

**Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau
& Office of Economic Development**

**Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes**

October 23, 2015

Present: Justin Armour, Rachele Cully, Gwenn David, Tim Haas, Marcy Morrison,
Julie Vance

Absent: Karen Cullen, Ken Jaray, Joy Vernon, Sarge Mac Donald

Guests: Michelle Anthony, Molly Wingate

Staff: Leslie Lewis

A regular meeting of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development Board of Directors was held Thursday, October 23, 2014 at the Garden of the Gods Trading Post. The meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m. by President Marcy Morrison.

A. Action Item: Approval of September Meeting Minutes

Tim Haas made a motion to approve the minutes of the September Meeting as presented. Julie Vance seconded the motion and it passed.

B. Action Item: Approval of September Financials

Tim and Leslie will meet prior to the next Board meeting to adjust the Forecast column. Tim reported there would be adjustments made on both the revenue and expense side of the financials. Marcy stated that the revenue side has been stronger because of the grants received in 2014 and as grants diminish after 2015, the Board will need to look at additional ways to increase revenue. The funds received from the City for promotion were discussed. Leslie stated that in meeting with Rebecca Davis, Finance Director, and Jason Wells, City Administrator, an increase was discussed. Prior to requesting additional funds, Leslie feels it would be important to have a plan for those funds and expressed wanting to see additional funds in 2015 go toward the mitigation efforts. In the July/August time frame, the Board will work on a 2016 plan prior to meeting with the City in September. With no questions regarding the September financials, Rachele Cully made a motion to approve them as presented. Gwenn David seconded the motion and it passed.

C. Action Item: Approval of New and Renewing Members

Staff received an additional New Member application from the Space Foundation Discovery Center as well as Renewing Members applications for PakMail, The Keg, Academy Riding Stables, Rocky Top Motel & Campground, Briarhurst Manor, Garden of the Gods RV Resort, and Andrea Warner. Julie made a motion to approve the New and Renewing Member applications with the additions. Tim seconded. The motion passed.

D. Action Item: Acceptance of Board Resignation

Staff received an email from Amanda Galloway submitting her resignation from the Board. Amanda is expecting with the baby due in March and feels she needs this time to prepare for the baby. Amanda's term expires at the end of this year.

Other board members whose terms expire at the end of 2014 are Tim Haas, Marcy Morrison, and Joy Vernon. Tim and Marcy are eligible to serve one more term and Joy would be eligible for two more terms. Leslie asked both Tim and Marcy to let her know if they are interested in serving one more term. Leslie will contact Joy to see if she is interested in serving another term and an article will be placed in the newsletter announcing the opening to hopefully receive additional applications. Julie made a motion to accept Amanda's resignation. Justin Armour seconded the motion and it passed.

E. Presentation: Heritage Center Pocket Projects

Molly Wingate was introduced. Molly is working with the Heritage Center to build a Pocket Program, an interactive artifact program brought to the Heritage Center from Monticello by Betsy Neibuhr. Molly brought a sample of a Pocket for the Board to explore. The program comes with a questionnaire. It allows the person to identify the artifacts and answer questions about them. The Heritage Center would like to create 20 of the pockets with curricular guides that are age appropriate for elementary, middle school, high school and adult. The pockets can be used in the Heritage Center or on location. They would like to open the program in 2015 and use it to attract groups to the Heritage Center. They need to raise \$6,300 for the program and have received a \$3,100 grant from the Inasmuch Foundation and a \$1,000 pledge for a matching grant from a family foundation in Manitou Springs. Molly is asking the Chamber, the City, and other organizations in Manitou Springs for funds. She is asking the Chamber for \$1,000 for the matching grant. Molly will be approaching groups in November and December as people are working on budgets. Marcy asked when they would need an answer regarding any financial commitment from the Chamber and Molly stated by December 31. Molly said if they receive more money than the \$6,300, it will allow them to create more pockets. By consensus, Board members expressed support for the project and the concept fits with Heritage tourism but will need to work on the budget prior to any financial commitment.

F. Presentation & Letter of Support: Westside Avenue Plan

Wade Burkholder, Planning Director, was not available. Michelle Anthony has been attending the Westside Avenue meetings as well. She reported it now looks like the 30% design will not be available until after the first of the year with a public meeting scheduled for February or March. When the program began, there was concern by staff that Manitou's interest was not being considered as seriously as they needed to be. There was an initial push that the entire project (31st Street to the Highway 24 overpass) be identical and cohesive. They were looking at a cross section that Manitou Springs wasn't happy with. Manitou wanted their boundaries to be consistent with what has been done in the downtown district to continue our identity. The Planning Department started an effort to go to all Manitou Springs' boards, commissions and local groups asking for support for the cross section design that supported more of the things important to Manitou Springs (ie wider sidewalks, amenity zone, pedestals for sculpture). Since that time, there have been positive changes in the Westside Avenue planning meetings with the

steering committee looking at a cross section more closely with what Manitou Springs was proposing. The Planning Department is still requesting the Letter of Support be signed by Leslie on behalf of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development. Marcy has signed the Letter of Support as President of the URA.

