

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
FEBRUARY 26th, 2019**

**Call to order:** Cristal Logan called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m.

**Attendance:** Present: Cristal Logan, Charlie Bantis, Andrew Ernemann, John Rigney, Dave Ressler, Donnie Lee, Debbie Braun, Rose Abello, Sam Barney, Jeff Bay, Linda Crockett, Nina Eisenstat, Rob Ittner, John Kinney, Cari Kuhlman, John Maloy, Maria Morrow, Steve Skadron, and Bill Tomcich. Absent: Simon Chen, Patti Clapper, Jeanette Darnauer, Alan Fletcher, Heather Kemp, Lisa LeMay, Heather Steenge-Hart, and Riley Tippet.

Staff Present: Claire Sacco, Eliza Voss, Jennifer Albright Carney, Susan Bantis, Kathryn Dziedzic, and John Davies.

Guests Present: Bert Myrin, Jeff Gorsuch, John Doyle, Harris Berlinsky, Kelly Murphy, and David Corbin.

**Approval of prior meeting minutes:** Approved

**Disclosure of Conflict of Interest:** Maria Morrow; potential involvement with project, Andrew Ernemann; existing relationship with partners, John Rigney; Aspen Skiing Company employee, Jeff Bay; works for HayMax, and Donnie Lee; formerly employed by Lowe Enterprises and specifically involved in Gorsuch Haus project.

**Presentation: Lift One Corridor Project & Ballot Measure:**

**Alex Biel - Committee to Improve the Lift 1 Corridor Plan:** via email - We are in no way opposing all development at the top of South Aspen Street. Unfortunately the City Council, bowing to pressure from the developers insisted in packaging everything in a several hundred word, virtually incomprehensible proposition that required an up-or-down vote. So in order to improve upon the proposition, it is necessary to first vote it down. The group I represent would welcome a new lift running down to Dean Street And we would also welcome the Lift One Lodge proposal, which we have supported in one form or another for over a decade. We welcome the vibrancy and excitement of Lift One Lodge with its restaurants, bars, and facilities for après could provide. It would be sited on the East side of Aspen Street, where the much-loved Holland House once stood. Although it features an interval-ownership financial structure, this is really a difference without a distinction! However we DO NOT support Gorsuch Haus. We believe that at roughly three and a half times the size of the egregious Aspen Art Museum, it is completely inappropriate for the middle of the ski slope at the top of Aspen Street. As everyone hopefully knows, the Zoning law would have to be changed to accommodate an arrogant Gorsuch group. This is unacceptable, and especially so since one of the stated purposes of Aspen's Conservation zoning is to contain urban development! In effect, changing the zoning for the economic gain of Gorsuch and his gang makes a mockery of Aspen's zoning! This giant hotel would be in the view plane of practically every building down in town. Where we now look up the mountain to see the pristine white slopes of Aspen in Winter, and lush green hills of Summer, we would see an ocean of concrete if Gorsuch Haus is approved. In fact as almost-former Mayor Skadron put in a recent hearing, the reason people come to Aspen is to be in our mountains. Mountains that we have intentionally not desecrated as has Vail, Snowmass and so many other places! Why in the world would Aspen willingly give up this precious, differentiating, and highly desirable attribute? The advantages of having one hotel rather than two should be obvious: one hotel would yield roughly half the traffic on newly narrowed, already dangerously steep Aspen street. A far smaller thermal footprint. Consider the thousands of truckloads of earth that will need to be hauled away, and the wear and tear it will cause to our streets. Yes, and think of the mudslides we've had in the past on the West side of the mountain. The massive excavation high on the hill creates a destabilization risk has not been fully evaluated. We are aware that the SkiCo, pushing further development, has said that they would not build a lift without two hotels at the top of the street. We see this as an audacious threat by a company that should know better! The SkiCo, if you think about it, is really the 'steward' of our slopes. In the broadest sense, SkiCo should properly be guarding the slopes rather than the despoiler of them. They seem to have forgotten their true role. Our guess is that their outrageous threats are not soundly based. That if we do vote the proposition down, they will take a more polite, reasonable view. They may wish to reconsider the possibility of luring World Cup and its international media coverage back. They may start to understand the value of a revitalized Ruthies - which was closed for years to help drive members into their private, highly profitable Mountain Club - has new value for Summer activities, such as SkiCo's very profitable wedding business. But they have left us with no choice; we must regretfully vote NO and continue to oppose this proposition precisely to force a better one that we can support.

