

**Aspen Chamber Resort Association  
Marketing Advisory Committee Meeting  
Minutes  
March 4, 2008  
Aspen Square Hotel**

**Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 9:10 a.m. The meeting was chaired by Casandra Foister. In attendance: Maureen Poschman, Chris Bentley, Helen Klanderud, Eileen Tucker, Donnie Lee, Bill Tomcich, Nancy Lesley, Lisa Johnson, Joanna Eisler, Debbie Braun and Annie Watts staffed the meeting.

**Agenda item 1) Round Table Update**

Overall, winter has been strong in profitability with increase in ADR, but not as strong in terms of Occupancy. Because of the strong influence on international travel, the length of stay has been able to remain high but inventory and bookings have been way down for domestic markets with their requests for shorter stays and not enough inventories to meet those demands.

March is declining in occupancy and has been for several years. Should the MAC committee look at extending their period of marketing to include March and put together a push for lodging specials?

Shuttle services to / from the airport continues to be a problem for all lodges. For the lodges with the service in not having enough staff to accommodate all guests and for lodges w/out the service it is relying on taxi/shuttle services who are over booked. An agenda item to bring up at the Aspen Lodging Assoc ALA should be the lodges w/out a shuttle going in on a cooperative program in having one van for multiple properties.

**Agenda item 2) Marketing/Special Events Tax and Long Term Impact Study**

This year ACRA DM is charged with doing their biannual summer research program in profiling the Aspen summer guest. In addition to profiling the summer guest, ACRA sees an opportunity to have RRC Assoc. perform a long term impact study on the effect of the new bed base of Snowmass coming online in the next few years, and have staff resources look into other destination marketing organizations tax structure and funding for their destination. With that data, review to see if it would be appropriate for an outside committee to rally the community/city council to increase the marketing funds.

Idea would be to increase the DM fund to 1% from the .5% , and have ACRA use those funds to support new signature events or groups that bring business to Aspen in need periods or to have those extra funds increase advertising/marketing efforts on a domestic and international level.

City Council has formed a budget task committee to be an advisor to how the city spends funds. It is important for ACRA to look into that committee and be aware of their guidelines.

Motion: Can we use staff and financial resources to look at a long term impact study of new Snowmass properties coming online and compare other DMO's budgets?

Motion seconded and approved.

**Agenda item 3) Special Events**

- See Marketing/Special Events Tax
- Lodging. When a new special event or media event comes to town, we need to get more support from Lodging community in providing special media rates. Another agenda item to put on ALA docket is to educate both lodges about importance of media coming to town, and for lodges to educate us on how to balance which lodges we use and when.

**Agenda item 4) Air Service Update**

Bill Tomcich: Cancelled flights into Aspen this year has surpassed last year's level, although with the new customer service initiatives and alternate plans have made the guests inconveniences much more tolerable than last year. On the good news: Delta started their non-stop flight to Atlanta two Saturdays ago and all flights have been booked. The plane has not had to stop for re-fueling nor have they had to deny boarding to any passengers. If this positive response to ATL keeps up, would not be surprised if they switch up their flight plans to include one daily non-stop to ATL and decrease one flight the SLC. Frontier Airlines recently announced their plans to fly into Aspen Pitkin starting Apr. 26<sup>th</sup> with 3 daily flights and increasing to 5 daily flights starting May 15<sup>th</sup>. Aspen/Snowmass community is offering

Frontier Airlines marketing partnership funds of 100k. A task force will be put together to look into how to spend those funds and what promotions we can put together.

#### **Agenda item 5) Research Program**

The biannual summer research will begin this spring with RRC Associates. We look to the lodges for help getting guests to fill out forms and such. Hopefully we will be up and running with a new website by early summer, which will allow for online responses.

#### **Agenda item 6) PR Update**

Maureen Poschman: Kudos to Lisa Johnson for all her hard work in getting NBC's Peter Alexander to Aspen and having coverage on Nightly News and the Today show. Rob Marciano, CNN Weather Anchor is going to be out here all this week, and Lisa has appointments with CBS' Early Show next week when in NY. Lisa will be in NY all next week taking appointments with Sheri Heedum, PR for Food & Wine, in hopes to pick up some of the morning programs for this year's Food & Wine.

Travel writer for Travel+Leisure is in town this week writing a story about Aspen for next winter.

Colorado Tourism Office is hosting "Let's talk the many seasons of Colorado" event in New York Apr. 12<sup>th</sup>. We are going to host a precursor lunch for 70 media on Friday, Apr. 11<sup>th</sup> featuring local Chef from Social and Elevation.

Media Kit 2008 is online. PR team also emailed directly to 500 journalists, and printed 100 copies. This year's media kit is all new copy and very strong.

Outside Magazine is looking at hosting a weekend event in end of May/early June or this fall highlighting local expedition guides and training classes for kayaking, paragliding and other backcountry activities. Possible cross-over with Frontier Airlines marketing/promotions.

#### **Agenda item 7) Aspen Groups Overview**

Welcome to Joanna Eisler! Joanna is about a month into the position and busy getting out on the road meeting with various planners and meeting organizations. She recently returned from Denver to meet with Destination Colorado and MPI and then headed to Atlanta for a Destination Colorado tradeshow and a social meeting with the Georgia MPI chapter.

Recently appointed to the finance committee of MPI and will be looking for donations for a golf tournament in Vail on June 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Meeting adjourned: 11:05 a.m.**