

Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau
& Office of Economic Development (iManitou)

Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes

April 25, 2013

Present: Jennifer Brown, Karen Cullen, Tim Haas, Ken Jaray, Marcy Morrison,
David Symonds, Julie Vance, John Webster

Absent: Tara Hawbaker, Matt Carpenter

Staff: Leslie Lewis, Marcy Morrison

A regular meeting of the iManitou Board of Directors held a regular meeting on Thursday, April 25, 2013 in the City Council chambers of Manitou Springs City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 8:35 am by President David Symonds.

Marcy Morrison announced the resignation of Tara Hawbaker from the Board of Directors. Marcy will contact Tara and thank her for her participation. She then suggested the Board talk to other business owners they may know that may be interested in serving on the Board of Directors and have them contact her.

Dave asked that the agenda be amended to add a "Marketing Report" following the Roundtable Discussion: Business Year to Date.

A. Action Item: Approval of March Meeting Minutes

Karen Cullen made a motion to approve the March meeting minutes as presented. Ken Jaray seconded the motion and it was approved.

B. Action Item: Approval of March Financials

Jennifer Brown reviewed the Balance Sheet. On the Income & Expense statement, she noted there has been progress towards the goals including Dues revenue. There is a shortfall on the manitousprings.org ads that was a rafting company that has not renewed their membership. Their banner ad was removed from the web site. She explained that the "800 Service" title will be changed to "Communications". That expense was high in March because of the change over from CBeyond to Comcast and some overlapping services that were needed. Once the change is complete, iManitou will save approximately \$200 per month. The \$825 on brochure distribution was for our annual distribution through Pikes Peak Country Attractions Association. Dave asked about the Flood Insurance coverage. Staff was unsure of the limits but will check the amounts. Questions were raised about the ownership of the building. After discussion, staff will add the City as additional insured on the policy.

Ken asked who, if anyone, is selling banner ads for manitousprings.org and was told currently there is no one pushing those banners. With no one specifically selling ads, Ken brought up concern that we would not hit the budgeted revenue in that category. Karen stated that

Authentic B&B Inns & Cottages of Pikes Peak will not be renewing their banner ad as they haven't had response from the banner. Julie Vance stated that she felt the web site has value to the members and those members who have taken time to add additional photos and longer listings may be willing to pay a little more for their listings which might help make up some of the difference.

There will be an adjustment to the March financials as staff is going to change the \$862.50 that is shown as a reimbursement to offset a portion of the expense under Economic Development. This money is the check that the City paid on the Highway 24 sign.

Tim Haas made a motion to approve the financials. Karen seconded the motion and it was approved.

C. Action Item: Approval of New & Renewing Members

Staff did not get the New and Renewing Members list put together for the meeting so the item was tabled until April.

D. Roundtable Discussion: Business YTD

Tim requested this discussion be added to the agenda. He reported that his business is down so far this year and expressed concern that the Board needs to be aware. The board discussed the weather and Easter may have been factors. Several Board members reported not only are their sales down but other businesses they have talked with are down as well. Reservations for summer are looking positive for some types of business (cabins and bed & breakfasts). The board also discussed, that following a bad summer last year, many businesses cannot handle another bad year.

Ken asked if surveys were done on a regular basis, or ever done, to find out what's missing and what people enjoy. There has not been a survey done in many years. Ken suggested that most organizations do reach out to their clientele and that a 5 question survey be created that can be placed on facebook, in lodging room, restaurants and shops and possibly handed out to high school students around town. Ken feels there is not a lack of people in town but that would give an idea on what they would spend more money on. Marcy reported that she hears great things, both visiting with people in the office and when she is out and tells people she is from Manitou, but feels the problem may be disposable income with the people who visit. The board then discussed the fact that Manitou does not attract people who don't worry about money. Karen stated that in the Social Media meeting, one of the gallery owners stated that Manitou does not do a very good job of marketing to higher income brackets. Ken stated that possibly the people we are marketing to don't fit our needs so we need to change who our market is and figure out how to get there. Jennifer mentioned a supplement in the Denver paper that comes from the Evergreen/Conifer area. Several of the areas that surround Denver advertise in the publication. She suggested that we look at that as an advertising possibility.

Ken brought an article that ran in the Independent recently, "How to make the most of limited time when you have unlimited options". It is a 24 hour, three day, and one week suggestion of itineraries that Manitou Springs is not listed in at all. Pikes Peak, Garden of the Gods, and Cave

of the Winds are mentioned. The contract we have is with the Military papers and iManitou did not run an ad in the Insider. Ken was disturbed that Manitou was not mentioned in the article, advertiser or not.