**John Doyle - Aspen resident since 1980:** Thank you to everyone for welcoming me to speak and for everyone that has been involved in this process. Two years ago we had the World Cup Finals in town, and it was the best week of my life. I would love nothing more than to have the World Cup back in Aspen, but this project has been misleading, in fact that there is no guarantee that the World Cup will return to Aspen even if this project is approved. I agree with Alex regarding the hotels. Two hotels are too much and the height of the buildings are taller than the Wheeler. This project is proposing over 320k square feet of commercial space. The current Aspen Art Museum is only 33k square feet, so this is equivalent to almost 10 Art Museums in the neighborhood. The reason people come here is because of the small town feel, different from being off the side of the interstate. Throughout this process, I've researched the City's position on moving historic lift structures, and this is as extreme as moving the Wheeler Opera House. During the initial approval in 2011, this project was admired for its commitment to employee housing and amenities offered for the community. Since then, there have simply been too many changes made, from housing to taxpayer financing street improvements and a ski museum. The ski museum had been portrayed as taking up the majority of a building, however it is now proposed to only occupy a small portion in the basement, with the rest of the space devoted to ski patrol, a coffee and gift shop, and a locker room. My issues with the project began when us taxpayers were being asked to foot the bill, and I began researching zoning rules and regulations. I'm not against development of the area, and would like to see the lift be made accessible, but I live in the neighborhood and simply do not like the idea of this project.

**Jeff Gorsuch:** What an honor it is to be invited to speak before the Board this morning. I have lived in Aspen for 22 years, but the Gorsuch family has been a presence going many years back. This project came about out of my love for Aspen 10 years ago, when I had the opportunity to work with Aspen Skiing Company. Our idea was not the first, as there have been other plans to revitalize the original ski portal to Aspen Mountain. A few years ago, we met with Steve Skadron and the City, to come up with a plan that put the community values first. The idea of adding lodging, amenities, and public parks to this once bustling area of town is not an opportunity that comes often, and we've tried to work with everyone to create a plan that benefits everyone. We are excited to be on the ballot on March 5<sup>th</sup>, and hope that the community will come together to add future vitality and opportunity by connecting Lift One to the community. This used to be the longest ski lift in the world, and we hope that this plan can bring the FIS World Cup, activity and recognition back to Aspen.

**Harris Berlinsky – Vice President of HayMax Capital:** We took direction from City Council, and put Lift One first and everything else came second, on this proposal. We came up with a plan to bring the lift down to Dean Street as close as possible, while making everything else fit. The new lift will load in the exact location as the former lift. The proposed project is framed by the chalet, steakhouse, lodge, and lift. People have issues with the 60 feet between the buildings, but only 45 is required. This project is compliant with regulations, and is offering so much to the community, such as park space the size of Wagner Park. Gorsuch Haus would provide world class staging for the World Cup and revitalize the neighborhood. We feel as though building a vibrant hotel brings more to the community than large homes that sit empty for most of the year. The old photos of the Skier's Chalet have been major inspiration to recapture Aspen's former glory. There has been a lot of misleading information from opponents of this development, such as housing. From the initial approval in 2011 this project has complied and exceeded the housing requirements. There will be housing for 67 employees, which is more than the 45 proposed in 2011. This project is slated at contributing more than \$42 million to the community over the next 30 years, and we are bonding against that money to build today. The \$4.3 million we are requesting is only to be used for the public development, with developers getting none of the money. The City will not be contributing any of the money until the new lift is installed and fully operational. This investment by the taxpayers is capped and the developers will be paying anything over the amount. This area is zoned so that one large or four smaller single family homes could be built, but we think that a lodge will benefit the community more. The Little Nell and the Silver Queen Gondola were both also built on land with conservation zoning. The law states that you only have land use approvals for 10 years, and we are coming up on that, as our approval was in 2011. We don't have a choice to take this back to City Council, and this may be the last opportunity to bring the lift down to the town. It is frustrating that with all of the compromises and people involved, there are still opponents who are against one or two aspects of this proposal. We are hoping to break ground within two years of public approval, and complete the entire project in four years. This project is the same distance from Rubey Park as Gondola Plaza, so additional RFTA stops are not necessary. We have been very involved in public outreach, hosting community events and attending public hearings. For more information, please visit [liftonecorridor.com](http://liftonecorridor.com).

**Kelly Murphy – Aspen Historical Society:** We came to the party late, but after much compromise by all, we have come out with a plan everyone is on board with. John was a bit misleading in his characterization of the planned museum. We've had the ability to build on the site since 1995, but haven't made any moves due to the scale of a potential project and the lack of activity in the proposed area. This whole plan brings so much to the area, and that is needed in order to bring skiers and traffic. We will be sharing the space with Aspen Skiing Company, but it's very worthwhile. There will be skiers in the building every day utilizing the amenities, which will spark interest in the museum. What better place for a museum than an operational ski building? John also mentioned that we'd be tucked away with not much space, but that is not true. The basement is actually the best space for the exhibits, as there is plenty of space and minimal exposure for light sensitive artifacts. The rest of the building will be bustling with activity, which will help offset the operating costs of a museum, as admission alone will not suffice. I cannot speculate on the future, but there are no plans to come to Council in need of funding, if enough operating revenues are not made.

