



TOWN OF
ESTES PARK
COLORADO



**Lodging Tax Extension Task Force
Meeting #1
Wednesday, May 18, 2022
12:00p.m., Via Zoom**

Advisory Members Attending:

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

Voting Members Attending:

Michael Andrzejek, David Batey, Austen Bierl, Dan Centurione, Teresa Commerford, John Cullen, Pep Dekker, 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, Rebecca Domenico-Gelsinger, Josh Harms, Rachel Ward Oppermann

Meeting is called to order at 12:00 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

WELCOME & OVERVIEW

Bill Brown introduces himself and states he has been engaged by Visit Estes Park to manage the task force. His role is to moderate discussions so the group can reach conclusions and consensus. This is a public meeting. Meetings will be recorded and published. This is an advisory task force. The goal is to ultimately arrive at a consensus as to the advisability of a ballot measure and what a ballot measure looks like. The group will vote on final recommendations and issue a final report. Should a ballot measure be pursued, the group will determine an appropriate tax increase percentage to propose to voters.

INTRODUCTIONS

Bill Brown introduces the advisory task force members and asks each voting member to introduce themselves.

MEETING QUESTION

Do we want to pursue an increase to the lodging tax levied by the local marketing district for the purposes of workforce housing and/or childcare?

DISCUSSION

Bill Brown starts by listing alternative funding mechanisms and some of the pros and cons of each. He opens the floor for comments on the appropriateness of the lodging tax used to fund workforce housing and childcare.

The group discusses the need for a significant, consistent funding source supported by a thorough, executable plan. Many comment that the lodging tax alone will not solve workforce housing and childcare issues and stress that a lodging tax increase will be only part of the solution. There is a larger quality of life issue here.

Other solutions, such as a general sales tax and a property tax increase targeted to non-resident owners are debated. The group discusses using Visit Estes Park's budget now. Bill Brown states that the statute requires voter approval to change the use of the lodging tax. In the 1980's the State cut the marketing budget and it had adverse economic impacts.

Austen Bierl states that Estes Park's lodging tax is low compared to other destinations. Bill Brown states that lodging tax increases have a larger impact on conventions because meeting planners evaluate costs. Many Colorado mountain destinations are having the same problems as Estes Park and may also raise taxes. It's not a static tax environment.

Several mention that the ballot measure should not be introduced this November. There is only one chance to do this right.

John Cullen has had conversations with the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA) and Stifel about solutions to improve workforce housing inventory without inflating real estate market rents. With a 5% lodging tax the Stifel/CHFA model works. Stifel and CHFA will present at the May 25 meeting.

David Batey and Laurie Dale Marshall urge that the same thought goes into childcare.

There is a community of nonprofits working on housing and childcare that have systems in place and capacity, with consistent funding, to do this work.

The group agrees there is consensus that there is a problem that needs to be addressed and funded.

ACTION ITEM:

Do we want to pursue an increase to the lodging tax levied by the local marketing district for the purposes of workforce housing and/or childcare? 14 vote yes, 1 votes no, 1 is not present to vote.

ADJOURN:

Meeting is adjourned at 1:53 p.m.

Rachel Ward Oppermann

Rachel Ward Oppermann,
Recording Secretary

DATE: 5/26/2022

Signature: *Rachel Ward Oppermann*

Email: rachel@visitestepark.com