

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
February 27th, 2018**

**Call to order:** Donnie Lee called the meeting to order at 8:38 a.m.

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

**Approval of prior meeting minutes:** The board unanimously approved the January 30th minutes.

**Presentation: Roaring Fork Leadership – Linda Chi**

Roaring Fork Leadership's goal is to help the RFSD with their capstone program. All high school seniors in the RFSD need to complete a capstone project to graduate. The seniors pick out a program that is passion driven and they need community experts they can rely on to help them with guidance and mentorship of their project. The community experts can be experts in anything. Community experts should be available to seniors through phone conversations and in person meetings. This program is to prepare students for college and get them used to talking with strangers. With your help you can help encourage them to get out there and see what the real world is like. In the students junior year they select a project to do in their senior year. We would like to gather community experts before the end of the current school year to help next year's senior class. If you physically meet with the students more than 4 times, you do need to get fingerprinted, however we are looking at removing that part of the policy. There are approximately 450 students this year in the RFSD and we are looking for 60-70 community experts.

**Drug Awareness Committee** – There is a poster contest for 3-5<sup>th</sup> graders where the winners of the contest will receive prizes. They also have a chance of getting into a DC Comic Book. We are looking for donations for prizes for the contest, if you would like to donate, please contact Linda Chi for more information.

**Chair's comments:** I applaud everyone in the resort communities for how we have managed the ski conditions we've had this year. Kudos to the Olympians, especially our local Aspen athletes. The Ski Company is planning a celebration for those athletes.

**President's Comments:** The Employee Sustainability Committee is changing its name back to the Member Services Committee, which the committee will now be focusing on healthcare and wellness. The Public Affairs Committee has split into two subcommittees, a regional focus group and a business mix focus group. We are also convening with the Chairs of each Chamber Board from Glenwood to Aspen. This year the City Breakfast will change to the Business Breakfast on April 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Public Affairs Committee:** Since the last Board meeting, quite a few Board members have done a lot of work and outreach. We appreciate everyone's efforts to help get good information out there and provide a voice for business members. On March 6<sup>th</sup> from 10am-12pm, ACRA will facilitate a discussion with Mitch Osur and Peter Rice of the COA and local business owners regarding the Hopkins Street project. These issues affect us all and we need to understand how to approach this issues as a community and how we can transition without causing unnecessary impact. Please encourage your members to attend. If you have any questions on the project, I encourage you to send them to Debbie, so they can be discussed at this event.

The regional subcommittee is looking forward to the meeting of the Chambers. We're also going to add a regional section to the monthly newsletter, so we can educate our members on what is going on regionally.

The business mix subcommittee is working on a survey, and in the process, uncovered several other resources about business mix. There is a lot of high quality material out there, so as not to duplicate information, we decided to pull back and look at the studies that have already been done first. Will reconvene to look at all this information.

**Old Business:** none.

**New Business:** none.

### Director's Comments

**Warren Klug:** Guests have had great experiences despite the snow, but the recent snowfall has been wonderful. Interested to see how our business patterns came together this winter. We did surprisingly well in Jan and Feb. The first couple weeks of March look good, but the end of March has a drop off. Congratulations and thanks to the mountain crews. Other resorts in Colorado and Utah did far worse with the conditions. It's a great honor and exciting to be part of the Olympics, I hope the Ski Co holds a great celebration for the returning athletes.

**Steve Skadron:** The City is working with the Ski Co on the Olympic celebration. Maria thank you for your comments on the Hopkins avenue project. Justice Snow's is closing tomorrow, and June 1<sup>st</sup> is the target date for the new tenants. This Friday there will be a gathering of up hillers at tie hack. It's called the friendly uphill at tie hack at 7:30am, with about 30-40 people gathering every Friday.

**Linda Crockett:** We have an international exchange program and any of the campuses can participate. One of the exchanges we are working with right now is Buton that is focusing on forestry and natural resources and emergency medical services. We have a new media position and a culinary hospitality position. We'll commit to finding 5 expert members for the RF Leadership Program.

**Heather Steenge-Hart:** Had a great January, February was our highest occupancy month we've ever had. We were originally concerned about March but have seen a great pace already.