The Westside Avenue Plan is a \$15,000,000 project with over half of the funding going to the new bridge at Adam's Crossing. There is concern about how much of the funding will be available for the improvements in the rest of the corridor. Michelle reported there is a possibility that Manitou Springs will need to fund some of the upgraded improvements and enhancements. The streetscape will be a powerful economic driver when it is complete. The cost, and some reasons for the high price of the project, was discussed. They have started having meetings with utilities, with the undergrounding work scheduled to begin after the first of the year. The RTA funding will be available in January.

Julie asked if the City would be looking at undergrounding utilities between the Highway 24 overpass and the downtown district since the other areas of Manitou Avenue will all have the underground utilities. Michelle thinks that will happen at some point but the funding will need to be put together.

Marcy again requested that the Chamber be notified when a meeting is planned so that we can let business owners know in advance so they can plan to attend. Planning staff is committed to contacting the business owners in the Manitou Springs area impacted to discuss changes that will be happening.

Justin made a motion to have Leslie sign the letter, on behalf of the Chamber, going to the Steven Murray, FHU, Andre Bracken, El Paso County Engineer, and the Westside Avenue Action Plan Project Management Team. Julie seconded the motion and it was approved.

G. Action Item: Leadership Awards

The Chamber has supported the Leadership Awards the previous two years. There has been collaboration between the City, the Chamber and the School District. Marcy reported the group is expanding the awards. She was unable to be on the call with Ken Jaray and Ralph Routon to further discuss the program. They will be moving the awards presentation to the spring. By consensus, the board agreed to contribute financially and felt spring would be a good time for the presentation. Gwenn thought the program began with the Manitou Springs Collaborative.

H. Action Item: Social Media Contract

Susan Wolbrueck's proposed contract for 2015 was sent to the Board for review. Leslie reported that Susan is currently taking care of, and does a lot with, our Facebook and Twitter accounts. She also works on youtube and instagram which are growing. For 2015, a monthly blog and social media roundtable meetings for the members (as a benefit and by fee to attend for non-members) were added. Susan will also be managing Facebook advertising as part of her contract. The proposed contract is \$800 per month. Gwenn explained that blog posts help with search engine rankings. Tim asked if there was an estimate of the number of hours spent on a monthly basis and requested an average of hours per month. The board felt two social media

roundtables per year would probably be enough. The Board would like additional information prior to approving the contract with a 60% increase in the fee.

I. City Report

Sarge Mac Donald was not present. There was concern expressed that Councilman Mac Donald has not been available for the last 5 meetings and in the work session, Council seemed unaware of concerns brought forward by the Chamber. Marcy will find out if there is still an alternate liaison appointed that might be available to attend our meetings if Councilman Mac Donald is unavailable.

J. Marketing Update

The new website is up. There were a few glitches with the lodging reports initially but those have been corrected. Julie reported she is not receiving lodging reports. Gwenn receives a report at 3 am that includes multiple requests for lodging. Karen and Brittany will be going to Denver to do some training on the backend of the site. They are still working on developing the portion of the system that will allow members to have access to their landing pages to make changes. The Board was asked to look at the new site, if they haven't already.

The Marketing Task Force will be meeting next week to make plans for the holiday advertising. Blakely + Company wanted to talk about the 2015 budget but until the full budget is set, that can't be determined. Some things are set with marketing because of the grants. We are looking for someone to do gift wrapping on the weekends. Having Santa downtown every weekend is set.

K. Executive Director's Report

The Coffin Races are this weekend. We expanded the entries to allow 70 teams but will not have the "coffin-off" so the times in the races will decide the winner. We have two shuttles that will be running 10 am – 4:30 pm. There will be parking at the high school and several of the large hotels on Manitou Avenue. One shuttle will run between downtown and the high school and the other will run on Manitou Avenue. The back lot of Tajine will be available as well. There will be a VIP event in Shoshone Plaza with food and tequila samples. This will be an invitation only event. The number of teams allowed to enter was raised because the race filled so early this year. We have 4 fire department teams and the rest are private groups and organizations. Karen is recommending the entry fee for the coffin teams be raised to \$100 for next year. Staff is concerned about doubling the fee because the cost of building the coffins and outfitting the teams in costume is high. The Westside Rhythm Kings will be playing in Soda Springs Park from 2:00 – 4:00 pm and a costume contest is planned at about 2:45 pm. Festpix is going to be at the Coffin Races. They were at ManiFest. These are professional photos that will include the Manitou Springs logo and are sent to the person's phone. To encourage people to "share" their photos, Karen and Susan are recommending we offer an incentive to share such as one in 25 people will receive \$10 in Manitou Money. Julie suggested we put a cap on the number at 10 people receiving the Manitou Money. Tim asked about the cost of having FestPix at the event; staff reported the cost to be \$450. The funds will be coming from the photography budget.

