

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
April 24th, 2018**

Call to order: Cristal Logan called the meeting to order at 8:42 a.m.

Attendance: Present: Cristal Logan, Debbie Braun, Riley Tippet, Warren Klug, Jeff Bay, Linda Crockett, Nina Eisenstat, Andrew Ernemann, Rob Ittner, Heather Kemp, Lisa LeMay, Maria Morrow, Tim Perry, Laura Smith, and Bill Tomcich. Absent: Donnie Lee, Charlie Bantis, Dave Ressler, John Rigney, Rose Abello, Simon Chen, Patti Clapper, Jeanette Darnauer, Heather Steenge-Hart, John Maloy, and Steve Skadron. Staff present: Sarah Reynolds Lasser, Erik Klanderud, Eliza Voss, Claire Sacco, Nicole Heronemus, John Davies, and Jennifer Carney.

Approval of prior meeting minutes: Maria asked for a change to be made for her comment; change was made. Board unanimously approved the March 27th minutes.

Presentation: Mountain Rescue / Forest Service - Shelly Grail Braudis: Very excited to be working with ACRA relating to Aspen area tourism. Maroon Bells is celebrating 40 years of bus service, and encouraging all visitors to take advantage of the bus service (running June 9th – October 8th). Hoping to switch over to electric buses in future. Working with ACRA's "How To" campaign for Maroon Bells. There is an electric sign installed at Aspen Highlands to help communicate when the lot is full. Prices for parking have increased, but hoping to educate public on additional parking options (Ruby Park, Buttermilk on weekends, in-town, etc.) with free bus service to Highlands. Ticket prices for Maroon Bells bus are \$8 for adults and \$6 for children. You can purchase tickets for Maroon Bells at Ruby Park. Only vehicle traffic allowed is kids in car seats, handicapped visitors, and campers. There is a new White River National Forest app and Maroon Bells hotline (970-945-3319). As of April 18th, website is live and taking reservations for Conundrum Hot Springs. This is to reduce the amount of visitors at one time (68 vs 300 w/o reservations) and the group size is limited to 6 people. You will only need a permit for overnight visits. Trying to go big on educating the public this year about leave no trace and back country etiquette. Will be turning people around if they don't have permit, but will be recommending nearby areas. Will have 6 unpaid interns and 3 paid staff members this summer and hoping to keep them at trailheads to educate and enforce. Hoping to have permit system for Four Pass Loop (2019 -2020), Capitol Lake (2020 – 2021) and Thomas Lakes (2021...). There is a \$10 fee for reservations, but it doesn't benefit forest service. Hoping to add \$5-10 to fund forest service. Hanging Lake reservation system delayed, but will have additional info in May. Will have transportation similar to Maroon Bells / RFTA. Forest Service and Mountain Rescue have been meeting since September about dangers of back-country fatalities. Hard push to educate hikers about dangers. Due to bridge construction, hard to get information out and looking for solutions (signage similar to hickory House). Contemplated moving visitor center to Aspen Highlands. Debbie Braun is willing to share some space at the Pavilion visitor center. Huge push with news outlets and social media to educate CU and CSU students about new reservations system and back country etiquette due to huge impact issues around Cathedral Lake. Relying on partnerships to get the word out due to lack of funding. Pitkin County is funding 2 positions for the forest Service this summer. There is a lot of pressure from Washington to close campgrounds, but Pitkin County has stepped up to fund. Everything is busy and our big push this summer is education on back country etiquette, how to, and where to go.

Chair's comments: Very glad to see SkiCo employees are on vacation. They did a phenomenal job with the winter despite the challenges. Congratulations to ACRA for a great Eggs & Issues breakfast.

President's Comments: Town seems to be settling down for off-season. CMC community advisory meeting is tomorrow. Will be meeting about Destination 2040 in the next few weeks. Will be attending branding exercise with the Colorado tourism Office and will keep everyone updated. Meeting on the future of the Roaring Fork valley in the next few weeks. Gave update on finance committee Q1 report. Chamber dues are coming in. We don't have any speakers lined up for the next few meetings, will set up. New hires at the Chamber: John Davies (executive admin assistant), Noel Chiarelli (special events for summer), and Bridget Crosby (marketing). Cooper is graduating in June, so will be taking time off. Big thanks to speakers at Eggs & Issues breakfast.

