

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
June 27th, 2017**

**Call to order:** Donnie Lee called the meeting to order at 8:37 a.m.

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

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

**John Kinney:** Provided an update of the airport plans. The FAA has changed the flight capacity of the airport runway by 30-50%. A normal runway has a capacity of 64 arrivals and departures an hour. The Aspen airport has a runway that flights go head to head on during arrival and departure. The current capacity per hour is 32 which is changing to 20. This will affect flight schedules the most during the winter season.

**Presentation: Pitkin County Assessor's Office, Larry Fite:**

Larry explained how the Colorado tax system for residential and nonresidential properties is unique by having a split assessment rate. The Gallagher Amendment which was passed in the 80's, requires a balance of residential and nonresidential taxes on a state wide basis. Residential property has grown exponentially in comparison to nonresidential property. Over the past few years the residential assessment rate has been at 7.96% and has just been lowered to 7.2%. This change has the effect of shifting the tax liability from residential to commercial property. Changes to individual taxing districts will vary depending on the size and makeup of the properties within the district. Small districts that are primarily residential could potentially end up with a reduced overall tax base depending on the degree to which values increased during the current revaluation cycle. Larger districts will likely see a redistribution of the overall tax burden from residential to non-residential properties.

**Chair's comments:** Congratulations to the ACRA staff on another successful FOOD & WINE Classic. There is a lot going on this summer which reminds us how lucky we are to be here.

**President's Comments:** Thank you to ACRA staff for a successful FOOD & WINE Classic. Dave Ressler has accepted the honor of Grand Marshall for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade. We are looking for 3 judges for the parade; please contact me today if you are interested. Met with Mitch Osur about a new Mobility Lab Experiment that City Council will be meeting tonight to talk about. Please find attached press release for more information. Kudos to the City for taking this initiative. We've been working with the City on the new Shop Aspen campaign. The Shop Aspen map is completed that will be available at all of our information centers and the Saturday Market booths. At the end of July, we are hosting the Destination Marketing of the West CEO Forum with 35 CEO's attending from other destinations. Many of our western state counterparts are very interested to learn more about the marijuana tourism so we will be working on having a roundtable discussion with that group.

The City will be discussing the master plan for their new office and the ACRA offices at the July 11<sup>th</sup> work session.

**Public Affairs Committee:** Kudos to everyone at ACRA who worked on the Shop Aspen campaign. This is a great way to provide a balance for all of the input we received from the local retailers. The PA Committee met with a group that is working on a regional housing authority. We see a lot of opportunity to share resources and information to help this succeed. They would like to do a study for the housing needs of our commuters. We will be talking about what's there that's interesting for us, what can we do to take advantage of this movement and the work they are doing, at our next meeting.

We are also working with the City on mobility over the summer season.

**Marketing Advisory Committee:** Jeff shared a few updates on some initiatives due to some budgeting changes in the DM budget. The Aspen Photo Challenge has completed, we discussed how to continue to improve that program.

**Old Business:** none.

**New Business:** none.

**Director's Comments**

**Andrew Ernemann:** This summer is reminding me of 2006-2007 on the real estate front. We are seeing properties quickly gaining multiple offers. There is a trend of people wanting to be downtown with easy access to services. We are tracking 100% over last year in regards to transaction volume for real estate. My question is, are we getting ahead of the construction that is happening and where is that tipping point?

**Bill Tomcich:** We are seeing healthy projections for summer occupancy. May – October is pacing  $\frac{3}{4}\%$  ahead of last year. Keep in mind, we have fewer beds this season with the Sky Hotel closed. To keep even with last year we need to have about a 4% increase. However, last year was a record year. SAS is doing great with early bookings for next winter, this is happening about a month earlier than usual. I believe it is due to the increased air service into the Aspen Airport.

**Charlie Bantis:** I met with a group to put forth effort in taking local young adults and employing them to help them attain skills to be able to stay in the valley. This is a direct initiative to resolve the employment needs in the valley.

**Corey Enloe:** absent.

**Cristal Logan:** absent.

**Dave Ressler:** Thank you for the privilege of being the Grand Marshall for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade. Marijuana has certainly created new issues in our emergency department that we haven't dealt with before. However, alcohol is still the number one drug so please remember that there are agencies and help there for those who need it. A lot of the discussion with the Better Care Act is about Medicaid. I do encourage you to speak your mind to our senators on this legislation.

**David Perry:** Snowmass Bike Park had a very successful opening and Snowmass has never been busier. We have approval from the Forest Service to start construction on our new attractions in Snowmass.

