

**ASPEN CHAMBER RESORT ASSOCIATION  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES  
November 28th, 2017**

**Call to order:** Donnie Lee called the meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.

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

**Approval of prior meeting minutes:** The board unanimously approved the September 26th minutes.

**Grey Lady – Ryan and Ian:** Last night at the City Council work session, The Grey Lady asked for a temporary use permit to access the trellis space for a Saturday Market during the winter season which would be converted to restaurant space in the evening. In the past we have requested to cover the space during the winter because of snow but have decided to request utilization of the space for a Saturday Market. We want the market to be open to vendors as well as brick and mortar stores. We are trying to strictly adhere to the criteria of the summer Saturday Market. We have reached out to as many retailers in the area to get constructive criticism. We are hoping this will not be direct competition but a good compliment to the downtown core during the winter.

*Lisa:* I think this could bring second home owners into the core if it is food heavy.

*Riley:* I sat on CCLC for many years and what we found over the years of researching the Saturday Market is that the public appreciates the amount of people the market brings into the core to shop in the rest of the businesses.

**Presentation - RFTA Ralph Trapani, David Johnson & Dan Blankenship:**

We are currently on an outreach tour for the RFTA Integrated Transportation System Plan Stage 3 – “analyze options”. RFTA is the second largest transit authority in CO and the largest rural transit agency in the U.S. with over 5 million riders annually. RFTA not only reduces traffic congestion, but improves human health and air quality and allows everyone mobility and accessibility. The non-driving mode share for the region is approximately 30%, roughly double the national average. RFTA exceeds expectations at AM peak times moving 40% of all commuters into downtown Aspen; During XGames, RFTA carries 59,000 passengers daily. This highly effective system requires investment. We have identified 70 alternatives that relate to west Garfield County for short, medium and long term improvements including service improvements, TDM and bike shares, parking, bus stops, bus replacement and expansion, pedestrian crossings/trail, expansion of maintenance facilities, employee housing and office space. Improvements that benefit Aspen include optimization for increased service on weekends for BRT’s, We-Cycle expansion, upper valley parking management, real time vehicle and bus travel time information, dynamic parking pricing and expansion of the aspen maintenance facility. Currently RFTA has a few existing funding sources including a mass transit tax, RTA sales & use tax, service agreements, grant revenue and operating revenue. Potential local revenue sources include: lane usage fees, utility fees, and special improvement district, expand sales & use taxes, lodging tax, parking revenues, naming rights/advertising/private contributions and property tax. There is a possibility that the Federal transit funding will be abolished.

*Cristal:* Thank you Dan Blankenship for your great leadership, work and service to this community. We would be a much different place without RFTA under your leadership.

*Rob:* What’s your expectation with Gallagher and how business property taxes and leaseholders will be hit with a Mill Levy?

*Ralph:* We have not done that analysis yet. That’s why we are moving into the financial planning step of this process. We would like to meet with you again once that process is done.

*Charlie:* Where do fare increases factor in?

*Ralph:* Fare increases would come as time goes on, RFTA does not operate solely on the fares.

*Dan:* We do passenger surveys every two years. A cash fare from GWS to Aspen is \$7. Riders can get a discount with a stored value card and/or season zone pass. Many businesses subsidize their employees season passes by paying for them outright or paying a percentage of the pass cost to make it more affordable for riders. Riders who have to pay that cost think that we’re already at that upper threshold of fare pricing. We want people to use transit to reduce traffic and

because of the lack of parking spaces up valley, we have to make the fare prices affordable. Our forecasts indicate that our ridership will increase by 30-40% in the next few years.

*Jeff:* I use RFTA all the time and so do my employees. What RFTA did during the GAB closure was tremendous, thank you. Is there any reason you don't sell bus wraps or advertising for the buses?

*Dan:* It has been discussed by the RFTA board. We cannot advertise other businesses on our vehicles because of an ordinance in Aspen. GWS is a little less strict with those ordinances. It's kind of a politically sensitive issue.

*Jeanette:* What type of improvements are you planning on doing to the pedestrian crossings?

*Ralph:* We plan on working on underpasses primarily.

*Cristal:* What is the timeline for the mill levy and what can we do to help that process?

*Ralph:* Stay tuned, right now there isn't anything.

**Chair's comments:** Welcome John Rigney to the Board. Thank you for your participation in the October Tourism Outlook. There will be no meeting in December.