Friday evening we will have fireworks. Leslie included the information on Fox News this morning and Julie reported Channel 12 mentioned them. Leslie will be interviewing with Channel 12 later

today and will promote the fireworks as part of the weekend activities. They will be at 8:30 pm off of Higgenbotham Flats. People should be able to view them from downtown. There will be an antique hearse paraded through downtown at approximately 5:15 pm going to Miramont Castle. In speaking with Jennifer, Miramont Castle, their reservations are coming in slowly. Julie reported she has more Friday/Saturday night reservations than she has ever had for the Coffin Races. Gwenn reported that she is full for the weekend. The Coffin Races are Saturday and the Heritage Center will have Ghost Tours on Saturday evening. Michelle Anthony reported that the Ghost Tours are doing well with reservations. The Heritage Center is showing a horror movie on Friday evening. The Trading Post has "Ghost at the Post" (trick-or treating for young children) on Friday evening.

Leslie will be meeting with the 9 Health Fair leaders next week to begin work on that event for April. We have requested April 18th availability with Community Congregational Church but have not received confirmation from the Church. Leslie has not heard from Patti Clavier, who served as the medical coordinator last year, but hopes she will be at the meeting next week. If Patti is not available, we will need to find a volunteer with a medical background and certification to serve in that capacity.

At the October 14 work session with Council, Tim was unable to attend because of a break-in at the Trading Post and Gwenn had to take an emergency trip to Denver, so Julie, Marcy and Leslie attended. In discussing the "Rapid Response" line, at first it seemed Council felt calls should be sent to the El Paso County dispatch number, which Councilman Smith reminded them was more of an emergency line. During business hours, calls can be made to the old Manitou Springs Police Department number (685-5407). Council is discussing replacing the receptionist for public works in the budget sessions so that may change.

On the Right of Way maintenance topic, the Police Department will speak with Code Enforcement and ask them to take a stronger code enforcement position. If board members see weeds coming out of sidewalks on City property, public works should be notified.

The board concerns about the homeless population seemed to take Council by surprise. Julie told them she felt like the City was not necessarily making a haven for them but they weren't making it difficult for them to exist here. Councilwoman Nicolleta argued with her on that point and stated the City was making it difficult but then also discussed the food pantry available to them. Julie had another incident with a gentleman at 4:00 am, who woke her guests and had them call PD for him. Councilwoman Toll suggested Julie hire a security guard for her property. Julie again expressed concern that her guests are having problems that she has not seen in the 30 years of having motel properties in Manitou Springs.

Justin reported that he is suddenly having problems with someone writing several negative reviews each day (4 – 5) on the Crystal Park Cantina. They are obviously fake using names such as Earnest Hemmingway.

Marcy feels that some of these problems took Council by surprise but wouldn't have if we had someone from Council attending our meetings. Several members of the board expressed concern that since dispatch has changed, there is a feeling of disconnect between the

community and the Police Department. Tim asked if scheduling another work session, with better attendance by the board, with Council perhaps in the spring would be appropriate. Marcy suggested we ask for a session in January. Julie asked Leslie to send the dates of possible sessions in January and February to the board and ask for preference for a meeting. Topics of discussion will need to be determined and sent to the City in advance.

Leslie will be leaving next Wednesday to attend the Governor's Conference on Tourism and will be there Thursday as well.

The Parking Authority Board is recommending purchase of a surface lot (Tajine Alami) for additional parking and is recommending approval of the shuttle for 2015 at the same level of service as 2014. Chuck Murphy was interested in submitting a proposal for the shuttle service in 2015 but there are still some funds left from the grant so the City will go with Mountain Metro without a bid process.

L. Executive Session

Board members have received the evaluation form as well as the self evaluation from Leslie. Marcy recommended the board members fill out their forms and return them to Marcy, Tim, and Karen (the Executive Committee). They can get together to consolidate the evaluations into a summary which will be discussed in November. Marcy requested hard copies of the evaluation be given to her instead of email. She offered to pick them up or members can drop them off at the Chamber. It was requested they be returned by Friday, November 7.

Justin suggested we move all board meetings to the Garden of the Gods Trading Post. Tim was thanked for the space and breakfast for the board.

Having no other business before the board, Tim made a motion to adjourn at 10:51 am. Justin seconded the motion and it was approved.