



Visit Estes Park
The Destination
Marketing Organization
VisitEstesPark.com

Board of Directors Regular Meeting August 16, 2016 Minutes

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

Also Attending: Kyle Patterson, Rocky Mountain National Park Public Information Officer
Cody Walker, Town of Estes Park Trustee & VEP Liaison
Mark Holdt, Mountain Sage Consulting
Carrie Arnold, Deer Crest on Fall River
Ken Arnold, Deer Crest on Fall River
Ken Larson, former VEP Board Chairman
Michelle Oliver, Lazy B Wranglers
Terry Rustin, Estes Park Trail Gazette

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair Scott Webermeier at 2:00 pm

Public Comment:

Carrie Arnold spoke in support of CEO Elizabeth Fogarty, noting the results and accomplishments of Visit Estes Park during the past two years. She spoke of the organization's success in promoting Estes Park during off-season months and the desire to retain Fogarty as CEO in Estes Park, and not at a competing destination.

Ken Larson, prior VEP Board Member and Chair, spoke in support of Fogarty and offered his support for extending her a contract. He cited Fogarty's unique background and the outstanding results produced by her and the VEP team.

Ken Arnold told the board he has worked with Fogarty on many occasions and appreciates and supports her. He noted having increased business that he said is the result of efforts by Fogarty and the Visit Estes Park team.

Michelle Oliver thanked Fogarty for her professional approach and vision that she shared ever since meeting with Elizabeth from when she first arrived in Estes, through the process of trying to launch a new business. She said everything Fogarty represents has been a tremendous support to the Lazy B business and is of great benefit to the community.

Terry Rustin introduced himself saying he was representing the Estes Park Trail Gazette.

Board Comment: Trustee Cory Walker noted that at the last Town Board meeting, he brought up the Town's non-enforcement of regulations pertaining to vacation rental occupancy in an effort to obtain clarification about the practice. A joint Town of Estes Park-Larimer County meeting about vacation rentals will be held on Aug. 30.

Jon Nicholas announced that key topics to be discussed at the Thursday, Aug. 18 meeting of the Estes Park EDC will include discussion of financial and non-financial incentives that can be used to strategically meet the organization's strategic goals.

Lindsay Lamson briefly spoke about the recent EALA Short Term Vacation Home Survey, saying the vast majority of respondents who own vacation homes have no intention of making their homes long term rentals, especially since most shared that they visit their vacation home throughout the year.

A. Action Items

1. Approval of Minutes from the July 19, 2016, Board Meeting

Nicholas moved the minutes from the July 19, 2016 meeting be approved. Steve Kruger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Discussion of Items and Reports

1. Rocky Mountain National Park Report – Kyle Patterson

Patterson announced that Darla Sidles, new RMNP Superintendent, has arrived. Her last assignment was at Saguaro National Park, Arizona. Patterson expects to receive July visitation numbers by the end of the week and will email them to the board. Shuttle ridership in July was up 19% over that seen in 2015. She noted that response to the "Please Help Your Friends Behave Better" news release received significant response and exposure, resulting in engaging people on topics that are hard to talk about. The release has resulted in generating a number of national news stories tied to how to behave in national parks.

2. Mountain Sage Consulting

Webermeier introduced Mark Holdt of Mountain Sage Consulting. Holdt has been contracted with to assist in creating the board's strategic plan. Webermeier said Holdt would be conducting a series of meetings with the board, most likely every other meeting of the board. Holdt provided an overview PowerPoint presentation of his company's philosophy of work and an outline of his work for Visit Estes Park that will include reviewing current governance documents to final presentation of a draft strategic plan in March 2017. Following completion of the draft strategic plan, the draft will be shared with key constituents.

3. Mediation Report

Webermeier referenced the Memo of Understanding included in the board packets, and recommended board members read the signed document, as members of both boards are expected to follow the points outlined.

4. Finance Report – Elizabeth Fogarty

VEP cash reserves are over \$1 million, and reminded the board that the balance is necessary to carry negative cash flow months and provide sufficient funds for reserves and current obligations. Total taxes received in June were 25.66% higher than in 2015; when adjusted for late payments, the increase is 16% higher. Year to date, tax receipts are 19.27% higher; to continue pacing ahead of 2015 is notable, she said. Fogarty said it is not any one lodging segment that is contributing to the growth; rather, she said, most of the increase is from occupancy and ADR across the board. This year is the most aggressive ADR the community has attained and is attributable to continual education from EALA, VEP and staff, along with growing confidence in the market especially during the winter season that was largely successful due to VEP's winter campaign, as well as other stakeholder efforts.

