

Visit Grand Junction
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting
March 9, 2021, 3 pm – 5 pm

The meeting was held virtually.

Presiding: Joe Burtard

Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present: Paul Petersen, Julie Shafer, Ken Mabery, Kelsey Coleman, Paula Skrzypczak, Angel Bautista

Visit Grand Junction Board Members Absent: Tammy Anderson, Josh Niernberg

City Councilmembers Present: Councilmember Phillip Pe'a

City of Grand Junction Staff Present: Elizabeth Fogarty, Director. Kim Machado, Administrative Specialist

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 pm.

Minutes from the February 9, 2020 meeting: Paul Petersen motioned to approve the minutes as written; Angel Bautista seconded. Motion passed.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Elizabeth Fogarty provided an update on lodging tax collections. From the 4.25% lodging tax collections that Visit Grand Junction receives, January 2021's business was down 20.6% compared to January 2020. When considering the 6% lodging tax collections, January 2021's business was also down 20.6% over January 2020. Grand Junction's hotel occupancy for January was 4.1% higher than December 2020's occupancy.

Other updates Fogarty shared include:

- Elizabeth attended the Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) Board Meeting, where Governor Polis was a guest. The Governor shared encouraging news about tourism bouncing back this summer and fall. Fogarty also shared recent data that included hospitality job losses due to the pandemic, travel spending by state, COVID recovery status by Colorado county, safety and wildfire risk perceptions by state, and the CTO's winter strategy.
- Elizabeth was a featured panelist on an international travel and tourism industry webinar hosted by Destination Analysts and Miles Partnership, highlighting best practices for Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) websites and visitor guides during the pandemic. Elizabeth presented at Club 20's Virtual Winter Policy meeting for the Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee and also presented Visit Grand Junction updates for Coldwell Banker Distinctive Properties.
- According to a recent survey, most of Visit GJ's volunteers plan to resume volunteering when the Visitor Center reopens.
- Fogarty shared positive news relating to Visit GJ's digital marketing efforts: The net growth rate for Visit Grand Junction's Facebook page has been pacing higher than Breckenridge's Facebook page for the last six months. Visit Grand Junction's Stakeholder eNews open rate is higher than the industry average for the last six months. Website sessions on VisitGrandJunction.com during 2020 were up 20.4 percent over 2019. Mobile devices continue to be the most commonly used to access Visit GJ's website over the last six months.
- Colorado National Monument visits increased 9.72 percent in 2020 over 2019, while many parks managed by the National Park Service experienced a reduction in visitation in 2020, due to the pandemic.
- Visit Grand Junction will be scheduling and hosting an Event Task Force Meeting later in March 2021.

Board Business

Grand Valley Grapes and Grains Adventures requested a letter of support from Visit Grand Junction as required for their Colorado Public Utilities Commission transportation permit application. Elizabeth drafted the letter of support with the

assistance and approval of the City Attorney. Paul Petersen mentioned that he fully supports the letter. There were no objections to the letter.

The following motion was presented by Paul Petersen and seconded by Angel Bautista: "I approve sending the letter of support to the Colorado Public Utilities Commission as written." Motion approved unanimously.

Community Updates and Q&A – Horizon Drive District

Vara Kusal, Executive Director of the Horizon Drive District, provided updates on projects including the Maroon bike route completion, parklets, a bike repair station, and bike racks, the new Subway complex, a new deli in the former Coloramo Credit Union space, the Clarion Inn remodel, and art on Horizon.

Community Updates and Q&A – Dos Rios and El Jet Cantina + Sky Outpost

Jen Taylor, developer of the Riverfront at Dos Rios and owner of El Jet Cantina + Sky Outpost, shared the master plan and conceptual design for the El Jet Cantina + Sky Outpost, along with recent project updates. Construction is expected to take place in June 2021. The City of Grand Junction is contributing \$1 million to xeriscape the area. The mixed-use project area is located by the Colorado River and includes an indoor/outdoor cantina, center fountain, palapa, yurts, vehicle, and tent campsites, seventy-one short-term casita rentals, a bathhouse and laundry workspace hub (outpost), and community shade structures. The outdoor recreation area will include a beach area along with trails. The project is expected to be completed in April 2022.

Other Comments

Angel Bautista mentioned that the community will have an opportunity to provide comments regarding the search for Colorado Mesa University's new president at a meeting scheduled on March 16 at 5:30 pm. More information on the presidential search can be found at <https://www.coloradomesa.edu/presidential-search/>.

There being no further business, Julie Shafer motioned to adjourn, Ken Mabery seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 4:54 pm.