



TOWN OF  
ESTES PARK  
COLORADO



**Lodging Tax Extension Task Force  
Meeting #4  
Wednesday, June 8, 2022  
12:00 p.m. Via Zoom**

Advisory Members Attending

Jody Shadduck-McNally, Cindy Younglund, Scott Webermeier, Deborah Gibson, Sean Jurgens, Rich Chiappe, Jason Damweber, Adam Shake, Alea Rodriguez

Voting Members Attending

David Batey, Austen Bierl, Teresa Commerford, John Cullen, Richard James, Dzidra Junior, Laurie Dale Marshall, Trevor Scott McGuire, Michael Romero, Greg Rosener, Suzanne Smikahl, Seth Smith, Scott Thompson

Visit Estes Park Staff Attending

Kara Franker, Michael Zumbaugh, Josh Harms, Rachel Ward Oppermann

Meeting is called to order at 12:05 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

MEETING QUESTION

Who should be responsible for oversight and prioritization/allocation of the funds?

DISCUSSION

Bill Brown reviews reference materials distributed prior to the meeting, including a chart detailing housing needs versus construction and a table showing changes in lodging taxes in the past five years. The housing needs versus construction chart demonstrates that construction has not kept up with needs since 2006. The changes in lodging taxes in the past five years chart gives insight into the competitive lodging tax environment.

Bill Brown summarizes the decisions made by the Task Force to date.

A discussion on what percent lodging tax increase to pursue is initiated by quantifying the housing need as defined by the last housing needs assessment. Greg Rosener presents a summary of the type of housing units that could be created at varying lodging tax rate increases by leveraging bonding income streams based off Stifel Public Finance's recommendations to help the group visualize how much of an increase may be needed. He emphasizes this is not a plan but a rough estimate. Childcare is included in this analysis. John Cullen clarifies this is a subsidy for the equity normally required to purchase a house.

David Batey makes a motion to recommend a six percent lodging tax increase, based on what the market will tolerate, with the proviso that with additional information that percentage may be reconsidered. Greg Rosener seconds the motion. Dzidra Junior cannot support a six percent increase. The YMCA's mission is to offer affordable vacations. If forced she may be able to consider a two percent increase but is hesitant to commit due to too many unknowns around how the money will be used. John Cullen cannot support a six percent increase. Combined with the sales tax and convention tax it is not competitive. The Stanley Hotel's clientele are not luxury travelers, they're aspirational and are frugal. He would support a two – four percent increase. Teresa Commerford cannot support any increase citing inflation, gas prices, demographics of Estes Park visitors and diversity, equity and inclusion. Richard James might support a two percent increase but it will be challenging to get short-term rental owners to support an increase.

Members agree that a six percent increase cannot be justified and most suggest between two and four percent. Three percent is a commonly proposed. It will be important to gain the support of short-term vacation rental owners. David Batey withdraws his motion and proposes a substitute motion. He proposes that a 3.5% lodging tax increase, over the current lodging tax, is recommended based on what the market will tolerate, possibly changed by additional information and to be affected by the discussion on what to do with the short-term rental fee. Bill Brown takes the motion directly to a vote. Motion passes nine to four with three members not present.

Bill Brown asks members who were opposed to the motion to think about what changes, such as a change to the short-term rental fee, may allow them to be in favor of the motion. He would like greater consensus. A final vote, that includes the three absent members, will take place June 15.

The group addresses this week's question by brainstorming entities that could be responsible for oversight and prioritization/allocation of the funds. The group recommends considering Larimer County, the Town of Estes Park, or the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) with oversight from an advisory committee, a local representative or the local Housing Authority.

Alea Rodriguez does not foresee the County taking on a half-billion dollar program but supports the idea of a community advisory board to help guide the funds. Jason Damweber is not sure the Town is the right entity to administer these funds. He also supports a local advisory committee. Trustee Younglund supports the idea of CHFA administering the funds guided by a local advisory committee. Both organizations will be involved in the appropriate capacity.

Naomi Hawf, Executive Director of the Estes Park Housing Authority and an attendee of the meeting, is asked to speak on behalf of the Housing Authority. The Housing Authority has been involved in several housing projects and could be involved in administering the funds and providing oversight. She is not sure if CHFA would have the interest in administering the funds.

Bill Brown reports Visit Estes Park can be a fiscal agent of the funds but desires to otherwise stick to their mission. Visit Estes Park is not the right entity to administer the funds. The Estes Park Housing Authority and Visit Estes Park are not directly accountable to voters.

Bill Brown spoke with Jamie Gomez from CHFA and learned that administration of the funds is within the scope of CHFA but they need to determine if they have statutory authority to do so. Regarding childcare, a portion of the funds could be split off for investment in it.

John Cullen recommends that the Housing Authority's role is to make sure that units stay workforce housing. Naomi Hawf cautions that oversight given to entities outside Estes Park could decrease flexibility and increase restrictions in proposed uses of the funds. Greg Rosener states the Housing Authority understands the housing market better than any other entity and should be involved.

The level of programmatic detail necessary for voters to assess a ballot measure and possible modifications to the motion to increase the lodging tax 3.5%, to gain greater consensus, will be discussed.

ACTION ITEM: Approval of minutes

Greg Rosener moves to approve the minutes from the June 1, 2022 meeting. Austen Bierl seconds. Motion passes 13-0.

ACTION ITEM: Lodging tax increase percentage (withdrawn)

David Batey makes a motion to recommend a six percent lodging tax increase. Greg Rosener seconds the motion. David Batey withdraws the motion. Greg Rosener withdraws his second of the motion.

ACTION ITEM: Lodging tax increase percentage

David Batey makes a motion to recommend a 3.5% lodging tax increase, over the current lodging tax. Greg Rosener seconds the motion. Motion passes 9-4. Teresa Commerford, Richard James, Dzidra Junior and Seth Smith opposed the motion.

ADJOURN: 1:56 p.m.

*Rachel Ward Oppermann*

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Rachel Ward Oppermann,  
Recording Secretary

DATE: Jun 15, 2022