

MINUTES  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1992  
Two Rivers Convention Center

PRESIDING: Don Bramer

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Tom Ralser, Paul Nelson, Cindy George, Juli Cogdill, Steve Hilliard

STAFF PRESENT: Debbie Kovalik, Barbara Bowman, Judy Manning, Irene Carlow

GUESTS: Cindy Sherrill, Amy Cassidy, Ray Coca, Don Hobbs, Mike Saelens, John Moss

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Juli Cogdill moved minutes of January 14 meeting be approved, Paul Nelson seconded; passed unanimously.

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER LEASE: The 1992 lease has been signed; total annual obligation is \$1,000 - \$1,500 less than budgeted even though the cost of utilities is not included. As the Board had requested, the lease does not discuss addition of an automatic door. We will need to negotiate this item if we decide to install the door.

PARKS & RECREATION PRESENTATION: Ray Coca and Don Hobbs presented the Parks & Recreation video and master plan. The Department actively works with the VCB staff in bringing groups to Grand Junction. Currently working on bring a series of softball tournaments. Have received seven bids on state tournaments and one national qualifying tournament. Men's fast pitch tournament will also come here.

Re: Master Plan -- Grand Junction currently lacks large park areas compared with national standards. Have received requests for 12 additional tennis courts, but both staff and Council are concerned with where the courts could be built; Lincoln Park is built out. Have also received requests for additional pool, softball and baseball facilities. Grand Junction does not have a recreation center, while most cities our size have 2 - 4 such centers.

A Master Plan will give a perspective on the needs of all users, not just special interest groups. Over 300 interest groups have been identified and Parks & Recreation wants to hear from all users. Both facilities and land will be studied. The Master Plan study will include most of the area's population base (excluding Fruita and Palisade); 60% of users are county residents, not just city residents. This will be a 9 - 12 month process with various surveys and a number of public meetings. The meetings will begin

in late February. Parks & Recreation is requesting input from the VCB on what tourists want to do while they're here; need to look at trends. The study will be a justification tool (e.g., for a recreation center). Parks & Recreation will be looking at locations that will best accommodate users. This is approached as an all-encompassing study and will also look at arts and cultural side of recreation.

**BOARD RETREAT:** Don Bramer abstained from the discussion. Staff solicited cost estimates from Powderhorn, Ouray, Glenwood Springs and Battlement Mesa. Staff recommends holding the retreat at Powderhorn, which had the lowest bid; the Board concurred. The retreat will begin at Noon Friday, February 21 and will adjourn at Noon Saturday, February 22. Board members will call staff with any items to be placed on the agenda.

**OFFICE/VISITOR CENTER LOCATION PROPOSAL:** Mike Saelens presented a conceptual plan for a visitor center or combined administrative office/visitor center immediately behind the proposed Taco Bell at the southeast corner of Horizon Drive/I-70 interchange. The developer believes this location is the best property on Horizon Drive and has excellent exposure. It is the proper elevation for a visitor center because it is level with or higher than I-70 at the proposed construction site. The developer approached the VCB as a result of the RFP process last year.

The developer would build to suit, but currently envisions an estimated 1,600 sq ft, one-story building separate from and at a higher elevation than the Taco Bell. There is a total of 39,000 sq ft of land available to dedicate to the VCB and could include a picnic area. Access to the proposed building would be either from the State access road (parallel to I-70), or from main Taco Bell entrance a separate drive that would skirt the restaurant parking lot up the hill to the site. At no time would traffic have to go through the Taco Bell parking lot to reach the site. Adequate signage can be placed at both the east and west ends of the property.

The developer would benefit from having the VCB at this location, and believes the VCB would also benefit. Wants to put the property to the most efficient use. Would be willing to build to suit or sell to the City. Current plans are to begin construction on the Taco Bell May 1, 1992, to be completed in 90 days or less. The proposal goes to the Planning Department on March 3. Anticipates 700 cars per day and has provided that figure to City Planning. Knows there are concerns about traffic control, but any development along Horizon Drive will affect traffic. Paul Nelson stated that the City is already talking with the State concerning traffic signal funds. Don Bramer noted that, yes, this would benefit Moss, Inc. but the visibility afforded by this location would likely filter more traffic to other locations/businesses. Mike Saelens hopes visitors will see a reason to overnight and spend money at other businesses and restaurants.