Executive Committee: The committee welcomed the two new officers, John Rigney and Dave Ressler. A capital budget was approved for 2018. The RFP's for financial services, and the creative and advertising agency are underway. An update will be given at the next executive committee of who was selected.

Old Business: none.

New Business: none.

Director's Comments

Linda Crockett: 2 ½ day conference for Colorado Mountain College. They recently joined Aspen International Mountain Foundation; partnerships with common cultural interests. Will be hiring a part time coordinator (non-accredited) for Aspen campus. Thought Eggs & Issues was amazing. Mentioned that the Forest Service's presentation and Mountain Rescue are so important. Wonders if Colorado Mountain Club could help.

Tim Perry: nothing to add.

Andrew Ernemann: Mentioned the presentation at Eggs & issues. Wonders if fewer properties under contract are sign of real estate slowdown.

Greg Poschman: Gave update on possible land donation on Red Mountain. Loved Eggs & Issues breakfast. Mentioned the annexation issue with Eagle County watershed. It's a travesty that only one person is running for the commissioner seat, but she's a great candidate and very excited to have her.

Rob Ittner: Follow up on Doug Kidder's event. 300 people showed up. Three bands played and they raised \$45k. Doug moved back just days ago and went back to Valley View. He is recovering after a stroke. Restaurant is very quiet with all of the hotel closures in town. Gave an update on restaurant closures for off season. It was a positive winter despite the challenges. Sales were flat through February. Food costs for restaurant are up 20% since January due to region / seasonality of food suppliers (buying from California vs Arizona). Would like to see a job posting board for June and July by the chamber for local restaurants. Running for county commissioner again.

Maria Morrow: Very happy that ACRA is working with the Forest Service, and hoping to educate public on etiquette for "leave no trace." Want to see what kind of messaging we have in the works.

Eliza Voss: Launching the "How To" campaign.

Claire Sacco: Fall symposium for business development. Panel discussing different topics to help guests be responsible visitors.

Lisa LeMay: Would like to mirror what Maria was saying about educating the public is great. Public should be able to go to local shops and get recommendations on alternative nearby attractions. Same message as other retailers; took a hit this winter due to snow conditions, but summer will be good!

Riley Tippet: Nothing to add except summer will be here soon!

Bill Tomcich: Gave update on local hotels. Last minute bookings in March. This year down vs last year. World Cup finals helped. Very strong finish to ski season. No finals on April finals, but both Aspen and Snowmass are pacing ahead. The Hotel Jerome has extended closure due to construction. 110 fewer rooms due mainly to Sky hotel closure. Closures on par with last year. End of May looking busier than usual. Gave airport update. 2x as many flights as last year. All three airlines year-round. Low fares into Aspen. Waiting on FAA for airport improvements.

Nina Eisenstat: Commend Debbie for a great Eggs & Issues; great mix and energy. A lot of non-chamber members. Off season has not been slow; Smuggler and restaurants have been busy. Waste is also an issue on Smuggler and is hoping the campaign will extend to include Smuggler.

Jeff Bay: I've been hiking in flip flops with how the weather has been lately! We have been very busy and almost sold out last week with 75% occupancy. Due to the hotel closures around town, there is a demand for open rooms. Have not experienced any issues with the delays getting into town due to the bridge project. Just got back from four days in Tulum regarding the "over-loving" of resources. It's very important to "walk the walk" when it comes to all the talk about sustainability.

Warren Klug: Winter was amazingly okay. March was a very tough month, but there was a pickup for last minute reservations. Aspen Square has been slow, but summer numbers are coming along and look great. Last night there was a scholarship program at the high school. \$360k in local scholarships were given out. Very proud of the community and the Aspen School District. Aspen has promised that no child will not go to college due to financial struggles. 96% of Aspen High School students have been accepted in to college. Dana will be replacing effective June 1st as I am retiring.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 10:21a.m.