Lamson noted that the success of the winter season gave many owners confidence to raise rates, and they didn't see a drop-off in occupancy which furthered their confidence. Lamson also noted that the level of cash position is required to meet expenditures coming due, but also to maintain a working cash reserve to spend through the winter.

5. KPI Report

Fogarty highlighted key indicators for the month.

6. CEO Update

- Fogarty reminded the board that she and staff are working on the 2017 Operating Plan and Executive Summary so a draft can be reviewed at next meeting, with approval anticipated the following meeting. Board members are welcome to provide input.
- The content coordinator position is posted in both local papers.
- Fogarty continues to have discussions with Town Administrator Frank Lancaster about Destination Product Development. Most recently she has talked about installing boulders with grip holds around the Estes area, installing a splash pad at Bond Park, installing a climbing wall behind Performance Park, and establishing a co-op garden/CSA project.
- Completion of the Service Level Agreement with the town has been delayed due to last minute input from Visitor Center staff. No completion date is projected.
- The last Travel Buzz was about PR. The next program is Sept. 14 and will again be held at Inkwel & Brew at 8:30 am. Topic in September is "Ultimate Customer Service Program: Fast & Easy." The September program will be used to launch a formal brand champion program where one individual per month who has exhibited the Estes Park Brand through exemplary customer service will be honored with a plaque, prizes, receive a dedicated parking space and be featured on a dedicated Brand Champion page on VisitEstesPark.com.
- VEP attended the hunter-jumper and wine festivals, capturing photography and video to add to marketing assets for next year.
- Fogarty distributed the EALA survey results where private vacation home owners were asked a variety of questions including whether they were or will ever become a long term housing option.
- Fogarty will give a presentation to the Rotary Club of Estes Park next month.
- Communications Director Brooke Burnham met with Fort Collins Visitor Center and Colorado Welcome Center in Fort Collins volunteers to discuss communication about upcoming Hwy 34 construction. More than 35 people attended. She received positive feedback about VEP's pro-active efforts. Most questions were about the Loop. Fogarty said VEP has done a good job presenting & sharing information and enlisting the assistance of Foothills partners to get the word out.
- Fogarty noted that Estes Park businesses should be aware that Office of Economic Development Recover Colorado business grants are available for US 34 closure financial assistance. She said if an Estes Park area business shows a change in revenue after the road closes, it is possible to receive financial assistance through the grant program. Nicholas noted that business owners who already applied for assistance will be further along in the funding process than others.
- CDOT has agreed to install temporary signage at the corner of Mall Road on Hwy 36 to let motorists know Hwy 34 businesses are open.
- A Colorado Tourism Marketing committee conference call recently was held to review the state's winter promotional campaign. Fogarty shared that the campaign will carry the tagline, "America's Best Skiing." However, she said creative content in the campaign does not solely carry a skiing focus; rather the campaign is about snowshoeing, sledding, tubing, cross country skiing, horseback riding and other activities, all of which Estes markets as well. Fogarty was optimistic and supportive of the State winter campaign and reinforced that with CO pacing as the #1 overnight ski destination in the country, it makes sense for the

state to carry that brand recognition and then support it with all of the other activities that non ski destinations offer as well. She shared an example of, what if Utah's winter tagline or campaign was about snowshoeing. People would be wondering why Utah wasn't talking about skiing, the obvious winter activity.

- The Virtual Tour has now been posted on the VisitEstesPark.com home page; staff is now at round two of sales of virtual tours.
- Fogarty showed VEP-produced videos that are posted on social media and VEP's YouTube account, including camp coffee, fall season, Elkins Distillery and others.

C. Executive Session

At 3:30 pm, Karen Ericson moved that the board enter into an executive session for the purpose of discussion of a personnel matter, and not involving: any specific employees who have requested discussion of the matter in open session; any member of this body or elected official; the appointment of any person to fill an office of this body or of an elected official; or personnel policies that do not require the discussion of matters personal to particular employees under C.R.S. Section 24-6-402(2)(f). Morgan Mulch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

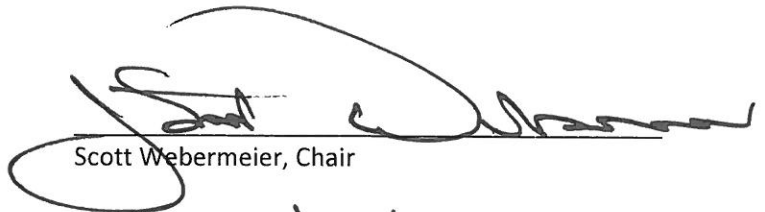
D. Adjourn

The board did not return to public session and adjourned for the day.



Suzy Blackhurst, Recording Secretary

DATE: 9-6-16



Scott Webermeier, Chair

DATE: 9/6/16