**Heather Kemp:** I have employees that love to work in Aspen but they don't want to live here. When we poll people on affordable housing, are we polling both the people who live here as well as the people who work here and live down valley? Some of the other retailers I've talked to have brought up the idea of having dog friendly stickers on their windows to help dog owners visit their shops.

**Heather Steenge-Hart:** absent.

**Jeanette Darnauer:** absent.

**Jeff Bay:** NPR is broadcasting from Aspen right now and we are getting a huge amount of national coverage from that. I heard on NPR about a reduction of traffic elsewhere and how it increased after that was announced. It really is about changing people's habits. A 340 unit affordable housing development was approved last night for Eagle County.

**John Maloy:** Our facilities are in high demand and are being used frequently by the community during the summer. Keep in mind that once our staff leaves for the summer, we have plenty of parking to utilize.

**Julia Theisen:** Our October board meeting date will be changed to accommodate a board retreat focused on tourism. We will be bringing in an outside speaker from the federal level to talk about national tourism and the impact of the

economy on a national level. We'll also bring a speaker from the state level and possibly international. The retreat will be a very robust half day session.

**Laura Smith:** absent.

**Lisa LeMay:** *Comments via email:* Early June didn't have its usual drop. Typically, we get a small upswing for Memorial Day and then traffic drops back down until Food & Wine. This year, we didn't see the drop in traffic after the holiday but instead saw a steady increase until we got the big jump the 16th. It's great seeing that time fill in!!

**Maria Morrow:** The two biggest issues in the valley right now are affordable housing and traffic. Both of these issues could get worse if we don't find common ground throughout the valley.

**Nina Eisenstat:** I am working on developing a value based voice for our elected officials. I am also working with the Aspen Institute on the Ideas Festival. Every presentation I've attended at the Ideas Festival, the presenter mentions how thin the air is along with how beautiful is it here. We are getting wonderful exposure from this event.

**Patti Clapper:** We were recently interviewed by Aaron Harbor with USA Talk Network. I will try to get some footage of the interview for the local TV networks. The opening of the white water park in Basalt is June 30<sup>th</sup> from 5-7 pm. We are still taking suggestions for the name of the park.

**Riley Tippet:** absent.

**Rob Ittner:** General consensus from the restaurants during FOOD & WINE was that it was successful. They have asked how we can better adapt the event for our needs, perhaps with better outreach to local caterers. Overwhelmingly, businesses will be operating understaffed for this summer season. This translates to the housing issues throughout the valley as well as the overall concern that costs have skyrocketed for general maintenance services. I am working with publishers on a new restaurant cookbook that will be sold nationwide and locally.

**Rose Abello:** We sold out our first event of the year. Bluebird Art + Sound is an interactive art exhibition in Base Village from June 30<sup>th</sup> – July 2<sup>nd</sup>. Weather cooperating, we will have fireworks in base village this year.

**Simon Chen:** Is the county going to do anything about Independence Pass and the traffic impacts on pedestrians and bikers during the GAB closure?

*Patti:* We will be implementing a system to notify semi drivers if they are too long in length to go over the pass at the base of the pass. We are also talking about putting up some signage or information to notify people of the mixed use over the pass.

*Charlie:* Is there any talk about possibly restricting the bikers from riding the pass or notifying them of the dangers during that GAB closure?

*Patti:* I'll bring that up in our discussions with the BOCC.

*Rob:* There is a law that passenger cars needs to give bikers a 3 foot right of way when passing them.

*Patti:* It's an education process for both drivers and bikers alike.

*Tim:* Are some of the delivery companies thinking about using smaller trucks so that they can go over the passes?

*Patti:* There are efforts and outreach being made to do so.

**Steve Skadron:** I was recently invited to Halifax, Nova Scotia to talk about the legislation on marijuana in Colorado as Canada is preparing to legalize it nationwide. Our City Council retreat is coming up where we will be reworking the whole employee housing program. We're going to see some clash from the up valley and down valley communities because of the different sets of values. The City is working on providing discounted hotel rates and using vacant city housing for employees to stay in town instead of commuting during the time of the Grand Avenue Bridge closure. It will first be open to City employees and then others.

**Tim Perry:** Was in Chicago recently and a friend asked me about the music festival in Aspen. They hear recordings from the Aspen Music Festival on the public radio. With the bridge closing the construction workers are very concerned

about their employees that commute from beyond GWS. They are really trying to find a solution for their workers not being able to make it here to meet deadlines.

**Warren Klug:** The summer is off to a great start and I hope our restaurant and retail friends are seeing a great season as well. Recently visited Montana and Glacier National Park where we had some great and not so great experiences with our travel. Everybody in this community plays a part in our visitors experience and it's important for us to continue our efforts of being welcoming, friendly and helpful to them.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 10:43 a.m.