

VISIT GRAND JUNCTION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
August 21, 2018

Eureka! McConnell Science Museum
1400 N. 7th St.
Grand Junction, CO

Presiding: Julie Shafer, Chair

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

Board Members Absent: None

Guests: Vara Kusal – Horizon Drive Business Improvement District

Staff Present: Elizabeth Fogarty, Kim Machado

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

Minutes from the June 12, 2018 meeting: Paul Petersen motioned to approve the minutes as written; Brad Taylor seconded. Motion approved.

Minutes from the July 17, 2018 meeting: Josh Niernberg motioned to approve the minutes as written; Tammy Anderson seconded. Motion approved.

Horizon Drive District Trail System

Vara Kusal, Executive Director of the Horizon Drive Business Improvement District, shared plans and map renderings of the proposed Horizon Drive Trail System. The trail loop will run west of Horizon Drive between the Bookcliff Country Club and existing businesses up to the DoubleTree Hotel. The loop is just under a mile and will be a great experiential amenity for guests and employees. The trail will consist of boardwalk-type material and the existing drainage infrastructure will be expanded. Feedback from businesses along the loop is positive and they are supportive of the trail. Next steps include obtaining approval from the Urban Trails Committee and then approval from City Council. Once Council approves the plan, grant applications will be completed for funding.

Vara shared information on construction of three crosswalks on Horizon Drive, which is scheduled to begin in October 2018. She also mentioned that the Horizon Drive District is working with the CMU Scholarship Program for placing art on Horizon Drive and the new trail system. Art on the utility boxes, called Electric Art, is included in the District's 2019 budget. The art will be reflective of the Grand Valley, history and agriculture.

Lodging Tax Committee Update

Julie Shafer provided a lodging tax update regarding the campaign for the lodging tax increase ballot. The Holiday Inn and Suites will host a meeting for hoteliers and other stakeholders on August 29 to discuss campaign activities such as assigning volunteers and writing letters to the Editor. Julie added that if any board member would like to assist with the letters to the Editor to please let her know. Approximately \$25,000 has been raised to date for the campaign. The goal is \$50,000 to be used for marketing. Members of the committee have met with many of the area's service clubs and the response has been positive.

Julie asked those in attendance about any feedback they have received about the potential increase to the lodging tax. Several board members expressed that the feedback is positive. Vara stated that responses from Horizon Drive businesses have mostly been positive and added that the Horizon Drive Business Improvement District Board will be voting on support of this ballot at their September meeting. Josh Niernberg expressed his concern about the talking point stating it's time Denver paid their fair share when visiting Grand Junction. He added that Grand Junction heavily relies on clientele from the Front Range and stating an aggressive tagline against a segment Visit Grand Junction (VGJ)

markets to is counterproductive and difficult to support. The Board were all in agreement with his statement. Julie mentioned that she has conveyed that concern with the committee and will share it again.

Visit Grand Junction Updates

Elizabeth Fogarty shared updates and information on the following topics:

- Reorganization – All positions have been posted and several have already closed. Elizabeth and HR are reviewing applications. The Marketing and Communications Manager position may continue to be extended and is likely to be the last position hired, as it is somewhat dependent on the talent that is available through the other position hiring. An interview for the Data Analytics and Research Analyst position is scheduled for Friday, August 24. This position is a progressive one for any destination marketing organization as it is typically a state-level position at this point in the industry.
- Summer Outdoor Retailer Show – The show was very successful. GJ's booth was located on the main floor of the show along with the major outdoor brands. The booth was represented by Elizabeth and Steve Jozefczyk from the Grand Junction Economic Partnership (GJEP). Many contacts were made, some of which provided value to VGJ directly through group leads and partnerships that benefit the community, including CMU. Elizabeth shared photos and videos of the show, GJ's booth, and the billboard video ad outside of the convention center. Staff from the Grand Junction Economic Partnership praised VGJ on the creative for the awareness campaign and the gifts for the media. Elizabeth will forward GJEP's responses along with a link to the videos to the board members.
- Event Partnership Application – Elizabeth distributed drafts of the new Event Partnership application and the agreement forms. The forms address how the event supports the brand and how attendance is being tracked. It outlines the expectations for assistance which will help VGJ determine what level of support is needed. VGJ's goal is to increase attendance at each event and help events improve over time to support the community brand. These forms, along with an explanation of the new initiatives that VGJ will use to assist events, were shared with the Special Events Task Force. They were supportive of this new approach. Elizabeth welcomed the board's input once they have had time to review the extensive event partnership program.
- Destinations International, ESTO and Booyah Conference Updates – Elizabeth recently attended these conferences and presented highlights from each of them. A common theme from all conferences is a customer first approach, treating all guests as an individual and providing them with award-winning experiences which requires knowing the customer before their arrival. Innovation, technology and data are essential to achieving this. The examples provided by Elizabeth showed how rapidly the hospitality and destination marketing industries are changing, and thus it is necessary to be very agile and incorporate leading edge technology and experienced staff to stay competitive and grow the market.

Other Business

Britt Mathwich mentioned that he facilitates a 4-hour customer service workshop called *Golden Opportunities* for hospitality businesses and brand ambassadorship. Elizabeth replied that after the rebranding process is complete, this is an important step to consider, as the community must represent the brand for the brand to be successful and thrive on behalf of the community.

There being no further business, Josh Niernberg motioned to adjourn the meeting; Kevin Reimer, seconded. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 5:05 pm.