

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

The meeting was held virtually

Presiding: Tammy Anderson

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

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; Ken Mabery seconded. Motion passed.

Community Updates and Q&A – Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce

Diane Schwenke, President and CEO of the Grand Junction Area Chamber of Commerce, reviewed the Chamber's programs and activities during 2020, which included assistance to businesses during the pandemic through webinars, grants, resource guides, CMU masks, and the 5-Star Program in partnership with the Mesa County Public Health Department. Diane also shared the Chamber's plans for 2021. It includes ongoing business advocacy, workforce development programs, and webinars on various subjects.

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, December 2020's business was down 20.5% compared to December 2019. Total collections received for 2020's business decreased by 34.4% compared 2019. When considering the 6% lodging tax collections, December's business was down 20.4% over December 2019. Total collections received in 2020 for the total 6% lodging tax decreased 34.4% compared 2019. For the entire year of 2020, Grand Junction's occupancy outpaced the U.S. by 11.6%. Visit GJ's Roam from Home marketing campaign during quarantine, followed by retargeting ads during appropriate times, helped drive responsible visitation during 2020. Grand Junction's average daily rate for 2020 was \$76.42, and RevPAR was \$37.55, a 26 percent decrease and 17.4 percent decrease below the U.S. average, respectively.

Other updates Fogarty shared include:

- Visit GJ will release several research studies in 2021. These include an Economic Impact, Tourism Promotion Funding Scenarios, Cost-Benefit Analysis, and quality of Life Impact studies by Tourism Economics. Also commissioned is a Visitor Profile study by Longwoods International, a DMO Website Importance study by Destination Analysts, and a Visitor Guide Readership and Conversion study also by Destination Analysts and DMA West Association.
- Several events have been planned for 2021, including Country Jam, Western Slope Triple Play golf tournament. Also, many concerts will be held at the Avalon and the Las Colonias Amphitheater featuring Kansas, the Beach Boys, Marshall Tucker Band, Boz Scaggs, Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, and the Dead South.
- Destination Think presented the destination branding presentation at the February 1 Grand Junction City Council workshop. The Council shared positive comments about the "Where Life Leads" destination brand and was supportive of the fact that the community's voice and input is represented in Grand Junction's brand. Destination Think also presented to the department directors on February 3, and the directors' feedback was also favorable.

Elizabeth recapped details from the last three years of board retreats, which also included the board's preference to have shorter retreats in the future and have the destination branding results be the strategy going forward. At each monthly board of directors meeting, information, data, and strategic direction is shared. She inquired of the board members whether or not they prefer to have a retreat in 2021. Tammy commented that the past branding presentation by DT served the purpose of a retreat and favors waiting until later in the year when the board can meet in person to see if it's necessary to schedule a retreat. Ken Mabery and Paul Petersen agreed.

As a follow-up to board members' questions from a previous meeting, Elizabeth shared data on the impact of the Hotel Maverick's sixty additional rooms on Grand Junction's occupancy in 2020, which was determined to be less than 2 percent influence, based on the analysis. This reinforced that the 38 Grand Junction hotels and 3,225 rooms as a whole represents the occupancy and lodging tax, not any one property. She also shared the breakdown between fly market and drive market visitors for the last twenty-four months.

There being no further business, Ken Mabery motioned to adjourn, Paul Petersen seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 4:44 pm.