Marcy stated if we want to attract a more upscale clientele, we need to make sure the stores are offering merchandise for that level of customer. Dave stated the complaints he receives are that there is nothing to do at night in Manitou Springs. The baby boomers are looking for an “experiential” vacation. Ken stated that he thinks health and well being are part of what the boomers are looking for. They want adventure and unique experiences. We have much of what that population is looking for. Marcy mentioned that we don’t do enough promotion of the parks and open space that surrounds Manitou Springs. iManitou has an area trail map that was created years ago that we make available in the office and on the web site to show all of the hiking opportunities in the area.

Karen talked about packages created by Authentic Inns, called “Authentically Adventurous”, and each of the properties put together a package of some kind (with ATVing, zip lining, romance, etc) that they put in a newsletter and sent it to 8,000 people. Karen asked how many people iManitou has in its data base that a newsletter could be sent to. Julie suggested talking to the companies that offer those types of adventures about helping to fund a promotion of those activities. Ken suggested these are great ideas to put into a plan for next year and work on it now. Karen suggested it should be part of the marketing plan. Marcy will talk with TOSC about using the maps on hiking and biking that they have.

Dave thanked Ken for bringing the article to the attention of the board and pointed out that the Manitou Springs web site doesn’t mention history or adventure on its home page. The brochure distribution was discussed.

Ken suggested that the Board could spend a lot of time talking about the details of all that had been discussed and stated he would prefer to see the Board come up with broad statements and objectives and allocate resources (staff and gathering community resources) to come together and figure out a strategy to achieve those objectives. Karen suggested that might be the Marketing committee. Marcy suggested that a meeting, possibly a retreat, be set up and those broad terms and objectives be set with short term and long term goals. Ken suggested that a lot of that is already in the City Vision plan and that should be used as a starting point.

E. Marketing Report

Tim stated that he has attended the Marketing Committee meetings that have been held and while they have been informative, he doesn’t believe that group can come up with short term and long term goals. Dave reminded the group that when the Chamber and EDC merged, the idea was to bring on someone with a marketing background (the COO). That has not worked and Dave pointed out that iManitou doesn’t have a professional marketing person or a professional marketing plan and he thinks we need that level of help. All of the business owners have their ideas of marketing their business but we need someone that can market the community. Karen agreed that we need someone with expertise that can do the work. Tim agreed and said the concept is not new, that everyone has been aware of that for some time.

He further stated, in iManitou's defense, he feels we have done a fairly reasonable job from year to year of evaluating what has worked and not worked. There are some standby areas such as the State Vacation Guide and Colorado Springs Guide and presence on the web. Karen stated the presence on the web has declined. Tim stated we have attempted to move forward and should not rely on a volunteer community to come up with the most important marketing piece iManitou has. Karen stated the statistics need to be gathered to look at and staff should gather the data so the board can look at all of it. Karen offered to identify what should be looked at and stated she could actually do the work but needs access to the analytics. Staff reported there is currently a problem with Google Analytics and staff is trying to figure out what the problem is. Staff further stated that we do have the WordPress statistics and will get Karen access to those statistics she needs.

Tim stated he felt it has been a good conversation that plays into the bigger picture of Marcy has been essentially donating her time for some time and iManitou has people wearing a lot of different hats. He asked about having a short term plan of being as covered as we can be for this season, which should include having a reserve in case of a major event, and if we can do some work now and make changes to impact this season and have a brainstorming meeting in late summer or fall to not only discuss marketing but determine how to handle other needs that we have and structure the organization going forward. Karen asked if the SEO work that was set up has been done. Staff stated the report was complete and thought staff had made the recommended changes. Marcy thought we could do pre-planning now but that many of the business owners were too focused on summer and what will happen to set long term goals.

Dave suggested that we contact Kezziah Watkins to assist in the process. They have a background on Manitou and the iManitou organization. Ken made a motion to allocate up to \$1,500 for a planning effort and would like to start by contacting Kezziah Watkins to see if they are available. Dave seconded the motion and it was approved. The Board would like to see a facilitated meeting prior to Memorial Day. Dave asked about having the Mayor attend. After additional discussion, it was determined that the process should start with the Board and then after it is in place, involve the City.

