

Visit Grand Junction
Advisory Board of Directors Meeting
November 12, 2024, 3 pm - 5 pm

The meeting was held at Hotel Maverick, 840 Horizon Drive, Grand Junction, CO.

Presiding: Brenda Greene, Chair

Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present: Joe Burtard, Theresa Horvat, Manon Desrosiers, Elizabeth Fortushniak, Pat Nichols-Perrin

Absent: Mikhail Blosser, Julie Shafer, Tammy Anderson

City Council Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem Randall Reitz

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

Guests: Brandon Stam, Executive Director, Downtown Development Authority and Business Improvement District

The meeting was called to order at 3:04 p.m. by Board Chair Brenda Greene.

Minutes from the September 10, 2024, advisory board meeting: Pat Nichols-Perrin motioned to approve the minutes as written; Joe Burtard seconded. Motion passed.

Minutes from the October 1, 2024, advisory board meeting: Joe Burtard motioned to approve the minutes as written; Pat Nichols-Perrin seconded. Motion passed.

Community Updates and Q&A

Brandon Stam, Executive Director of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Business Improvement District (BID), provided updates on the latest Downtown development, programs, and activities. He shared renderings of The Terminal, a mixed-use project with 106 units at the former Greyhound Bus Station, featuring studio, two-, and three-bedroom apartments above art spaces, studios, and food and beverage venues. Upcoming events include Festive Fridays, Small Business Saturday, and Parade of Lights. A new interactive app has launched that allows consumers to search for Downtown activities, restaurants, and shops.

Elizabeth Fogarty thanked Brandon for the DDA and BID's partnership with Visit Grand Junction and asked if there is anything Visit GJ could improve upon or do to further the partnership. There was nothing mentioned, so she also encouraged him to reach out if there is anything Visit Grand Junction can assist with.

2024 Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference Recap and Attendee Comments

The 2024 Colorado Governor's Tourism Conference (Gov Con) was held in Mt. Crested Butte, CO, on September 26 – 29, 2024. Representing Grand Junction were sixteen attendees, consisting of four Visit GJ advisory board members, 6 community stakeholders, and 6 Visit GJ staff members. Visit Grand Junction covered the expenses related to conference registration and lodging for the sponsored attendees. Gov Con sessions included artificial intelligence, emerging marketing and data trends, sustainability, responsible destination management and stewardship, and visitor services.

The following community stakeholder attendees provided their insights, learnings, and applications from the sessions they attended: Tava Reppard, Sales and Catering Manager, Hotel Maverick; Cesar Camacho, Marketing and Member Engagement, Palisade Chamber of Commerce; and Robb Greene, Co-owner, Castle Creek Manor Bed and Breakfast. Advisory board members Pat Nichols-Perrin, Joe Burtard, and Manon Desrosiers also shared comments.

Tava, Cesar, and Robb thanked Visit Grand Junction for sponsoring their attendance at this year's conference.

Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board Business

Elizabeth provided an update on the recent interviews conducted for the four board seats set to expire on December 31, 2024. Elizabeth Fortushniak, Brenda Greene, and Pat Nichols-Perrin were reappointed to serve a second three-year term on the board. Tevfik Demirciftci was selected to serve his first three-year term, replacing Mikhail Blosser, whose term will conclude on December 31, 2024. Mikhail will serve as an alternate in case of a future vacancy.

Board Chair Brenda Greene announced that the election of board officers for 2025 will take place during the December 10, 2024, advisory board meeting. Elizabeth Fortushniak and Manon Desrosiers expressed interest in serving as Board Chair for 2025, while Pat Nichols-Perrin expressed interest in the Vice Chair position. Brenda encouraged anyone else interested in serving as an officer to let her know.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Elizabeth thanked the board members for their attendance and support during the October 1, 2024, Visit Grand Junction advisory board meeting, which included members and staff from the Grand Junction Regional Airport Authority and Grand Junction Regional Air Alliance (GJRAA) boards. She mentioned that the memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Grand Junction and the GJRAA is currently in development, aimed at establishing clearly defined roles and expectations. She also shared a draft of an addendum outlining the data items Visit Grand Junction will provide as part of the MOU. In addition, there are data requests included for consideration from the Alliance that would assist Visit GJ with their destination strategy which supports direct flights.

An advisory board member requested that monthly updates on the MOU progress be included in each Visit Grand Junction Advisory Board meeting.

Other updates include:

- Elizabeth shared an update on Grand Junction's lodging tax collections. Grand Junction's YTD September 2024 business lodging tax collections were estimated to be 2.8% above YTD September 2023.
- For September 2024's hotel metrics, Grand Junction's occupancy was 74.7%, ADR was \$132.29 (a record for the month of September), and RevPAR was \$98.83.
- Highlights of hotel metrics were shared for the months of May, June, July, and August 2024. Notable metrics included:
 - May 2024 ADR of \$134.79 was the highest ADR ever recorded for the month of May and of all time.
 - May 2024 RevPAR was \$101.06, marking the earliest month on record when RevPAR exceeded \$100.
 - May 2024 occupancy of 75.0% was 14.1% above the U.S. occupancy of 65.7%, 15.4% above Colorado, including ski towns, occupancy of 65.0%, and 8.8% above Colorado, excluding ski towns, occupancy of 68.9%.
 - June 2024 ADR of \$131.75 was the highest ADR ever recorded for the month of June.
 - July 2024 ADR of \$118.13 was the highest ADR ever recorded for the month of July.
 - August 2024 ADR of \$121.53 was the highest ADR ever recorded for the month of August.

There being no further business, Theresa Horvat motioned to adjourn; Manon Desrosiers seconded. Motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.