**David Corbin – Senior VP of Planning and Development for Aspen Skiing Company:** I listened with some amusement to Alex Biel's letter, about ASC making outrageous threats. We have been very patient and collaborative in this decade long process to try and evolve the master plan for this area. It was the original portal to Aspen Mountain, which has been replaced by the Silver Queen Gondola, and we are looking to revitalize this area. It needs to be restored and we need to look to the future. There are plans to replace the beds that we've lost due to hotel closures, while respecting the neighborhood. There have been countless people involved in conversations, and many compromises have been made to come up with a plan that works in everyone's interests. Unfortunately, you can't cherry pick everything that you want in a master plan, as all aspects need to be supported and considered. This is a plan that everyone can appreciate, as the community goals and values are well served. We have done much research and development to ensure there is plenty of operating space and offerings to support life, activity, and vitality in all aspects of this development. We don't currently have a "Plan B" if this does not gain public approval, but we can't predict what could be proposed in the future. This proposed development is not limited to winter, as there are year round opportunities in the area, with parks and mountain activities. We aren't planning anything similar to offerings at Snowmass, but more access to Aspen Mountain. We are currently in the master planning process with Pitkin County. In regards to the speculation of large single family homes, there is not any plans in any of the existing contracts allowing such. While there has been a lot of public sector input, the Parks Department has been the driver of the plans for public facilities in the summer. The park spaces are a vital part of this whole plan, and we hope voters will see value in that. Finally, to answer questions about how long this could impact Lift One service, the lift could be down for 1-2 years during construction.

**Chair's comments:** The Public Affairs Committee has fully vetted the Lift One issue and brought it before the Board of Directors to determine if we will be issuing our formal support. We've heard from members of both sides, those for the project, and those against it, and will be discussing as a group to determine the ACRA's stance on the issue. There are three possible outcomes of this discussion and vote; we can either remain neutral, issue our formal support, or our formal nonsupport. The Public Affairs Committee was unable to come up with substantial concerns to justify not taking a position on the issue.

The group determined those with a Conflict of Interest, who were then excused from the conversation. Discussion took place surrounding the Lift One issue and concerns were voiced about housing, business vitality, future opportunities, and possible consequences of support or nonsupport. A vote took place, needing support from all 8 members in the room to pass, but with 2 "no" votes, the motion to support Lift One failed. Following the meeting at the Aspen Square Hotel, the Executive Committee met and determined there was not a quorum, and that the vote was null and void. An electronic vote was taken via email, so that Directors absent from meeting could participate, and majority voted to issue support of the Lift One measure. Election Day is on March 5<sup>th</sup>, where the issue will be brought to the public.

**President's comments:** All of the issues discussed are vital for looking to the future of this community and creating opportunities for Aspen to thrive.

**Finance Committee Update:** The Committee has met over the last few months regarding the Request for Proposal issued in November to area banks. Both Charlie Bantis and Cari Kuhlman were recused from the process, due to conflicts of interest. This was a process first discussed early last year, as a part of the strategic plan, to ensure the Chamber's financial security and efficiency. In the Board packet you will find the recommendations made for the spread of the ACRA accounts, and we are seeking ratification from the Board to move forward with the recommendations. Motion was approved. Additionally, as part of the technology upgrade aspect of the strategic plan, the Chamber will be switching from AT&T to Verizon Wireless, for cost savings and reliability. Finally, as economic impact surveys have been discussed recently, the Committee will be looking deeper into options available later this year.

**Marketing Advisory Committee Update:** The Committee met last week and reviewed the structure of Destination Marketing. We are confident in Eliza and Sarah's leadership. In line with the strategic plan, there is continued evolution of the ACRA website and technology. The chatbot, Diana, is live on the website. We are continuing research of visitor data with Arts & Culture partners. A new creative plan has been developed around the "secret season", including media. Many upcoming opportunities with sales, groups, and weddings. Jeb Ball, of Redwheel Media, has joined our Committee, and our next meeting is scheduled for May 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Old Business:** none.

**New Business:** none.

**Director's Comments:** Due to time constraints, director's comments were limited to those with vital updates.

**Dave Ressler:** During the January 29<sup>th</sup> meeting, Debbie brought up healthcare and opportunities to review before the Board. We have been working with insurance providers to create products that are tailored to needs and costs of our community. We will have more details to share in the coming weeks.

**John Kinney:** Please take a look at the handouts that have been passed around for information on the Airport Experience Committees. This will be a ten month process followed by immediate action.

**Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 10:49 a.m.