

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
August 29th, 2017**

**Call to order:** Cristal Logan called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

**Attendance:** Present: Cristal Logan, Warren Klug, Debbie Braun, Simon Chen, Rose Abello, Jeff Bay, Jeanette Darnauer, Nina Eisenstat, Riley Tippet, Tim Perry, Linda Crockett, Lisa LeMay, Patty Clapper, Steve Skadron, Rob Ittner, Heather Steenge-Hart, Corey Enloe, John Maloy, Charlie Bantis, Laura Smith. Absent: Donnie Lee, Andrew Ernemann, Dave Ressler, Bill Tomcich, Heather Kemp and Maria Morrow. Staff present: Erik Klanderud, Julia Theisen, Susan Bantis and Claire Sacco.

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

**Presentations:**

**JAS – Jim Horowitz:** A short video was presented explaining the educational aspect of JAS as an organization. Music education started 20 years ago, when an all scholarship program call JAS Academy began. After the recession of 2008, we began to focus in the RFV. Public schools need the help of non-profits for music success. Our programs include: Tickets for Teachers, JAS In-School Summer Camps, and Pays to Play (pays for beginning lessons). JAS donates instruments, instruction hours, financial support, festival tickets and scholarships to students and schools in the valley. The Budget: 41% of our budget consists of contributions while 59% of the budget is earned through events. The JAS Labor Day Experience accounts for 63% of the \$9 million budget.

New Adult Education Initiatives: There were a number of people who liked the music, but did not know why, and did not know the history of the music. JAS Around the World and JAS Listen Up help educate people on the roots of the music and what it means. We want people to learn as well as listen.

**Aspen Family Connections – Katherine Sand:** Aspen Family Connections exists in the Aspen School District, but we serve all families in Pitkin County. “Relax, Its Aspen” is a great slogan for the visitors, but not necessarily indicative of life here. It is possible to be unhappy in ‘paradise’ for a variety of reasons. Aspen is a place where it is hard to ask for help so with the help of area schools, nonprofits and health and human services departments, Aspen Family Connections was created. Aspen Family Connections opened in January of 2017, and within 6 months we’ve had 80 referrals. These requests range from needing tutors to counseling. Aspen Family Connections refers and connects people to the proper organizations in the valley. We are not trying to create dependency, we are trying to help people find resources to be independent. We not only work with children but the whole family in providing education. We connect people to people, people to resources, and people to their community.

**Chair's comments:** There is a great buzz surrounding the arts around town. Everyone had great audiences and turnouts for what their events. For the Institute, it was Walter’s last season with us, which was nostalgic. We also had the Da Vinci Festival which was wonderful. Housing for our interns was a challenge this year which we will be looking at for future seasons.

At the executive committee meeting, we talked about a new secretary and assistant secretary. Ski Co has not yet named who will be the new ASC representative on the Board. Maria has drafted a lease for the new ACRA offices, and we will be negotiating that in September, with a goal of moving in October. A proposal will go to COA for the Destination Marketing budget this fall.

Since we are all ambassadors, we need to remember that our second homeowners are here and it is not just visitors in town.

**President's Comments:** Thank you to Sandy’s Office Supply for designing the new offices, we are looking at end of October to move in. Thank you to Steve Skadron for his time helping with the DMA West Conference last month. We had 50 CEO’s in town and they were all thankful to our Mayor and City for their help working together. On September 12th ACRA will be presenting the Shop Local campaign to City Council during their work session. There is potential for this campaign to continue into the winter season. Vail came in to town last week to compare notes and talk about

marketing and events. The events team will be going to Vail to look at how they execute their special events and permitting. ACRA is working with sister cities to visit Queenstown for a familiarization trip.

**Finance Committee:** We met last month and things are on line with the budgets. The Chamber has a number of bank accounts spread around town. We feel that after the move it is time to consolidate. We should be getting better deals and purchasing power with the amount of money that is spread around. We would like to do an RFP for one bank to handle our accounts. The person who reviews this will not be a banker in town but a third party. In preparation, we went through the Chamber financial policies and procedures. We'd like to update these as the RFPs come in to stay up to date. We will be looking into credit card processing fees as well.