As presented, the developer would prefer a 20 year lease; Board members asked if there would be interest in a 3 year lease. A short term lease would result in very high rent, considering a developer's return on investment on a special purpose building. Steve Hilliard asked if we might not find agreement on a lease somewhere between 3 and 20 years; 20 years is too long a commitment; would be unable to respond to tourist population shifts. Would hope that the building design could be generic enough to accommodate another tenant should the VCB relocate for any reason. John Moss pointed out there will be as much separation as possible between the two buildings: different elevations, visibility, etc. He would encourage something that speaks to the visitor; find best design for the property. What does the VCB want to look like? There are design opportunities available; Mike Saelens, the VCB and an architect could meet; cost of design will be built into lease amount. Board members noted that plans were drawn some years ago and the Director should try to locate those plans to see if there is any possibility of using them. Unattractive entryways was one of the negative aspects identified in the Denver focus groups. An attractive development at this interchange would greatly improve the entryway and help overcome that negative impression.

Timing is very important to the developer and he would like some form of decision/commitment by May 1. Needs to know if this proposal will move forward or not so appropriate planning can begin. Ideally, would like to be able to use one construction crew for the restaurant and VCB building, but not essential. Board was enthusiastic about this proposal, but a final decision of this type may be not be made by the developer's May 1 date and any recommendation by the Board must be approved by City Council.

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

We now have accumulated four years of statistics. Lodging tax receipts are up 18% over January 1991. The brochure is completed and the first quantities will be shipped within the next several days. The majority of the photos in the 1992 brochure belong to the VCB, which will save us \$800 on reproduction rights this year alone. The map in the back of the brochure will be reproduced, padded and distributed to hotels, at the Visitor Center and to groups.

Group Sales: We are getting calls from tour and travel operators planning for 1992. We are planning co-operative mailings with the Monument and will do a survey of tour operators. Sales leads are ahead of last year and we are building a database for groups. We are developing multipliers for both leisure and corporate travelers. Convention servicing policies and procedures are nearly complete and will be mailed to Board members. The Denver sales blitz is on hold because the Holiday Inn and Ramada were not able to participate at the time planned. Debbie and Barbara attended Destination Showcase, a trade show for CVB and city exhibitors; over 600 meeting planners attended the show.

Visitor Center: Visitor numbers are nearly parallel to 1991. The volunteers are getting familiar with the newly-installed cash register. The register was needed for better security and accountability, as well as to aid in collecting sales tax. In high season three volunteers will be on a shift, one dedicated to running the register.

Tashiro: Changes are being made to improve the MRS and will increase our ability to do any number of cross-correlations. Tests will be done this month, with full-scale use May through September; five properties will participate. The planned telephone survey will not be done because the necessary information is not available from the Chamber database. Their program has no sort capability for dates, cities, states, etc.; handwritten inquiry sheets were thrown away without notification to the VCB. Surveys will be postponed until September; we will use the VCB's database accumulated from May through September 1992.

The billboard on I-15 near Cedar City will be repainted once under the terms of the new contract.

**OTHER BUSINESS:** Don Bramer met with Lena Elliott and explained why her special events fund request was not approved. He pointed out inaccuracies in the Sentinel's editorial; the amount of money requested and the proposed use were misstated. Steve Hilliard reiterated his position that hotels should provide financial support to sporting events. He asked why the VCB does not welcome participants at events. The Director and Sales Manager pointed out that it is up to the organizer; staff is always available and willing, but the decision is left to the event organizer. Don Bramer noted that conventions can (and oftentimes do) receive a welcome from the Mayor, VCB, Council members, etc. The VCB provides a long list of services to groups. Staff continues to request hotels' convention calendars so we can service groups that do not contact us.

Tom Ralser moved for adjournment; Cindy George seconded. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.