Marcy spoke with the Mayor regarding her concern about the tone of the flooding potential and asked that he contact Mayor Bach and find a way to balance the message so that we don't cause panic and discourage visitors to the area. Mayor Snyder has a meeting set with Colorado Springs and invited Marcy to attend. Ken asked if Marcy would talk with the Mayors about the Governor's call that Colorado be the healthiest place in the nation. Ken feels Manitou is leading the way and should partner with Colorado Springs. The person who ran Intel's who ran their global wellness program has been assigned to Encore Fellowships to pay retirees to work with non-profits. This person will be working with Ken's group beginning in August.

F. Downtown Cleanup

Tim handed out a flyer that had been created for the upcoming clean-up. The flyers will be printed on colored paper and handed out downtown. The BID is sponsoring a downtown clean-up which will include dumpsters for businesses to use. There was a downtown walk-thru with Bruno and Brad where items needing attention were identified. The dumpsters will be placed

toward both ends of the downtown but the exact locations have not been determined. Dave offered the Wichita Lot for the location of one of the dumpsters. The BID will be power-washing the sidewalks. Flowers are being planted so the downtown will be ready for the season. Tim also had a summary of the ordinance regarding the outdoor seating which will be handed out again with the clean-up flyer.

G. City Report

Matt was not available for the meeting today. Ken asked if everyone had seen the article that Matt will be inducted into the Colorado Springs Sports Hall of Fame.

The Parking meters are going up this week. Ken asked about the Residential Parking Plan. Karen stated the Residential Parking Plan has not yet been formalized. There are 83 parking spaces on Ruxton and 100 residences. The downtown does have a free 15 minute option for people to run in and pick something up without paying for parking.

H. COO Report

Marcy asked how many businesses have not renewed their memberships. Staff stated there were probably 8 in the last couple of months that did not renew. Several of the businesses have closed and others are not in a financial position to renew their memberships. Staff will get a non-member list to the Board.

Ken previously asked for a comparison of sponsors of the wine festival last year compared to this year. Floyd has been talking with two car companies regarding sponsorship. If one of those commit, we will be at the same sponsor level. Last year many of the restaurants paid \$100 to have their menus at the event. Leslie was not sure how many people picked up the menus. She was unsure if that would be offered for a fee. Julie reported she has some reservations for the wine festival. Ken clarified that he was looking for the amount of staff time involved in putting on an event and asked staff to begin tracking with the wine festival.

Marcy stated she feels iManitou is getting good response from public works recently. They will be painting the posts for the signs on El Paso.

The responses we have received for the part time Social Media position have not met Marcy's expectations. One of the two people interviewed was very over-qualified and the other had done some of what we are looking for but there was concern she may not have the initiative to do things on her own. Marcy is going to the WorkForce Center to talk with the councilors there. Julie suggested we go back to the colleges and look for a student. One of the department heads at PPCC is going to send the position description to the correct department head for us and UCCS does not have a graphic design department. Marcy thinks we will find the right person but it may take a little longer than we hoped. Tim shared the proposal Amanda Blough put together for Garden of the Gods Trading Post. Her proposal includes methods of measurement for the social media.

I. Special Events Update

The 9 Health Fair was last Saturday. It was better attended than 2012 but still not up to our expectations. There were 172 people that went through the paperwork process. People

attended from Beulah and Ridgeway this year. Staff thought 60 attendees were from Manitou Springs. Several people thanked us for doing the event.

We have seen a surge in presale tickets for the wine festival recently. The presale discount ends the first of May. Staff needs to review how event insurance works and determine if it should be purchased.

We have received approval from City Council for the ice cream social, the summer concert series, the coffin races, and the wine festival. The concerts begin the first week of June and that schedule has been given to Peak Radar to put in their concert publication. Staff needs to check with Dan Folke on the parking for the concerts as he told the band he would block 20 spaces for them if changes are made to Soda Springs Park.

J. CommonSights Proposal

The CommonSights organization is looking for the Board to support them going to the businesses to sell the expanded listings. Businesses could have a free listing that would be very basic and iManitou could list up to 20 attractions for free. The business will revenue share with iManitou. Dave suggested staff contact Golden, who has a sight, and find out their thoughts on the program. Dave then asked if this is something we could create ourselves. The Board discussed looking into designing a sticker that we could talk to the City about putting that on the sides of the kiosks. The Board determined we need a mobile app to point the QR code to, which we don't have.

Having no other business before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 10:40 am.