

Visit Grand Junction
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting
June 11, 2024, 3 pm – 5 pm

The meeting was held at The Residence Inn, 767 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction, CO.

Presiding: Brenda Greene, Chair

Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present: Theresa Horvat, Pat Nichols-Perrin, Joe Burtard, Mikhail Blosser, Julie Shafer

Absent: Elizabeth Fortushniak, Manon Desrosiers, Tammy Anderson

City Council Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem Randall Reitz

City of Grand Junction Staff Present: Andrea Phillips, Interim City Manager; Elizabeth Fogarty, Director; Kim Machado, Administrative Specialist

Guests: Dan Ben-Horin, National Conservation Lands Specialist, Bureau of Land Management – Grand Junction Field Office; Michael Sarhan, Associate District Manager, Bureau of Land Management – Grand Junction Field Office.

The meeting was called to order at 3:07 p.m. by Board Chair Brenda Greene.

Minutes from the April 9, 2024, advisory board meeting: Theresa Horvat motioned to approve the minutes as written; Joe Burtard seconded. Motion passed.

Official minutes were not recorded for the May 14, 2024, meeting due to lack of a quorum. Meeting notes were taken at this meeting and have been posted on VisitGrandJunction.com.

Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Business

Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Chair Brenda Greene welcomed Julie Shafer as a new member of the Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board of Directors. Julie was appointed by City Council at the June 5, 2024, regular meeting to replace Kelsey Coleman. Julie's term will end on December 31, 2025.

Director Elizabeth Fogarty mentioned that she will be attending the U.S. Travel Association's Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO) on August 11 – 13, 2024, which conflicts with the regular advisory board meeting currently scheduled for August 13. The Board considered rescheduling or canceling the meeting. After a brief discussion, the Board agreed to reschedule the meeting. Staff will send a Doodle Poll to determine a mutually agreeable date and time to meet in August.

Community Updates and Q&A

Dan Ben-Horin, the National Conservation Lands Specialist for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), McInnis Canyons, and Dominguez-Escalante National Conservation Areas (NCAs), provided an update on the BLM – Grand Junction Field Office's conservation and land management strategies. He covered topics including recreation and wildlife, trail and campground upgrades, and wild horse management. Additionally, he shared information about the National Monuments and NCAs conservation campaigns with the Conservation Lands Foundation, the North Fruita Desert Trails Master Plan, Bangs OHV trail planning and development, wild horse management, Escalante Ranch Acquisition, and campground projects in the Gunnison River and Rabbit Valley areas. Dan also highlighted the "Respect, Connect, Protect" campaign and encouraged Visit Grand Junction to link to it.

Elizabeth Fogarty thanked Dan for the BLM/NCA update and offered assistance with messaging during the wild horse gathering operations. Dan thanked Elizabeth for the assistance and mentioned the BLM's new public relations specialist would contact her.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Elizabeth shared an update on Grand Junction's lodging tax collections and hotel metrics for April 2024's business activity. For April 2024's business, lodging tax collections were estimated to be 18.8% above April 2023. Year-to-date lodging tax collections are 12.7% higher through April 2024's business compared to the same three-month period in 2023.

For April 2024's hotel metrics, Grand Junction's occupancy was 69.3%, ADR was \$111.72, and RevPAR was \$77.45. For April 2024, Grand Junction's occupancy was 13.8% above Colorado's occupancy when including ski towns, 8.8% above Colorado's occupancy when excluding ski towns, and 6.3% above U.S. occupancy. For April 2024 YTD, Grand Junction's occupancy was

55.9%, ADR was \$94.31, and RevPAR was \$52.75. For April 2024 YTD, Grand Junction's occupancy was 3.0% below Colorado's YTD occupancy when including ski towns, 3.7% below Colorado's YTD occupancy when excluding ski towns, and 6.6% below the U.S. occupancy.

Grand Junction's April 2024 YTD ADR has increased by 5.4% year-over-year. This growth outpaces Colorado's YTD ADR, including ski towns (4.7%), excluding ski towns (0.6%), and the U.S. YTD ADR (2.2%). Elizabeth commended Grand Junction's hoteliers for yielding rates appropriately to overcome a softening in occupancy nationwide.

Other updates included:

- Elizabeth gave an update on the Grand Junction Regional Airport and Grand Junction Air Service Alliance. She discussed the history of Avelo Airlines' operations in Grand Junction, which began in April 2021 and ended in August 2021. Additionally, she explained how Visit Grand Junction continues to support direct flight cities (and others) through destination marketing strategies, including the new Breeze Airline flights to Santa Ana and San Francisco.
- Elizabeth shared an overview of a meeting with Chandler Smith, the new Executive Director of the Outdoor Recreation Coalition.
- Elizabeth shared an overview of a recent meeting with the CMU Marketing Department.

Due to the limited time remaining in the meeting, other updates on community meetings and events Elizabeth attended, as well as public relations mentions, will be shared at the July 9, 2024, meeting.

Joe Burtard thanked Visit Grand Junction for event marketing assistance for the Colorado Stampede and confirmed the first-year event was a great success. The rodeo is planned to be a yearly event.

There being no further business, Pat Nichols-Perrin motioned to adjourn; Theresa Horvat seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.