

Visit Grand Junction
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting
June 13, 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, Pat Nichols-Perrin, Mikhail Blosser, Tammy Anderson

Absent: Elizabeth Fortushniak

Grand Junction City Council Member Present: Mayor Anna Stout

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

Guests: Matthew Janson, Chair, Grand Junction Commission on Arts and Culture

The meeting was called to order at 3:01 p.m. by Board Chair Kelsey Coleman.

Minutes from May 9, 2023, meeting: Pat Nichols-Perrin motioned to approve the minutes as written; Paula Skrzypczak seconded. Motion passed.

Community Updates and Q&A

Matthew Janson, Chair of the Grand Junction Commission on Arts and Culture (GJCAC), provided an update on the Commission's programs, activities, and initiatives, which included art grants, support outreach, public art exhibits, cultural endeavors, and an economic impact study on the arts and culture in Grand Junction. Public art exhibits are displayed at various City of Grand Junction buildings, including City Hall, the Grand Junction Convention Center, and the Avalon Theatre. Councilmember Scott Beilfuss is the new City Council liaison to the GJCAC.

Elizabeth Fogarty thanked Matthew for the update and for the partnership with Visit Grand Junction. She shared information and examples relating to Visit GJ's support of arts and culture in the community and how art is a significant pillar in the overall brand strategy. She further explained how the efforts of the GJCAC are complemented within the Grand Junction destination brand as demonstrated in Visit GJ's marketing and social channels, public relations, community event partnerships, art exhibits, art tours for the Visitor Center volunteer ambassadors, and Visit GJ's new gamification app that will include an art walk. Visit GJ's support of arts and culture also includes Elizabeth's involvement as a board member of The Art Center of Western Colorado.

Elizabeth offered to share Visit GJ's support for arts and culture with the current GJCAC and discuss further collaboration on messaging that is important to them. She also shared the Grand Junction Event Partnership program that Visit GJ manages and encouraged Matthew to consider it for art events in the community. She encouraged Matthew to reach out if there is anything Visit GJ can assist with.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Elizabeth Fogarty provided an update on lodging tax collections. During the June 13, 2023, board meeting, it was reported that from the 4.25% lodging tax collections that Visit GJ receives, January 2023's business was 7.0% above January 2022, and February 2023's business was 12.3% above February 2022. After Visit GJ calculated and included lodging tax collections from short-term rentals for the first quarter, the adjusted percentage for January 2023's business is 7.3% above January 2022. The adjusted percentage for February 2023's business is 11.6% above compared to February 2022's business.

From the 4.25% lodging tax collections that Visit GJ received, March 2023's business was a factor of 4.3% above March 2022's business. This percentage includes lodging tax collections from short-term rentals for the first quarter. A preliminary estimate of the 4.25% lodging tax collections that Visit GJ received for April 2023's business compared to April 2022 was shared. Further confirmation will be related during the July 11, 2023, meeting.

Of the Grand Junction lodging properties that reported their metrics to STR, LLC., occupancy for April 2023 was 69.4%, ADR was \$100.45, and RevPAR was \$69.74. A comparison of Grand Junction's April 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 a City Council Workshop; Get to Know Your City community event; The Art Center of Western Colorado board meeting; the Colorado Tourism Office Marketing Committee meeting, City ADA Compliance Plan meeting, New City Councilmember orientation; State of the Valley; Visit GJ presentation to City Communications staff; Visit GJ presentation to morning Rotary; Grand Junction Regional Air Service Alliance; dinner with journalist, Jennifer Broome.
- Recent media coverage of Grand Junction included articles from Smithsonian Magazine ("Seven Perfect Summer Sports for Tubing in the United States"); Outside ("Outside's 2023 Travel Awards"); The Denver Post ("Put Arches, Vineyards on your Agenda" and "These Trails Have the Wow Factor"); and Spoke and Blossom ("Summer Jams: Save the Dates for These 5 Western Slope Music Festivals").
- A new video option was released on the research platform that Visit GJ uses to receive consumer information and data. Consumers were asked in a recent survey, "What was their favorite thing about Grand Junction?" and "What was something that surprised you about Grand Junction?" Respondents who had visited Grand Junction in the last three years provided their perspectives via video, which were shown to the board members. The complimentary comments from both videos included Grand Junction's natural beauty and attractions, scenery, friendly locals and staff, recreational opportunities, food, breweries, entertainment, pleasant weather, good air quality, hometown feel, beautiful downtown, and Palisade Peaches. Several respondents mentioned a desire to return to Grand Junction for another visit. In contrast, some comments provided constructive criticism, which also assist in developing strategies to improve visitor sentiment.
- Industry data relating to the impact of AI on travel planning and current online travel booking trends were shared. Elizabeth mentioned that the staff continues to separate hype from reality and focuses on what will impact the destination the most.

There being no further business, Tammy Anderson motioned to adjourn; Mikhail Blosser seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 4:41 p.m.