**Old Business:** none.

**New Business:** none.

**Director's Comments**

**Charlie Bantis:** Nothing new to report

**John Maloy:** School is back in session. At the end of our last fiscal year, we received a grant to reduce emissions on the bus fleet which allowed us to purchase a green bus that is more energy efficient.

**Corey Enloe:** Thursday will be my last day at the Aspen Club. I have appreciated my six years on this board.

**Heather Steenge-Hart:** Thank you for your service at on the Board Corey.

**Rob Ittner:** We are finally getting our heads out from under the water. We had a very busy summer, but the prices a bit down from previous summers. Costs continue to rise, so that is our concern. Staff issues continue to be a problem for us, resulting in 20% less staff which caused us to not run as efficiently. I think it got a little bit better as the summer went on, but it's hard to keep people motivated. One suggestion we had was to create a job board in town that could be helpful for short term hires. We communicate in the restaurant community, and we'd love to be able to put those into a physical spot where that could happen. We need a free place because the switch happens so often. Perhaps on the pavilion. I think it is worth further discussion. Minimum wage will increase in December, which will add approximately \$25,000 to our bottom line cost. There was an article in a magazine about a tip line for receipts for dishwashers etc. Is it possible to put on a seminar for restaurant labor laws?

I am focused on what little changes we as restauranteurs can make to be the best we can and continue to be more accurate and successful.

**Steve Skadron:** It is important to hear that there is some hope for the restauranteurs and know that the small changes help. It's helpful to be proactive. From the city council table: we passed some contract addendum's for the old power house to ensure the moving timeline for ACRA. We are responding to an action by the U.S. Supreme court on signage, and it has to do with content neutrality on signs. Any regulations that permit a restaurant sign to be a certain size, and a political sign to be a different size is not allowed. Because of this we had to eliminate sandwich boards around town. Had we not eliminated them, we would no longer be able to control them and we could have as many as 800 signs around town. There is a year allowed for transition as this directly effects business. Reed vs. Town of Gilbert. We started strict so that we can hopefully become more lax. Comm Dev will be doing outreach to let people know.

**Patti Clapper:** We had a collaborative meeting with the COA to try to outline some goals for the next year. The airport environmental assessment is available at the Pitkin County Library, online, and City and County offices. Public comment ends the first week of October. The federal government would not allow greenhouse gases in the reports. We will have public meetings late September for Q & A.

**Lisa LeMay:** Retail has been a mixed bag it seems. Some sports stores have reported being down 30-40% in sales. Otherwise, it seems good. People seem to really like the Shop Aspen campaign and they are happy to be included, and appreciate the efforts. Even the ones who are not members.

**Laura Smith:** Perhaps the paper will run a “TODAY’S NEEDS” job section. I’m happy to reach out and ask. Echo what Cristal says that it was a strong summer. We had a theme of enchantment that was a very happy, positive theme. Next year’s theme is Paris, City of Lights. As an audience member, I went to the Aspen Santa Fe Ballet and it was a wonderful arts experience that was different and edgy. The rain has been a challenge for us this season. It hit all of our concerts and that was tough. Hiring continues to be hard for mid-level positions, housing and expertise are some additional road blocks. I’d like to find out more ways to reach out to locals to get them into the music tent. I’d also like to reach out further to the State to Colorado musicians who can’t necessarily stay in Aspen hotels and don’t want to deal with the traffic. I’d like to make it affordable for those people. I’d love input.

