

Visit Grand Junction  
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting  
July 20, 2020

The meeting was held virtually

**Presiding:** Paul Petersen

**Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present:** Julie Shafer, Joe Burtard, Ken Mabery, Tammy Anderson,  
Zeb Miracle, Josh Niernberg, Mikhail Blosser, Kelsey Coleman

**Grand Junction City Councilmembers Present:** Councilmember Phillip Pe'a

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

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 pm.

Minutes from the June 9, 2020 meeting: Julie Shafer motioned to approve the minutes as written; Ken Mabery seconded. Motion passed.

### **Advisory Board Member Comments and Updates**

Board members provided updates about their business, staffing, and COVID19-related topics.

### **Travel & Tourism Industry Forecast and Traveler Sentiment**

Kimberly Vince-Cruz, Vice President from Destination Analysts, shared the latest coronavirus traveler sentiment data and analysis through July 12. The data comes from a weekly tracking survey of a representative sample of American travelers in each of four U.S. regions and is designed to generate insights into when tourism businesses can expect demand to return and from whom.

### **Visit Grand Junction Updates**

Elizabeth provided updates on the following items:

- From the 4.25% **lodging tax collections** that Visit Grand Junction receives, May 2020's business was down 69.0%. Total collections received year-to-date through May's business decreased by 45.5% compared to the same time period last year. When considering the 6% lodging tax collections, May's business saw a decline of 69.0% over the same month last year. Year-to-date collections for the total 6% lodging tax through May's business has decreased 45.5% compared to the same time period last year. Fruita is down 47.0%, and Palisade is down 25.6% YTD through May. The 3.25% Grand Junction city sales tax collections through May's business has decreased 8.3%, which brings the total year-to-date collections down 9.7%.
- **Grand Junction's lodging data** was shared. Occupancy for May 2020's business was 37.4%, the average daily rate was \$66.84, and revenue per available room was \$24.97. When compared to April 2020, May's occupancy increased by 60.1%, the average daily rate increased 11.2%, and revenue per available room was up 78.0% over April 2020.  
Grand Junction's occupancy for June 2020's business was 52.2%, the average daily rate was \$74.37, and revenue per available room was \$38.85. When compared to May 2020, June's occupancy increased 39.8%, the average daily rate increased 11.3%, and revenue per available room increased 55.6%

- **U.S. occupancy** for June 2020 was 42.2%, the average daily rate was \$92.15, and revenue per available room was \$38.88. While Grand Junction outperformed the U.S. in occupancy for June, the lower average daily rate of \$74.37 compared to \$92.15 for the U.S. demonstrates the opportunity for Grand Junction hotels to apply effective revenue management strategies.
- Additional **industry data** was shared from Tourism Economics and U.S. Travel.
- The **branding** process remains on schedule. Elizabeth reviewed the Place DNA 1.0 and 2.0 projects. A joint meeting with City Council and the Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board will be scheduled, and Destination Think will present the findings from both branding projects.
- Visit GJ has partnered with the **Colorado Tourism Office** on a co-op through MMGY and includes an eNewsletter, digital ads, and social media.  
Elizabeth has been asked to sit on the CTO Marketing Committee for another year.  
Elizabeth attended a Bicycle Tourism CRAFT Workshop for the Southwest Mountains & Mesas Region to discuss cycle tourism opportunities.
- The **Visitor Center** remains closed, and a reopening date has not been determined yet. The staff continues to assess the safety of guests and the ambassadors and the perception of residents in welcoming visitors back into the community. The staff has been assisting guests as they stop by and call. Staff also continues to keep in touch with the volunteer ambassadors.
- Staff attended **Destination International's Annual Convention** on July 14 and 15. Sessions include the future of travel and tourism, responsible tourism marketing and recovery strategies, the latest technology and data trends, and advocacy and community engagement. Staff will present their insights at the August 11 board meeting.
- **Visit GJ staff toured the Hotel Maverick** in June. Staff then toured the Colorado Mesa University campus. Elizabeth thanked Tammy for arranging for the tour and hosting the Visit GJ team.
- Visit GJ continues to provide **support and training** for area stakeholders. Google My Business training was arranged with the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) and Miles Partnership. The classes assist local businesses with their Google business listings to gain online exposure and improve the conversion of digital audiences into new customers. In partnership with the CTO, a receptive international tour operator webinar was held to assist Grand Junction hotels who rely on international business.
- The U.S. Travel Association chose three DMO representatives, including Elizabeth Fogarty, with Visit Grand Junction, for a call with **Senator Cory Gardner** to discuss several industry issues and needs for the tourism industry. It was significant for Grand Junction to be recognized and included in these critical industry conversations.
- Visit Grand Junction continues to interact with the **media** regularly. Recently KKCO interviewed Elizabeth for a noon spot on alternative activities in the community due to event cancelations. Elizabeth was also interviewed for a short article in the Daily Sentinel. She will also be doing a podcast with the Christi Reece Group around changes in the marketing industry and how a DMO manages through a pandemic. Also, the Visit GJ team continues to send three eNewsletters each month.
- **Staff updates** were shared.
- The 2020 **Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference** will be held virtually this year on Thursday, September 17. Once again, the board will be invited and will be notified once registration is open.
- Visit GJ launched an **Independence Day video** featuring the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Independence Monument Climb.
- Organic (unpaid/non-promoted) sessions on the **VisitGrandJunction.com website** have increased 60% above the historical average since January 2020. This was mainly due to Visit GJ's "Roam from Home" campaign that was launched during the pandemic to inspire travel while consumers were quarantined. This trend demonstrates a strong intent to travel to Grand Junction.

Elizabeth asked the board members what agenda topics they would like to be considered for future meetings. Paul mentioned that he is looking forward to the outcome of the branding project. Some of the members were complimentary of the work and efforts of the Visit GJ team during the pandemic. No other board members suggested additional topics.

There being no further business, Josh Niernberg motioned to adjourn, Julie Shafer seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.