

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
February 24, 2015  
The Aspen Square Hotel**

**Call to order:** Donnie Lee called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.

**Attendance:** Present: Rose Abello, Charlie Bantis, Dan Bonk, Simon Chen, Jeanette Darnauer, Corey Enloe, Warren Klug, Donnie Lee, Lisa LeMay, Cristal Logan, Beth Mobilian, Maria Morrow, Michael Owsley, David Perry, Tim Perry, John Sarpa, Steve Skadron, Kenny Smith, Laura Smith, Riley Tippet. Absent: Adam Fortier, Nina Eisenstat, John Maloy, Heather Steenge-Hart and Bill Tomcich. Staff present: Jennifer Carney, Dorothy Frommer, Erik Klanderud, Eliza Voss and Julia Theisen. Guests from Mind Springs Health: Sharon Raggio

**Approval of prior meeting minutes:** The board unanimously approved the January minutes.

**Disclosure of Conflict of interest:** none

**Presentation:** Mind Springs Health – Sharon Raggio, President & CEO

Sharon's presentation highlighted some staggering facts regarding mental health in the Roaring Fork Valley. Mental Health & Substance abuse noted as a severe burden on the community. Suicide in the valley is 3x the national average and illicit drug use is at 8%, the national average is 1.7% of the population. 1 in every 4 people experience a mental health issue each year. The economic impact from mental illness on a community is huge. Reimbursement has changed in the past 2 years resulting in less psychiatric beds available per 100,000 people in the population. Mind Springs Health has expansion goals of 76 beds which would accommodate approximately 16 psychiatric beds for every 100,000 people. The expansion facility would be located in Grand Junction. They are also focused on early intervention and incorporating mental health professionals into the primary care physician offices.

**Chair's comments:** Donnie let the group know that Debbie is out of town for a family emergency & thoughts are with her. Reminder that next month there will be a board retreat at the Gant, where the BOD will review progress that has been made and what still needs to be accomplished. This meeting will be longer than the traditional board meeting and will be a precursor to the Board retreat in the fall. Information will be coming in the next week or two regarding these meetings. Hotels are doing very well despite dry few weeks, and folks are excited that the snow is back.

**President's comments:** Absent.

**Finance Committee:** Adam is out of town, but Donnie reports that the year-end financials were very strong. ACRA finished the year with a surplus, and both the Airport and Destination Marketing budgets were healthy financially as well. Any questions can be directed to Adam or Charlie Bantis.

**Public Affairs Committee:** Committee met in the past few weeks and is looking back at the economic sustainability report. Regrouping on March 11 to brainstorm to set some strategic priorities. Hotel Jerome renovation project will be going to city council next week, so stay tuned. It will involve renovation of Aspen Times building, courtyard, 4<sup>th</sup> floor expansion which will allow the hotel to take families as guests with more flexible hotel room set up.

**Old Business:** none

**New Business:** none

**Directors' Comments**

**Adam Fortier:** Absent.

**Beth Mobilian:** Monday night (2/23) at the restaurant was like Christmas after a slow month. She echoes everyone's comments that the next 8 weeks are looking great.

**Bill Tomcich:** Absent.

**Charlie Bantis:** Nothing to report.

**Corey Enloe:** Echo all hoteliers - It has been busy. For the bulk of winter season (Mid-Dec through Mid-April) there are only about a dozen days that Aspen/Snowmass as a community didn't beat the DestiMetrics aggregate average. Occupancy has been consistently up, but there is discussion regarding room night availability. It would be valuable to find the balance between occupancy and room nights and David Perry and Corey are interested in working on figuring that out. Corey is attending the Airport Assessment Plan meetings. They will review 4 main areas of Environmental impact (sense of place, sustainability, neighborhood compatibility, passenger experience) and there has been good dialogue surrounding this assessment. A reminder that this is NOT addressing the west side of the airport. Great to have new snow, but a good reminder to be educated and safe in the backcountry in light of recent avalanche death. Corey notes that it is difficult to find good employees and while there are anecdotal comments as to the cause of this, we aren't sure what the solution is but it is something to keep in mind.

**Cristal Logan:** Both sessions of the Ideas Festival are now sold out. Tickets are still available for Spotlight Health. The quarterly meetings between Destination Marketing and the Non-profit reps were a success, there is a lot of strong programming from each organization.

**Dan Bonk:** The hospital has been very busy, in the past month they actually exceeded the number of patients vs beds they had available. The hospital has a lot going on with physician services and an aggressive recruitment program, aiming to improve the service. This year they are on track to do \$3.6M in charity care, they have 315 FTE and provide an estimated \$88M in economic value to the community. Next phase of hospital construction, which is the emergency department, starts in April and is slated to be complete by October 2015.