**President's Comments:** We moved! Please come join us on December 7<sup>th</sup> from 4-6pm for our Open House. Please bring an unwrapped gift for a donation to Lift Up for the holiday gift program. Please RSVP to Erik Klanderud. We don't have a signed lease or signed marketing contract yet. We are hoping to have those contracts complete by January 1<sup>st</sup>. Attached to the back of the packet is the City Top Ten Goals for your review. I was unable to attend the New Zealand trip, however Steve Skadron was able to. Thank you to Warren and Kathy Klug, this year's Wintersköl King and Queen. The Wintersköl membership event will be a luncheon instead of a dinner. The date of the luncheon is January 11<sup>th</sup> at the St. Regis.

**Nominating Committee:** All of our seats ran unopposed this year. The officers of the Board will be visited in January. Thank you to all who will be serving again.

**Finance Committee:** The committee met yesterday to review the Q3 financials and everything is looking good. All three entities are looking at a positive income for the end of the year. The proposed budgets for next year are included in the packet. You'll notice DM changes in rent, they are now paying directly to the COA instead of paying the Chamber. Salaries are looking at a 3% increase, member dues are targeted at a 3% increase for 2018. The membership dues were kept conservative for 2018. Both the DM and Chamber budgets have off ramps in the case that revenues do not come in as projected. The 7% increase in tax revenues was calculated off of the 2016 numbers. We are negotiating with the DM contract what the proper reserves should be and how they should be handled. The \$90,000 reserve fund line is going to build the reserve fund for any economic downturns in the future. The Airport budget is relatively fixed.

**Motion to approve all three 2018 budgets, unanimously approved.**

**Old Business:** none.

**New Business:** none.

### **Director's Comments**

**Warren Klug:** Welcome John Rigney to the Board. Thanks to Ski Co for opening weekend. The pace for the winter seems to be strong. Holiday gift baskets were given to 250 families.

**Steve Skadron:** The City is in the process of building 3 affordable housing units by the base of smuggler mountain, near the S curve and Castle Creek. There is opposition on the castle creek one from members of the castle creek caucus. Their general concerns include the access to castle creek road and the size and density of the project. This is a core component of a sustainable industry, there are no variances. The alternative is a smaller unit by removing one floor. This will come back on the 11<sup>th</sup> of December agenda and I believe council can be persuaded on this. Please contact City Council to discuss your position on this.

We worked for two months on the City budget, which was just passed with 128 million to be spent in 2018. Two big projects include the new City hall offices and the pedestrian mall project. The infrastructure beneath the mall is rotting

and needs to be addressed. Toni Cronberg is continuing the fight against the City hall with an attorney from Denver, this can end up costing the tax payers more. At the December 12<sup>th</sup> work session we will discuss the mobility lab which the City will have to make a decision on in December or January.

Queenstown – from the conversations I had in Queenstown, you could replace Queenstown with Aspen as they are dealing with the same exact issues we are; traffic, affordability, capacity, and climate. One thing I really liked about Queenstown were their narrow streets that were very pedestrian friendly. They have no land use code there, which is the main thing I mentioned to them. I couldn't be prouder of everyone in this community and how we translate to audiences around the world.

**John Rigney:** Thank you for the warm welcome. I served on this board for 6 years about 8 or 9 years ago and it's good to be back. We had a good opening weekend. We need temporary workers for the season. The next key area of focus is to connect the midway in Snowmass to the basin. There is a little fill in needed for December and late March, but the season is looking good. The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Snowmass is this December. We have the U.S. Grand Prix in January and then XGames at the end of January.

**Heather Steenge-Hart:** Business is looking great for us. We spent the off season doing renovations in the restaurant, the Velvet Buck, with focus on Colorado cuisine primal cooking. We've also expanded our bar in the main lobby of the hotel which opens December 9<sup>th</sup>.

**Rose Abello:** The Snowmass 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration is on Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> in which occupancy has doubled for those days. The \$6.50 ticket sale made our numbers hit record highs. There will be fireworks that night and a party at Elk Camp with a \$10 gondola ride price to it. Banana day will be on the 16<sup>th</sup> with prizes to give away. The 50<sup>th</sup> Golden Gala is on the 16<sup>th</sup> as well. JAS will announce their lineup on that Friday. On Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> there will be a cabin jump and picnic up at Spider Sabich cabin. Every day at base village and mall area, we are providing free s'mores from 3:30-4:30 for free.

