

VISIT GRAND JUNCTION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

May 14, 2019

Holiday Inn and Suites – Grand Junction Airport  
2751 Crossroads Blvd.  
Grand Junction, CO

**Presiding:** Britt Mathwich

**Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present:** Paul Petersen, Julie Shafer, Zeb Miracle, Ken Mabery, Josh Niernberg, Kevin Reimer, Mikhail Blosser

**Board Members Absent:** Tammy Anderson

**Staff Present:** Elizabeth Fogarty, Kim Machado

**Guest Presenters:** Jamie Hamilton and Jen Taylor

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 pm.

Minutes from the March 12, 2019 meeting: Ken Mabery motioned to approve the minutes as written; Julie Shafer seconded. Motion passed.

**Junior College World Series (JUCO) Update**

Jamie Hamilton, JUCO Tournament Chairman, provided an update on the activities scheduled for the 2019 JUCO World Series. The keynote speaker for this year's banquet is Tom Brunansky, a former outfielder and current hitting coach for the Minnesota Twins. Jamie also shared how the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) leadership team is identifying new methods and strategies for improving JUCO. He thanked the board and staff for their continued support.

**Riverfront at Dos Rios Development Project**

Jen Taylor, realtor and developer of the Riverfront at Dos Rios project, presented a conceptual design for part of the redevelopment of the Dos Rios area, in partnership with the City of Grand Junction and other agencies. The mixed-use project includes a three-phase, 5-acre campus on the Colorado River that consists of an indoor/outdoor cantina, 18 surf-shack solar casita rentals, 40 vehicle campsites, 28 tent campsites, a bathhouse laundry workspace hub, a community shade structure, and food trucks. The outdoor recreation area will include a beach area along with trails. The cantina is scheduled to open in 2020 while the campsites are expected to open in 2022. The casitas will open in phases from 2023 – 2025.

**Travel and Tourism Group**

Elizabeth Fogarty distributed a list of questions to assist with the discussion regarding the possible establishment of a Travel and Tourism group, as shared at the previous month's board retreat. She stated that the current city leadership understands the importance of tourism and continues to support Visit GJ's efforts and strategies as a destination marketing organization (DMO), not only from the past year but moving forward. One of those strategies is enhancing and growing relationships with all area stakeholders in the hospitality industry. For example, the annual events meeting is scheduled for May 16, where event managers can share their event with hospitality providers in attendance. Other meetings will be scheduled, such as monthly "travel & tourism coffees and webinars, and an industry meeting that will bring all area hospitality providers together, such as restaurants, wineries, hotels, and attractions. These

meetings will provide a forum for connecting and sharing ideas to improve and increase tourism in the area. Elizabeth asked why a travel and tourism group is needed since Visit GJ is accomplishing the same strategies as would a travel and tourism group. She suggested that maybe we wait one year to assess if VGJ is meeting the needs of gathering and networking and then reassess at that time.

Josh Niernberg expressed that not all hospitality businesses, such as a tasting room in Palisade, would be represented if they are not contributing to the funding of Visit GJ. Elizabeth replied that positive discussions with town leaders from both Palisade and Fruita regarding support toward Visit GJ's marketing efforts have taken place and there seems to be interest, although it will take time. Paul Petersen commented that Visit GJ is already bringing everyone together and the new data-related marketing strategies will support a more inclusive representation. Josh mentioned that there is no need to establish a travel and tourism group if Visit GJ can represent all industries in the area. Councilmember Norris agreed and added that although much has been accomplished in the past year at Visit GJ, more time is needed to grow the relationships among hospitality providers. All board members agreed that a travel and tourism group is not needed.

### **Director Update**

Elizabeth distributed to the board members a copy of a memo sent to the Mayor and City Council highlighting Visit Grand Junction's accomplishments and the major initiatives being implemented. Positive feedback was received from the Councilmembers.

The new Official Grand Junction Visitor Guide was distributed to the board. Elizabeth highlighted the new aspects of the redesigned guide, which includes featuring local products and businesses, quotes and photos from residents, and inspirational stories about the area, including Fruita and Palisade. The guide will be mailed to area households and businesses to renew interest and excitement in where we live and to encourage people to be brand ambassadors of the area.

Elizabeth mentioned that she received a request from the Colorado Tourism Office to speak at a conference in Troy, OH, regarding regional branding and how communities can work together through partnerships. The city of Troy is similar to Grand Junction in that it also has an extensive riverfront trail. One of the key takeaways that Elizabeth gained by attending that conference was that Troy and their neighboring destinations doubled down on outdoor recreation, assuming it would make an impact in the area.

Elizabeth announced that Shana Martin started her position as the new Business Development and Group Sales Specialist for Visit GJ on April 29. Previously, Shana was the Director of Sales at the DoubleTree Hotel.

### **Other Business**

Britt asked if there are plans to meet with the Mesa County Commissioners. Elizabeth replied that she and City Manager, Greg Caton, have discussed that and plan to set up an individual meeting soon.

There being no further business, Ken Mabery motioned to adjourn the meeting; Julie Shafer seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 pm.