

GRAND JUNCTION VISITOR & CONVENTION BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

June 10, 2014

The Golf Club at Redlands Mesa
2325 W. Ridges Blvd.
Grand Junction, CO

PRESIDING: Per Nilsson, Chair

MEMBERS PRESENT: Billie Witham, Sharon Woelfle, Glen Gallegos, and Kate Graham

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mike Bell, Lon Carpenter, Brad Taylor, Kevin Reimer

GUESTS: Jay Moss and Vara Kusal – Horizon Drive District; Darshann Ruckman – Horizon Drive District business representative and General Manager – Clarion Inn and Econo Lodge; Jo Carole Haxel – Mesa County Fairgrounds; Mayor Pro-Tem Marty Chazin

STAFF PRESENT: Barbara Bowman, Debbie Kovalik, Mistalynn Meyeraan, Holly Prickett, Kim Machado, Erin Chapman, Kristin Lynch, and Kristin Winn

The meeting was called to order at 3:09 p.m.

Minutes from the May 13, 2014 Board Meeting: Through email communication, Mike Bell moved to approve the minutes as written, Billie Witham seconded; motion approved by a on June 16, 2014.

Board Discussion Items

Horizon Drive Corridor Improvement Update

Jay Moss presented a brief overview of the Horizon Drive District which includes 200+ businesses and employs 2,600 people. 70% of the hotels in Grand Junction are on Horizon Drive. Total estimated economic impact of the District is greater than \$300 million per year, which does not include the adjacent “bookends” – Safeway and the Grand Junction Regional Airport. 49% of the land in the District is currently undeveloped which has the potential to nearly double the annual economic impact.

Jay then provided an overview of the Corridor Improvement Plan. Estimated cost of the project is \$9 million. They have received a \$4.5 million RAMP grant from the Colorado Department of Transportation and matching funds of \$525,000 from the City of Grand Junction. Additional State and Federal grants are being researched and applied for. Jay then displayed a bi-section of what the improvement plan would look like. Improvements include additional round-a-bouts, plants and trees, art, and pedestrian walkways. The goal is to beautify the gateway into Grand Junction and encourage out-of-town visitors to stay in the area. As part of the improvements, the Grand Junction Visitor Center will have a shared entrance with Taco Bell. Visitor’s Way will still be used and RVs’ and motor coaches will be able to park there.

Construction on the corridor is slated to begin in the fall of 2015. An open house will be held on June 26, 2014 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the Clarion Inn where the public can view the project plans, give input, and discuss the future of Horizon Drive.

Mesa County Fairgrounds Master Plan

Jo Carole Haxel presented a brief history of the Mesa County Fairgrounds. Currently, the Fairgrounds host 475 – 500 events per year. Approximately 150 of those events generate hotel rooms in the Grand Valley. In 2011, major improvements to the equestrian facilities resulted in a 33% increase in equestrian bookings over 2010 and an estimated \$500,000 in economic impact to the community. Currently there are 33 straight weeks of horse shows scheduled from March through October.

The Mesa County Fairgrounds Master Plan was adopted by the Mesa County Commissioners in 2012. Construction plans for 2014 – 2015 include a new covered arena and show office, new BMX track, and a new entrance off of U.S. Highway 50. The new BMX track will be an Olympic regulation track designed to attract the most elite regional and international events available, resulting in more out of town visitors.

Special Events Committee Update

Sharon Woelfle reported that the special event committee reviewed 3 requests for funding and made the following recommendations:

- Dinosaur Days – August 23, 2014. *Amount requested: \$1,500.* Approximately 50% of attendees are expected to be from out of town. The committee recommends funding \$1,000.
- Downtown Car Show – September 27, 2014. *Amount requested: \$1,500.* This event does bring in out of town visitors. The committee recommends funding \$1,250.
- Steam Punk Convention with a Twist – September 26 – 28, 2014. *Amount requested: \$1,500.* This event was addressed at the May, 2014 board meeting but additional information was requested by the board. The event is a Victorian era meets modern/renaissance-type convention. Since it is a new event and is expected to attract out of town attendees, the committee recommends funding \$545.

The committee expects to receive one additional special event funding application for the year and that is the Rim Rock Marathon.

Glen Gallegos moved to approve the Special Event Committee's recommendations, Billie Witham seconded; motion approved.

Staff Reports

Marketing: Mistalynn Meyeraan reported that she and Kate Graham hosted a booth at the Colorado Urban Winefest in Denver and visited with several people about coming to the Colorado Mountain Winefest in September. Wineries from the Grand Valley were well represented during the event. Currently there are 111 wineries in the state and with the addition of a new winery, Red Fox Cellars, there are now 22 wineries in the Grand Valley. Other updates include:

- The GJVCB has recently hosted 10 Canadian writers, a Denver Post blogger, a Japanese film crew, a group of Germans, and 2 UK groups.
- Search Engine Marketing has switched from Pilgrim Advertising to Miles Media LLC.
- For two months now, the videos we produced through Pilgrim Advertising in the summer of 2013 are playing via TrueView video ads, a service available through Google AdWords. To date, one of the videos has over 8,000 views and another over 5,000 views.
- Miles Media has brought to our attention that there is a discrepancy in the reporting of the total number of mobile website visits from August 2013 through April 2014. Google Analytics had been

counting the number twice since we had requested separating the total number of visits between the desktop site and mobile site. We are still up in total visits over 2013. Karin Mast from Miles Media will be at the July 8th board meeting to explain further.

- For the month of May, there were 51 transactions made through our online booking engine. Per Nilsson asked if the report reflected data for the month of May only or year-to-date. He requested that the report include effective dates and year-to-date totals. Mistalynn will pass that request on to Miles Media.

Group Sales: Erin Chapman reported that group sales are 46% to goal for the year. Our Front Range Sales Representative has been making sales calls and meeting with clients. She will be attending the Colorado Society of Association Executives conference in Snowmass, CO and partner with a representative from Fort Collins to host a reception during the conference.

Convention Services: Kristin Lynch reported that several events were serviced throughout the month of May. The Special Olympics event was successful with many repeat visitors. Mistalynn mentioned that she spoke with a gentleman at the event who was so impressed on how welcomed he felt by the community that he will be writing a letter to the Mayor expressing his appreciation.

Kristin explained the purpose of the Special Event Task Force.

Visitor Services: Kristin Winn reported that the Visitor Center has been busy. The familiarization tour (FAM) for the GJVCB volunteers for the month of June will be a public lands workshop to be held on June 11th. Representatives from the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, and the Colorado Interpretive Association will be on hand to answer visitor-related questions and how to use the internet to pull up maps of the public lands.

The GJVCB has partnered with the Museum of the West on an intercept study. We have been asking visitors to complete a survey during their visit to the Visitor Center to understand the type of visitors that are coming to the area.

Darshann Ruckman shared that some of her employees attended the Tourism Open House in May and the feedback from them was very positive. They were surprised about how they were not aware of many of the attractions. She said that for next year, attendance to the open house will be mandatory for her employees and they will be paid for attending. Sharon Woelfle suggested that the hours for next year's open house be adjusted to 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. to accommodate employees who are students.

Strategic Plan – Next Steps

Barbara Bowman suggested that this topic be moved to July's meeting in order to have the majority of the board members in attendance.

Other Business

Mistalynn reported that a Statement of Qualifications/Request for Proposal for advertising, website, and public relations services for the GJVCB is now open on the Rocky Mountain Bid System website. Further information will follow including how board members will be involved in the selection process.

There being no further business, Kate Graham motioned to end the meeting; Sharon Woelfle seconded, motion passed. The meeting was adjourned at 4:53 p.m.