

Visit Grand Junction
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting
May 9, 2023, 3 pm – 5 pm

The meeting was held at Hotel Maverick, 840 Kennedy Ave., Grand Junction, CO

Presiding: Kelsey Coleman, Chair

Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present: Paul Petersen, Joe Burtard, Paula Skrzypczak, Tammy Anderson, Elizabeth Fortushniak, Pat Nichols-Perrin, Mikhail Blosser, Tammy Anderson

Absent: None

Grand Junction City Council Member Present: Mayor Anna Stout

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

Guests: Jamie Hamilton, Tournament Director, JUCO – Junior College World Series; Former Grand Junction City Councilmember, Phillip Pe’a

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m. by Board Chair Kelsey Coleman.

Minutes from April 11, 2023, meeting: Joe Burtard motioned to approve the minutes as written; Brenda Greene seconded. Motion passed.

Community Updates and Q&A

Jamie Hamilton, Tournament Chairman of the Junior College World Series (JUCO), provided an update on the 2023 Alpine Bank JUCO World Series tournament, which is May 27 through June 2, 2023. The tournament games will be streamed, and the championship game will be broadcast nationally on ESPN2 or ESPN+. Tournament ticket sales are trending positive. The annual JUCO Banquet is Friday, May 26, 2023, and will feature Jerry Schemmel, the radio voice of the Colorado Rockies, as the speaker. Other JUCO-related events include the Challenger Baseball game and MLB Play Ball Youth Clinic for local youth.

Jamie thanked Mayor Stout, the Visit GJ board, and staff for their continued support of JUCO and mentioned that JUCO could not be successful without the support of hospitality businesses and the leadership of the City of Grand Junction and Visit GJ. Elizabeth Fogarty thanked Jamie for sharing the updates with the Visit GJ Board and his continued leadership with JUCO.

Visit GJ Director, Elizabeth Fogarty, thanked former councilmember Phil Pe’a for his time and support as the council liaison to the Visit GJ Advisory Board. He was presented with appreciation cards from the board and staff. Elizabeth welcomed Mayor Anna Stout as the new council liaison to the Visit GJ Advisory Board. Cupcakes were served. The board members introduced themselves and shared their backgrounds and why they enjoy serving on the Visit GJ Advisory Board.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Elizabeth Fogarty provided an update on lodging tax collections. From the 4.25% lodging tax collections that Visit GJ received (short-term rental lodging tax revenue is collected quarterly), January 2023’s business was a factor of 7.0% higher compared to January 2022, and February 2023’s business was a factor of 12.0% higher compared to February 2022. Lodging tax collection information for March 2023’s business was unavailable by the time of this meeting. Of the Grand Junction lodging properties that reported their metrics to STR, LLC., occupancy for March 2023 was 62.9%, ADR was \$88.42, and RevPAR was \$55.65. A comparison of Grand Junction’s March 2023 and year-to-date metrics to Colorado and the U.S. was also shared.

Other updates include:

- Community Meetings and Events that Elizabeth attended recently include the Colorado Tourism Office Leave No Trace meeting; BeaconFest to support Volunteer of the Year Candidate Joy Bush, who has been a long-time volunteer at the Grand Junction Visitor Center; The Art Center of Western Colorado board meeting; Grand Junction Economic Partnership’s Western Colorado Economic Summit; new City Council members swear-in ceremony, and the City Council Workshop announcing new community board liaison assignments.
- Colorado Tourism Office (CTO) programs and partnerships that Visit GJ is involved with were shared. These include a seat on the CTO’s Marketing Committee, Elizabeth Fogarty as Tourism Industry Association of Colorado Board Chair,

attendance at CTO Board meetings virtually, international familiarization tours, RFP committees, Coloardo.com Brand Channel, Mountains & Mesas Regional Partnerships, marketing co-ops, subsidizing 15% in advertising costs for Mesa County tourism businesses in the Official Colorado State Vacation Guide, and public relations partnerships.

- Visit GJ has joined twelve other DMOs in the Western U.S. in participating in a DMO Website User & Conversion Study conducted by Destination Analysts on behalf of the DMA West (Destination Marketing Associations of the West) Education & Research Foundation. The year-long research, covering data collected during the 2023 calendar year, will uncover demographic and psychographic profiles of users who access a destination's website. The study will report on the return on investment (ROI) the website brings to the community. An interim comprehensive report of findings and initial ROI estimates will be available in the third quarter of 2023. The complete analysis, including how Visit GJ's website performs against other participating DMO websites, will be released in the second quarter of 2024. Visit GJ participated in a similar study with Destination Analysts and DMA West in 2020.
- Media coverage of Grand Junction in 2023 so far includes Grand Junction featured on The Weather Channel ("Passport to Winter" series) and Fox 31 Denver (Winter Wellness Adventures for the New Year Right In Our Own Backyard"); print and online articles in The Business Times ("Coming Attraction: Marketing Draws Attention, and Visitors, to Grand Junction" and "With Great Marketing Comes Great Management"), Wine Enthusiast ("Rivers Have Sustained Vineyards for Centuries, Now It's Time to Return the Favor"), Outdoors Wire, a new site from USA Today and picked up by Newsbreak ("23 of the Best Places to See Cherry Blossom Trees Bloom in the US"), The Denver Post ("Family-Friendly Colorado Getaways Where You Can Unplug and Relax" and Miss Hiking During Mud Season? These Colorado Desert Destinations are Perfect for Spring"), Wherever Family ("How to Have the Ultimate Summer Adventure in Grand Junction, Colorado"), Prime Women ("Top 12 Yoga Retreats for Mature Women"), Men's Journal ("Adventure Cycling: 7 Wild New Mountain Bike Trails and Destinations"), iHeart Radio ("Colorado City Named Among Best Desert Towns in the U.S.") syndicated from a Travel + Leisure piece, TripAdvisor ("Where to Ditch the Crowds for a Peaceful Memorial Day Weekend" and "The Best Places to Spend Long, Lazy Summer Weekends), and 5280 Magazine ("12 Fun Things To Do in the Mountains in May").
- Consumer data from Visit GJ's live market research panel platform was shared. When asked how they would describe their perception of Grand Junction, the majority of the respondents indicated that Grand Junction is a safe and growing community, as well as a progressive and innovative city on the move. The survey also asked consumers to describe the physical attributes of Grand Junction, and the majority responded that Grand Junction is a beautiful and clean city that is easy to navigate.

Mayor Anna Stout shared a City Council update.

There being no further business, Joe Burtard motioned to adjourn; Paul Petersen seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:04 p.m.