

VISIT GRAND JUNCTION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
June 12, 2018

Fruita Community Center
324 N. Coulson St.
Fruita, CO

Presiding: Julie Shafer, Chair

Visit Grand Junction Board Members Present: Brad Taylor, Tammy Anderson, Susie Kiger, Elizabeth Hallgren, Josh Niernberg, Britt Mathwich, Paul Peterson

Board Members Absent: Kevin Reimer

City of Fruita Representatives and Fruita Tourism Advisory Council Board Members Present: Mayor Joel Kincaid, Mike Bennett, Oralee Witte, Sally D'Agostino, Jennifer Seal, Eric Mello, Denise Hight

Grand Junction City Council Members Present: Bennett Boeschenstein

Staff Present: Greg Caton, Elizabeth Fogarty, Kim Machado

The meeting was called to order at 3:03 p.m.

Community and Tourism Update – Fruita and Grand Junction

Fruita City Manager, Mike Bennet, provided a summary of marketing campaigns to highlight tourism in Fruita which include focusing on the expertise of locals and the many activities to do in Fruita. Mountain biking and family-friendly events also continue to be a focus for Fruita. Spring and Fall are the busiest seasons for the area. The Fruita Tourism Advisory Council (FTAC) is currently updating their website, visitor guide and social media presence. Mike also provided details about the Kokopelli 100 and 140 Mountain Bike and Ultra Marathon taking place on September 7-8 on the Kokopelli Trail from Fruita to Moab.

Grand Junction City Manager, Greg Caton, recapped the history of the recent ballot proposal to increase the lodging tax in the City of Grand Junction. The Grand Junction City Council will consider the ballot question and resolution at an upcoming meeting on July 18. He further explained how the funds will be allocated should voters pass a 3% increase in the lodging tax.

Elizabeth Fogarty presented the campaign for the upcoming Summer Outdoor Retailer Show in Denver on July 23-26. She explained the media plan along with the awareness campaign messaging designed to attract companies to the area. She will actively meet with the media before and during the show and she shared the unique, outdoor-related gifts that will be given to them to help create awareness of Fruita, Grand Junction and Palisade. The campaign tagline is "It All Comes Together Here."

Elizabeth next explained the reorganization and future of Visit Grand Junction (VGJ). She included information on the seven (7) new staff positions and how it aligns with how successful destination marketing organizations are structured, as well as destination management, education and advocacy strategies that will provide value to stakeholders and the entire community. A formal branding process will be executed, and she highlighted the crucial branding steps to the group. She also explained the importance of data and how it will be used to produce actionable insights in real time. Lastly, Elizabeth shared a 4-page article from the Denver Post that was pitched by VGJ as an example of how VGJ creates awareness of the area to prospective visitors.

Mike thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and mentioned how they look forward to future partnerships with VGJ. Julie Shafer agreed and thanked the FTAC for attending the joint meeting with the VGJ board.

Members of the FTAC and City of Fruita along with Greg Caton and Bennett Boeschenstein departed the meeting at 3:48 pm.

Visit Grand Junction Board Business/Other Topics

Members of the VGJ Board and staff reconvened at 4:11 pm to begin the regular meeting of the board.

Minutes of the May 8, 2018 meeting: Brad Taylor motioned to approve the minutes as written; Paul Petersen seconded. Minutes approved.

Comments were shared by board members who attended the lodging tax ballot breakout session at the recent 2018 Western Colorado Economic Summit. Concern was expressed about a comment made during the session that Visit Grand Junction will be providing the marketing for the Grand Junction Air Service Alliance (GJASA) and Greater Grand Junction Sports Commission (GGJSC). Josh Niernberg suggested that the ballot language include what the revenues derived from a lodging tax increase will be used for and further mentioned that a conflict of interest may be perceived if VGJ is doing the marketing for the GJASA and GGJSC. Brad Taylor expressed his concern about the VGJ board not being privy to the ballot language as other organizations have been and further stated that if the current language is contrary to the mission of the organization, it may not be supported. The board's discussion regarding this point was supportive of Brad's comments.

After a lengthy discussion, several board members agreed that a memo of understanding (MOU) should be drafted as soon as possible between VGJ, GJASA and the GGJSC to outline what is expected from each entity receiving revenues from a potential lodging tax increase. An MOU will also provide clarity as the board transitions new members in the future. Both Josh and Brad suggested that the City Attorney should review it to ensure VGJ's interests are protected. Julie mentioned that she will set up a meeting between herself, Brad and the City Manager to discuss the ballot language. Elizabeth added that she will share the board's suggestion about the MOU and along with the concerns about the ballot language with the City Manager as soon as possible.

There being no further business, Josh Niernberg motioned to adjourn the meeting; Brad Taylor seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.