concert in a “Vegas” elevator, but how can we surprise and delight these mega fans of these bands with a fun Estes Park experience?
- Continue to educate and develop relationship with the athletes here in Estes Park
- We already know we have large local Colorado visitation during the winter months – piggy back off of what FL did – connect with our Colorado followers, encourage them to have family visit. Everyone wants to visit CO!

3. Upside of Downtime:

Project Time Off is the U.S. Travel Association’s research-driven initiative to prove the personal, business, social and economic benefits that taking earned time off can deliver. We aim to shift culture so that using personal time off is not considered frivolous, but essential to strengthening families and improving personal health; a business investment with proven returns and an economic necessity. Join the initiative by taking one more day off, visiting ProjectTimeOff.com or following @ProjectTimeOff.

- Started program in 2013 - an evolution of #Traveleffect. launched project time off to align with mission.
- 429 million vacation days go unused - it is getting worse a full work week less. Instead of visiting your destination, they are going to work not using their days and actually not getting ahead.
- not just the travel industry that will succeed when we take time off.
- why does this matter? 160 billion dollars to the economy, 1. 2million jobs, and 73 billion economic output for just by taking one more day.
- Americans do believe they can take one more day, just need a little more push.
 - fear of being replaced and poor communication prevent American workers from taking time off. corporate culture is also playing into it, managers aren’t leading by examples.

Americans “lost week” quietly threaten relationships. Americans are missing out on three significant family/friends events last year.

How to change the behavior:

Targeting types of workers:

Project time off is not targeting “hoarder Hilda” (hoards vacation hours) or “no time Nathan” (already living and using every minute he has)

The Careerists

into work, but wants to play again.
just needs to be pushed. sees vacation as a tradition.
need to show that time off is happiness.

The Staycationers

most likely to use time off for mental health day or satiation
need time away from work to distress
cost of travel deters from using time off
lowest reported levels of happiness and health

Millennials

starting to form their traditions and work habits
find it harder to use their time off, feel guilty taking vacations

Boomers

taking time off is extremely important
most likely generation to use all of their time off
least likely to change behavior
multigenerational travel on the rise
You can reach them with the message mentioning multigenerational travel.

Examples of the message in the media: Creating a culture where time off is encouraged. it produces a more productive work environment. The “Project Time Off” tagline or term isn’t hit over people’s head, but an undertone to the messaging brands put out.

- NY - did prewritten itineraries to see what is in their own cities. They provided American express offers to get a deal - cost is important to this group.
- Expedia - no more excuses campaign
- Visit Seattle - did something fun where Visit Seattle CEO did a scavenger hunt and the staff member who found him and took a selfie got an extra day off.
- Partnered with MasterCard to do the commercial. Most successful launch since the “priceless” commercials. Clear that this message works. Breaks it down into something attainable “one more day - I can do that!”
- unlocking domestic leisure traffic. It’s not about stealing a visitor from next door, but increasing the size of the pie.
- features of new projecttimeoff.com website:
 - upside of downtime blog - establish project time off for as the authority for this topic.
 - video series of time off and happiness.
 - time off doesn’t have to be extravagant. you can make a five day trip from Portland to Seattle, etc

Show Video of "18 Summers", produced by Visit Idaho. You only have 18 summers with your kids – make them count, make memories.

*Tactics for Estes Park to implement:

- Infusing these messages into our language on social, website and blog posts helping to support the cause and creating messaging coming from all different directions.
- sharing inspiring videos created by project time off and other travel focused videos
- Encouraging locally, taking a short getaway to Estes Park (Denver – CO Springs) it doesn't have to be elaborate. (short itineraries like NY did)
- Play off the NPS initiatives –especially with the 4th grade pass – one more day and the memories you could create.

Shaping Short Term Rental Regulation

Carl Shepherd – HomeAway co-founder

HomeAway has 1.1 million households worldwide; 700,000 in the US and is a publically traded company

Who uses vacation rentals?

- \$85 billion industry in US & Europe
- Average age is 53
- Average HH Income \$122,000
- Traveling as a family or as a group
- Average length of trip is 5.7 days

Common reasons people pick short-term rentals?

- Value for families/groups
- Access to kitchen, laundry and amenities of home
- Ability to cook meals
- Ample space for everyone
- Accommodation for friends/family together

Best Practices:

- Onerous regulations of short-term rentals can drive the industry underground, thus evading local regulations & local hotel taxes. Fair regulation of short-term rentals ensures greater compliance and greater receipt of local hotel taxes.
- Need to establish an easy and reliable way to identify and contact the short-term rental owner
- Make the tax collection and remittance obligation clear
- Treat the short-term rental owner the same as long-term rental owners. If the municipality tries to make the rental a commercial activity, compliance will be negligible as shown in Portland and San Francisco.

Shepherd pointed to the positive economic impact that short term rentals bring to communities. He said it's a \$31.1 billion industry in Florida, provides 322,000 jobs (directly & indirectly) and provides \$12.6 billion in labor income

In a national survey,

- 90% of respondents agree short-term rentals bring meaningful tourism and tax dollars to a local community.
- 91% agree that short term rentals provide economic benefits to local communities
- 69% oppose passing laws and rules to restrict the practice of short-term rentals
- 75% support fair and reasonable rules to regulate the practice of short-term renting.

Mary Branum, president short-term rental owners assn of Galveston

Key goals for her association forming was to preserve property rights

Lowering the barriers to registering and participating leads to higher compliance.