**Linda Crockett:** Thank you for having me, this is my first meeting on this Board. CMC is a bit tucked away in the North 40. This year, we had our 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary accompanied by some great events. We did one on campus and one at the music festival. Many of you are on our advisory board which has some plans for the campus. The organization has decided it is time to focus investment here to potentially make Aspen a residential campus with 180-200 units. These wouldn’t be full time year round students. Some of our partners would use this space as well. Our fall semester started yesterday, and enrollment has increased this year, which we’re excited about. We are trying to formalize our partnerships for academic credit. We’ve had requests to have dual credits for high school and college students. We are offering these for band and choir, and the music festival. The Aspen Skiing Company asked for help with training ski instructors and are able to offer dual credit and create a pipeline for instructors. For hiring, we did some full time jobs this summer. We had a hard time getting qualified people for our front desks. We put the open job position on our sign and it worked.

**Tim Perry:** We’ve had a strong summer with construction and planners also. I sat down with Amy Margerum, and she is wondering if the ACRA Board or the City can do something to acknowledge Walter Isaacson and his impact on this town.

**Nina Eisenstat:** It was an incredible season of music this year, thanks to Laura! I want to also say that there is so much interest from people who visit on what we do and how well we do it. Our visitors are envious of what we do here and that reminds me how we serve as ambassadors of the community.

**Jeanette Darnauer:** We have the ability to bring people together to have the conversation and figure out what the employment issues are. I want to congratulate Laura on the art banners around town. I loved Hairspray and the other performances put on by Theatre Aspen. They did 39 shows and were very busy. Kudos to the Chamber staff you’re your innovations and work you’ve done. I would suggest reaching out to lodges about the Shop Aspen campaign so they can tell their guests about it. Our friends visited with their RV, and it reminded me that people are still discovering Aspen – they didn’t know about the Maroon Bells or the John Denver Sanctuary and the other offerings we have. There are plenty of people who are happy to visit and discover us. Ducky Derby sold out with 30,000 ducks!

**Jeff Bay:** We’ve had some compression of the market because of fewer rooms, which has caused costs to go up and it is hard to provide the service they hope for. September and October are looking great and we are projecting sell outs for the next 8 weekends because of fall colors. Hopefully that will push into restaurants and other industries as well. The weekend is traditionally Friday and Saturday, but it is starting to push into Sunday as well. I offer no solutions, but I am in the Colorado Hotel Lodging Association, and the hotels in Denver are also struggling with housing and employee hiring. It is not just resort towns but Colorado as a whole is low on the hiring rates. The GAB construction has started – our employees are still making it and the guests are still happy. It seems like there are less cars coming into town and that people have changed their habits. How can we encourage them to continue these habits? The bigger issue is that some guests have had issues wayfinding through Glenwood, and missing the turn to Aspen.

**Riley Tippet:** We are working with the employee sustainability committee to make sure that these problems are more than conjecture. We are hoping to help with hiring practices and policies, and put in long term solutions. Many of these problems are not specific to Aspen, but are exaggerated by our town. We are trying to figure out the root causes and then figure out what the Chamber can assist with. Can we help people progress through their careers? We hope to then be able to go to the City and make suggestions and recommendations to figure out what is helping and what is harming in terms of policy.

**Rose Abello:** We are gearing up for a big September. Events this month include the Snowmass Balloon Festival, the Motoring Classic, Aspen Snowmass Vintage Car Race, and the Golden Leaf Half Marathon. We are in our 50th anniversary year, and we will have lift tickets reflecting our opening year prices. On the 16th of December we will be having a gala for \$100 a ticket, tickets are on sale until next week.

**Simon Chen:** The second annual Aspen BBQ Cook-Off is on Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup> at the Gondola Plaza. There are 10 different chef's competing. It is a great charity event that supports a number of non-profits in town. We were able to raise about \$100,000 last year. This event is sponsored by community partners including the St. Regis, Hotel Jerome and JAS Aspen Snowmass.

**Warren Klug:** It's been a good summer for us. Our guests love it here and they love the arts and the environment going on. Our fall looks good as well. August is always scary but we picked up last week luckily. Regarding the Grand Avenue Bridge project, we heard early horror stories but CDOT worked on it and it has gotten much better. It is amazing to see the size and scale of the project. They are on track for their timeline.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.