**Nine Eisenstat:** Welcome to John. Commend Debbie and staff for the October Tourism Outlook. It was well attended with great speakers and great strategies.

**Riley Tippet:** We helped 60-70 people get over the hill on Thanksgiving to go skiing. Thanksgiving and Christmas will always be busy. Christmas week is filling in really nicely.

**Cristal Logan:** Congratulations to Snowmass. Aspen Sojourner just dropped yesterday with their new cover. I will be Co-moderating town hall at the limelight, covering foundational questions of the housing program, who gets to live in subsidized housing and why. The event will be recorded for the radio by Aspen Public Radio.

**Maria Morrow:** The City Council top 9 goals is included in the agenda packet. One thing that was important to us this year was to be more vocal and involved with the community issues. We want to think more regionally. We know that our employees and business owners run down valley. We want to have forward thinking about mobility as well as RFTA. The statistics are amazing from RFTA, they are very forward thinking. Analyzing opportunities for new young business, how we communicate and gather information will be among the focus of the PA committee which will be reconstituted in 2018. If you know people or have ideas that should be on our agenda, please let us know.

**Erik Klanderud:** Paul Menter – former finance director from the City will be the facilitator at the Financial Seminar on Tuesday the 5<sup>th</sup>, 10am at the Limelight.

**Lisa LeMay:** Thank you for the unopposed reelection, it's an honor to sit on this board and participate on the committees. I am so appreciative of what the City is doing regarding housing, it is essential to maintain our community. The people who carry a lot of the weight in this valley are the most effected. The more we can encourage our employees to even write small letters to the council is really important.

**Andrew Ernemann:** From a global standpoint and affordable housing, it's great to see the rental side of it addressed. Having a stronger rental stock allows us to be much more dynamic and meet the needs of the community. Aspen seems

like we didn't have an off season this year which is encouraging for this winter. We are tracking about 100% over last year's numbers, on par compared to 2 years ago. It's a mix of higher end properties and the average price point going up by 6-7%, depending on the neighborhood in Aspen. Snowmass sales are about flat as well as their prices. Looking ahead – total listing inventory is down about 15-20 percent, a more constricted supply. The same number of properties are under contact as last year. Might have a little bit of slowdown going into 2018.

**Heather Kemp:** We've been really busy with corporate gifting this month. We see that people are still coming, no snow doesn't seem to slow people down. There are people here in town that have jobs and they're homeless. What do we do and what is our solution for having some emergency housing, besides St. Mary's? I will see if I can get some people to write letters to council on this issue. The housing here is not exactly affordable for our lower income employees. As a retailer we need employers that can work for \$15 an hour and they can't afford a one bedroom for \$1700/month.

**John Maloy:** Congrats to Warren and Kathy on your retirement. The CO Department of Education measures success across Colorado and uses it to approve and rate districts. Aspen School District received the highest rating in Colorado. Opting children out of taking the state wide test is becoming more popular in our school district. It is making it difficult to determine the teaching and learning changes that need to occur. We are concluding a 24 month study of the salaries of our teachers in order to attract and obtain teacher's as well as find places for them to live. We are able to provide housing for about 18% of our staff.

**Charlie Bantis:** Please do send your constituents out to the seminar on the 5<sup>th</sup>. The incidents of embezzlement in this community is high even though you might not hear about it in the news. It is a real issue that is simple to prevent. Paul Menter has some great ideas to implement to protect your business.

**Bill Tomcich:** What a tremendous October Aspen had as I had addressed in my recent executive summary. Congrats to ASE Airport staff, the consultant team, the BOCC and everyone involved with ASE's EA on getting it approved locally and off to the FAA.

#### **Guest Comments:**

**John Kinney:** Thank you to this Board of Directors and key individuals that played a role in the Environmental Assessment approval. Thank you for the letters of support. We will be getting the EA back from the FAA in the middle of January.

**Ward Hauenstein:** Not everyone was opposed to the Castle Creek project. I encourage people to weigh in on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of that unit. We will be discussing the AirBNB & VRBO type properties and how they affect long term housing, rentals, lodging tax, etc. ACRA is hosting a Financial Seminar on December 5<sup>th</sup> at the Limelight. I really encourage all the non-profits and small business to get involved and know what the red flags can be when embezzlement happens.

**Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 10:39 a.m.