

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
MINUTES OF THE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
DECEMBER 11, 2007

PRESIDING: Eric Feely, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Deborah Hoefler, Lynne Sorlye, Paul Petersen, Brunella Gualerzi, Bill Hill, Brian Barry, Rick Martindale

MEMBERS ABSENT: Steve Meyer

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Jennifer Grossheim-Harris, Barbara Bowman, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Nathan Knoll, Anna Maria Ray, Donna Horii, Gaylene Ore

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 p.m.

INTRODUCTION: The Chair introduced Nathan Knoll, who was appointed to the Board to complete Bill Hill's term which expires December 2008. John Williams was appointed to a 3-year term ending December 2010.

MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 13, 2007: Deb Hoefler moved the minutes be approved as written, Brian Barry seconded, passed unanimously.

HOST REMARKS: Sarah Russell welcomed the Board to the Courtyard by Marriott. Customer satisfaction surveys rank this property in the top 10% of the total 707 Courtyards; the Residence Inn is in the top 14% of the total 544. Occupancy continues to be high, with sports teams being a strong market.

BOARD ITEMS: Election of 2008 Officers Lynne Sorlye nominated Deborah Hoefler as Chair and Paul Petersen as Vice Chair, Brian Barry seconded, passed unanimously. An orientation lunch for the two new members will be scheduled in advance of the January 8 regular meeting.

Bill Hill submitted a draft plan for cultural heritage tourism promotion for the Board's consideration. Included in the proposal is an 8-month calendar of cultural events to promote during the off-season.

STAFF REPORTS: Sales Barb Bowman introduced Donna Horii, the VCB's sales representative in the Front Range market. Donna achieved more than double her goal in both sales calls and sales leads.

Donna reported that her most recent sales activity was attending the Destination Colorado Front Range trade show at Invesco Field. An estimated 300 meeting planners attended and there is a lot of interest in Grand Junction. The first Denver-area trade show of 2008 is Meetings Industry Council on March 25; there will be more competition as destinations from around the country will exhibit. Government and state associations are Grand Junction's strongest markets but drive time continues to be a big resistance point. Paul Petersen asked what the Front Range perception of Grand Junction is, e.g., are we viewed as a hick town? Donna responded there is a bit of that perception; there's no "sex appeal" like Vail or Aspen, and a lack of nightlife. Conversely, the home-town feel is a big plus to those who have been here. I-70 traffic is not a problem for weekday business travelers but weekends during ski season are terrible and summer weekend traffic is getting very busy also.

Barb Bowman reported that the direct mail campaign – a 2-minute video on a memory stick – has been very well received. Recipients are directed to the website to register for a case of wine. One respondent commented that it is the best promotional item they've ever receive.

Governor's Conference on Tourism The Director presented a letter from Richard Scharf, President and CEO of the Denver Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau, congratulating the bureau and our partners for an excellent conference. The Director commended Barb Bowman for all her efforts to make the Governor's Conference a success.

Marketing/Promotions Jennifer Grossheim-Harris distributed sample pages of the new website lodging section. The search function is improved and much more information is available to site users. The site will launch in January. Hill & Company is establishing a brand/design for the February "Arts, Hearts & Tarts" promotion; Cobb & Associates will assist with local efforts.

Director's Report The VCB is a partner in two grant applications for 2008 funding:

- With the Palisade Chamber of Commerce – applied to Department of Local Affairs for \$3,500 to produce/print orchard tour maps and brochures; the VCB has committed \$500
- With Delta, Fruita, Palisade, Cortez, Boulder and the Wine Board – applied to the CTO for \$13,500 for photography of agritourism activities

2008 Visitor Guide: Meadery of the Rockies and St. Kathryn Cellars have a potential buyer but the sale is not ready to close and the wineries have begun selling the inventory. The Director requested guidance on balancing the Visitor Guide production/printing schedule with the potential change in the two businesses. Production needs to go forward; however, we want to include existing businesses and still provide visitors with the most accurate information possible. The wineries are currently operating but their future is uncertain. In view of the December 14 deadline, the Board directed that all Visitor Guide listing information will close as of that date.

A current budget report was distributed; year-end expenditures will be slightly less than budgeted. The full city budget was presented to Council December 3 and was passed unanimously.

The 2008 budget includes \$145,000 in Special Programs for unique advertising and promotional opportunities, especially those that will target new markets such as blogs and podcasts. The

VCB has committed \$20,000 to promote American Airline flights from Dallas/Fort Worth to Grand Junction Regional Airport. The campaign could include print ads, media events, trade shows and presentations to travel agents and American Airlines reservationists. Other possible Special Programs expenditures could include a music/promotional CD branded to Colorado's Wine Country; distribution could be through car dealer partnerships and might include a certificate for a tank of gas.

OTHER BUSINESS: The Chair presented a plaque to Bill Hill and thanked him for his efforts on behalf of Grand Valley tourism and his dedication to the VCB's mission.

Deborah Hoefler presented a plaque to Eric Feely for his service as a Board member and his leadership as 2007 Chair.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm on motion of Bill Hill and second of Lynne Sorlye.