

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
OCTOBER 12, 2004

PRESIDING: Linda Smith, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lynne Sorlye, Jane Fine Foster, Peggy Page, Steve Meyer, Jill Eckardt, Kevin Reimer

MEMBERS ABSENT: Alan Friedman

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Irene Carlow, Barbara Bowman, Erin Chapman, Tamara Vliek, Layne Whyman, Sarah Allen, Vivian Brodine,

GUESTS: Aleta Davey, Charlie Novinskie, Linda Hill, Harold Stalf

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm.

MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 9, 2003: Jane Fine-Foster moved the minutes be approved as written, Lynne Sorlye seconded, passed unanimously.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION: Vivian Brodine introduced five volunteers who have each given 1,000 hours of service to the Visitor Center:

Barbara Markham

Bob Farrell

Billee Abell

Loretta and Bill Branton

The Chair recognized each person and thanked them for their contribution to the VCB and the community.

HOST REMARKS: Harold Stalf welcomed the Board and provided an update on Downtown activities. An extension of the TIF will be on the November 2 ballot; the issue will be discussion at the upcoming Downtown Association if anyone would like more information. If passed, the TIF will generate approximately \$12 million for spending downtown during the extension period of 2006-2011. A priority would be to direct funds to redevelopment of Colorado Avenue. The DDA would like to develop workforce housing – individuals who work downtown would be eligible under such a program.

BOARD BUSINESS: Special Events Applications for 2005 funding are due November 2. The Board will meet in workshop session to review applications and discuss funding recommendations at 1:30 Tuesday, November 9, immediately before the regular monthly meeting.

Downtown Car Show Over 261 cars registered for the event; 73 were from out of the area. Cars were lined up on Main Street from the 200 block to the 600 block and others were parked on Third Street. Main Street was crowded all day and merchants said they had more business than during previous car shows. Approximately 20 cars took a winery cruise on Friday afternoon and several car club groups went to Powderhorn/Grand Mesa on Sunday.

Colorado Mountain Winefest Ticket sales totaled 5,000 which is a decline of approximately 500 from 2003. The new venue at Riverbend Park worked out very well although the event experienced large expenditures for signage and traffic control. Area lodging properties that accept reservations reported a sold-out weekend and last-minute callers were referred to Parachute, Rifle and Glenwood Springs. The organizers' goal is to continue to improve the quality of the event, not necessarily increase out of town attendees.

Tour of the Vineyards The event drew 1,150 riders from 11 states with over 95% from outside the Grand Valley. The final report was received and VCB funds were spent appropriately.

Kokopelli Adventure Race 2004 is the final year for this event in the Grand Valley. The organizer will move the 2005 event to Frisco because of declining registrations and local permitting difficulties. The final report was received and VCB funds were spent appropriately. The Director will ask the BLM Area Manager to attend a future Board meeting to discuss land use policies.

Rim Rock Run Registrations are on track with last year's event.

Holiday Wine & Food Pairing Promotion can begin now that the dates are confirmed. RMA Tours will sell tickets and market to their database. RMA can also book rooms and transportation for this weekend event. The VCB's regional ads have begun.

Economic Impact Study Dr. Adams will present the results of her study on January 6 and 7. Thursday, January 6 will be a late afternoon presentation to Council, Board and the business/community leaders who participated in the research. This will be followed by a reception at the Visitor Center, marking the 15th anniversary of the VCB. (Print media will receive the study results Thursday for their Friday morning editions.) The VCB will host a breakfast presentation Friday, January 7 for a wider business/community audience; electronic media will be invited as well.

Expand the Tent Six properties have elected to participate in the VCB's 2004 marketing programs at a fee of 3% of gross lodging revenue: 4 B&Bs, the Inn at Wildewood at Powderhorn and Big J RV Park. The Board discussed the history and goals of this program. Steve Meyer moved that this program continue for 2005, Lynne Sorlye seconded, passed unanimously. The Director will forward the Board's recommendation to the City Manager for discussion with Council.

Election of 2005 Officers Any members interested in serving as Chair or Vice Chair for 2005 should contact the Chair. Election of officers will take place at the December meeting.

HILL & CO.: Earlier today the VCB hosted a focus group of lodging property owners/general managers. All properties listed in the Visitor Guide were invited; representatives of eight properties attended. The group met for 2 hours and discussed general business trends as well as a variety of topics that will assist the VCB in planning marketing strategies for 2006-2007. Attendees are very happy with the Visitor Guide and will put it in their guest rooms. Golf is a good draw for the Grand Valley but there is concern about increased competition from new courses in Montrose and along the I-70 corridor.

Holiday Shopping will again be promoted in both print and radio ads. Information on 3rd quarter ADR/Occupancy is coming in; Hill & Co. hopes to have the report completed for the November Board meeting.

STAFF REPORTS: Promotions The Wine Train sold out in four days. Reeder Mesa Vineyards will pour their wine at Greystone's tasting room, which will decrease travel time by 1 hour and increase the amount of time participants can spend at each winery.

Statistics/Director's Report The Director, Barb Bowman, Tamara Vlieg and Irene Carlow will attend the Governor's Conference on Tourism October 17-19 in Vail.

Lodging tax revenues are down 6% for the month, up 1% year to date. Retail sales tax/vendors fee collections are up 3% over projections, so bottom line revenue is OK. New properties in the area – La Quinta in Fruita and Holiday Inn Express in Parachute – are having an impact. Our lodging properties are reporting guests from a wider variety of states, and from a greater distance, which hoteliers attribute to the CTO's effective marketing.

Sales Barb Bowman recognized Erin Chapman for her excellent management of lodging rooms for the annual soccer tournament. Convention Servicing assisted 14 groups (1,450 attendees) during September. A total of 103 groups have been assisted YTD, which is 79% of goal. Two good leads resulted from our exhibit at the Colorado Marketplace tradeshow, sponsored by *Successful Meetings* magazine. The VCB is working with Powderhorn in an effort to develop packages; staff will attend a January 2005 travel agent show in Phoenix to develop more awareness in that market.

The Visitor Center is on winter schedule effective October 1; hours are 8:30 am – 5:00 pm Monday – Saturday, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm Sunday. New outdoor display panels have been installed; a map of lodging properties has been added to the interior displays. The number of visitors is down but people are staying in the Center longer.

OTHER BUSINESS: Charlie Novinskie reported that Walker Field enplanements are up 18% YTD. Aleta Davy reported that Fruita State Park had a very busy summer; the Park saw a marked increase in visitors from Canada this year.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.