**David Perry:** Monday's (2/23) avalanche death is sad reminder to be safe. City Council should be commended right now for approvals for Base 1, Sky Hotel and Hotel Aspen/Molly Gibson. Hope that we have hit bottom for lodging bed base and that in 15 years we will look back and see that in 2015 City Council addressed the lodging issue in the community and facilitated the rebound. The debate will go on regarding the referendum, many people are forming opinions that aren't based on facts, and they should just allow the city council to do their jobs. We still have a ways to go in terms of gaining beds back – to the high water mark of '97/'98.

**Heather Steenge-Hart:** Absent

**Jeanette Darnauer:** Thinks it's very important that council is taking this stance regarding the charter and it is critical to get the facts out. Welcomed Beth to the board. City market is good indicator of how busy town is – and was maxed last night. Hospital doing a great job keeping businesses going during the construction, she recently had reason to be at the hospital and wanted to make sure and commend them. There has been a lot of world attention on Vail and Colorado in the past few weeks and she believes it is important that our board take an initiative on lift 1A, we should come together to keep the issue alive.

**John Maloy:** Absent.

**John Sarpa:** Many people aren't realizing that the creativity that takes place during a public meeting. There is a good give and take, the creativity that comes out of the meeting wouldn't happen if you absolutely must meet code. Taking the charter to vote is the wrong way to go. It will inappropriately cut off the thoughtful evolution of the reinvigoration of the older infrastructure. There are creative people that care and the Sky Hotel project is a good example that you can find a way to make it work without variances. John commends the City for the new process for planned development. Council reviews schematic plans instead of spending the big money up front – great change. Real estate continues to be very strong. First two months of 2014 vs 2015 is up from \$77M to \$167M. John will pass along a Wall Street Journal article stating that for people with total wealth Aspen is second in the world after New York City for where people want to buy.

**Kenny Smith:** Retail has been strong, everyone having a very good winter. Expanded – doubled street square footage with Rolex boutique. Robin won Spell What for the second year in a row.

**Laura Smith:** Departed early.

**Lisa LeMay:** Retail has been strong from low end to high end products. Lisa pointed out that it is very important to keep large groups happy, in addition the families that come to visit. National Brotherhood of Skiers is currently in town and they spend big money, it would be advantageous to keep them coming back year after year.

**Maria Morrow:** Public Affairs comments.

**Michael Owsley:** County is beginning the environmental assessment on the east side of the airport. First meeting was yesterday, and it will take about 2 years of monthly meetings. Reviewing social, economic, and physical impacts to the community. Community is trying to look ahead, not imposing anything that the community doesn't want. If you look at the institutional renewal that is going on in town (Aspen Art Museum, Hospital etc..) it is just the end of a 40 year cycle and the institutions have simultaneously decided they need renewal of aging infrastructure. Donnie agrees and states that this is the way the community needs to look at it.

**Nina Eisenstat:** Absent.

**Riley Tippet:** CCLC has made some changes. They have been working with City Council to bring a more consistent message from the business core and community. Erik Klanderud is now an ex-officio to help tie in the membership of ACRA and CCLC to bring a consistent message to City Council regarding construction mitigation and flow and what the business community wants within the core. This is an effort to bring solid information to the City Council prior to their meetings so it doesn't always come from public comment.

**Rose Abello:** National Brotherhood of Skiers is a great group and hope to have them come back for their big summit every other year. Base Village Update – they think they will be able to draft resolution that will go to council for the March meeting. Snowmass received December tax revenues and lodging is up 8.91% and marketing tax is up 8.43% which makes a nice cushion for next year. In the midst of planning for summer which will be a "Snowmassive" Summer.

**Simon Chen:** Business continues to be busy, and with the recent snow the phones have started ringing again for March. He actually received complaints from guests about too much snow this past weekend!

**Steve Skadron:** Moving into election season the variance issue will be prevalent, he is opposed to moving the variance into the charter. It is being packaged with a pithy marketing system. Hoping for healthy debate within the council. Council has proposed an alternative and there will be a forum for public debate in 2 weeks. The travel channel is filming a piece on Aspen, Steve fat biked around town with host, look for it to air in the coming months. RFTA board is working on Rio Grande railroad access control plan. RFTA manages the corridor and should maintain control should rail ever return, it would be a huge impact if they lost control of the corridor. The recent push back against development in town is a reaction to decisions that were made in council 15 years ago, they didn't react at the time, and they are only now responding that buildings are being built. Propaganda is louder than the facts. Aggressive campaign to get signatures on the petition, however the question that should be posed is "Do you believe opening up the charter for land use code is the proper use?" And most people would realize it is not.

**Tim Perry:** Because of dry weather the construction projects that they have been printing for are ahead of schedule. With recent snowy weather, things have slowed a bit as the projects take a breather this month. New contracts will be in place through March and April.

**Warren Klug:** Echo Donnie's comments in regards to the happy customers with new snow conditions although many guests were very happy to ski the groomers in the sunshine. Aspen Square is pacing ahead including March. He attended the Immigration symposium last week at the Institute, and afterwards Erik Klanderud assisted with facilitating an informal meeting at the Aspen Square for businesses around town.

**Adjournment:** 10:00 a.m.