**Bill Tomcich:** It has been a strong month. Aspen was the #1 destination out of 15 and Snowmass was #2. Obviously despite less than ideal snow conditions, we had great occupancy. March doesn't look as strong, specifically after the 11<sup>th</sup> of March. I have seen a surge in bookings since the snow started this month. Looking forward into April, booking levels are higher compared to prior years as of right now. Comparing Aspen to the rest of the industry, we are pacing #5 and Snowmass is #2 for bookings in March, compared to 15 other mountain resort destinations. I think the new Icon Pass will be very successful to compete with the Epic Pass.

**Jeff Bay:** The recent conditions seemed to have infused a jolt of enthusiasm with the public. Our March is looking a bit better than we thought. It's great to see that the Ski Co.'s efforts have expanded and are being recognized. Shining Stars Foundation event March 2<sup>nd</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> is short on volunteers to help facilitate. They have plenty of openings for volunteers, please let me know if you are interested and I can pass along the information. The next two episodes of Top Chef are in Aspen.

**Julia Theisen:** The MAC will meet in March and May to facilitate an RFP process for creative agencies. The RFP will be going out to 6 creative agencies with the finalists presenting in May and then the staff will select our new agency this summer to prepare for 2019. We are asking the agencies to look at our existing campaigns and present how they would change or evolve the brand. We'll report back in May. We will be cohosting with the CO Tourism Office, 20 people after IPW in Denver.

**Nina Eisenstat:** The mood around town has shifted to exuberance. Social media is going crazy with pictures of the snow. I'm hearing a lot of enthusiasm towards summer with schedules coming out sooner than usual.

**Tim Perry:** Spent some time at the comedy festival this week and it was great to see the mix of locals and first-time visitors. Visitors are amazed at how we not only have great skiing, but we have a great town and other offerings of things to do. We're hearing a lot of buzz around construction for the summer.

**John Rigney:** We're looking at those same holes in the calendar with occupancy. It could be a pleasant surprise for a fill in, but we have pushed a lot out to try to fill it in. People's moods are lifted, and the skiing is great. We were all over the Olympics from branding to storytelling and the grand prix. You can't help but notice XGames all over the Olympic

events as well. To everyone that ever supported any of these efforts, I thank you. Six valley athletes made it and excelled! Icon Pass – it might be worth getting Christian in here to talk about what the future may hold with the pass.

**Lisa LeMay:** Cold weather retailers really suffered this winter, but other retailers have held their own and performed very well. We surpassed our Vail and Beaver Creek stores exponentially. Feedback is still coming in about the Hopkins project, everyone I've talked to is appreciative of the Chamber for getting information together and for reaching out to other constituents. They know it's not the Chamber's job, but they see the effort and appreciate it.

**Andrew Ernemann:** Real estate has been busy. The Aspen Core building has sold, and I predict it will be fully occupied by the end of the year. Snowmass Base Village has really built up steam.

**Rob Ittner:** People seem to be proactively looking for spaces to rent for events. There's been some talk about getting some employee base level involved on the Hopkins Ave project.

**Dave Ressler:** We've had every bed filled in the last few weeks. I want to compliment the school district with their health careers club. We have an exchange program that works with our various health care professionals and they have travelled to other area hospitals to learn how our health care systems are different. It's little well known that the hospital owns services mid valley that are lower cost alternatives for locals, such as the MRI and Surgery Center, we want to make sure our community is aware of those services. We have 5 elected board members and 3 of our 5 seats are up for reelection in May. It appears that our 3 incumbent directors have shown intent to run again for those seats. The flu really hit hard on the Western Slope. Our community had a high incidence of the flu but not a high admittance of those patients.

**Jeanette Darnauer:** Spent the last 2 weeks in Mexico. Good contingence of Aspenites down there. We were able to watch a lot of the Olympics. I could feel the excitement in Aspen when I returned.

**Cristal Logan:** We have a Sports in Society program and our head of that was featured on an NBC broadcast about 11 times. The Institute had a great Presidents Day weekend, those from out of town were stranded here that Monday and we had no possible way of getting them out of town. I've met our new President who will join us in June. The Ideas Festival is already selling out. We will convene all the nonprofit executives in March to talk about our upcoming celebration in 2019, the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Bauhaus.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 9:59 a.m.