

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

**Board of Directors  
Meeting Minutes**

**February 26, 2015**

**Present:** Karen Cullen, Rachelle Cully, Gwenn David, Ken Jaray, Farley McDonough, Marcy Morrison, Julie Vance

**Absent:** Justin Armour, Tim Haas, Nicole Nicoletta

**Guests:** Mayor Marc Snyder, Shelley Cobau, Jon Hollman, Christina Larsen, Dave Watt, Kenny Quintana, Travis Lord, Amy Mogck

**Staff:** Leslie Lewis

A regular meeting of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development was held Thursday, February 26, 2015 at Manitou Springs City Hall in City Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 8:34 am by President Karen Cullen.

Introductions were made.

**A. CDOT Discussion & Update**

Kenny Quintana came to the meeting to discuss the Flood Protocol for the 2015 season. He reported that all of the mitigation that has been done was examined, data gathered, and new information was developed. They are hoping to be able to lighten up on the protocol this year to not close Highway 24 as often. That information has not been approved for publication yet and cannot be released. Last year, when a "Watch" was issued, CDOT personnel began monitoring the roads. When a "Warning" was issued, Highway 24 was closed. There were flood warnings when nothing happened. They are hoping to be able to increase the rain gauge triggers. One area of concern is still the Fern Gulch area with a lot of sediment still there. Fern Gulch is between Cascade and Green Mountain Falls. Mr. Quintana reported it is a difficult balance to keep traffic safe and not causing issues for business. There will be a communication effort this spring to remind the businesses and residents about flood awareness. CDOT officials are thinking they would be meeting with City officials for updated information and the City could then disseminate the information to residents and businesses.

The gates on Highway 24 were discussed. The gates that have been installed along Highway 24 have to be closed manually when the Highway is being closed. There were also cameras installed for monitoring conditions. Ken asked if there would be fewer "false alarms" with this system. Mayor Snyder explained any time Highway 24 closes, Manitou Avenue closes. This prevents cars from lining up on Manitou Avenue through town trying to access Highway 24 on the west end of town. He also explained Williams Canyon might trigger a Manitou Springs closure that might not close Highway 24. Chief Ribeiro works closely with State Patrol as well as CDOT on road closures issues. He further stated that he believed there were 17 closures in

2013 and only 8 in 2014 so things did improve. The City will continue to err on the side of caution.

Marcy Morrison asked if the work in the area of Manitou Avenue and Highway 24, Sutherland Creek, had been completed. Mr. Quintana reported that the area had been cleared of sediment following the September storm. He further stated they clear that area every April to prepare for the rainy season. The Sutherland Creek drainage issues had nothing to do with the Waldo Canyon fire. The box culvert in that area has been a problem for a long time as there is not enough drop in that area for proper drainage.

Shelley asked if the National Weather Service would consider eliminating the Special Weather Bulletins as they can be confusing and may discourage visitors from coming to Manitou Springs. Mr. Quintana said CDOT does work very closely with the National Weather Service and it was through working with them, that looking at where storms were predicted, there were fewer highway closures last year. CDOT did not have to close Hwy 24 if the storm was predicted to hit the northern portion of the county. They did clarify that the August 9 storm was not predicted to hit the Waldo Canyon burn scar.

CDOT had a verbal agreement with Manitou Springs fill the potholes on Manitou Avenue with CDOT providing the hot/cold mix for patch. The need has become too extensive for Manitou Springs to handle. CDOT is having a problem with the realignment that took place in 2013 with the patrol that maintains Manitou Avenue gaining 10 miles of Highway 24 with no additional manpower. They will be getting to them as soon as they can but have to take care of Highway 24 first.

Dave Watts talked about the engineering firm (Respect) that has been working with CDOT on the mitigation efforts and some of the analysis of the debris basins and box culvert. CDOT is feeling better about Waldo Canyon and Cascade with the improvements that have been done by the County as well. Putting in some similar mitigation efforts as what was placed above Waldo Canyon would require purchase of private property and there is not currently funding mechanisms identified for that purchase.

Mr. Watts gave an update on the Rainbow Falls Bridge with the history going back to 2007 when CDOT began being approached with issues and problems with the bridge. The bridge is just outside of Manitou Springs city limits but is part of Manitou's connection to Fountain Creek and the developing trail system. CDOT was approached by El Paso County with concerns about the embankment that holds up Highway 24 and the state of repairs of the bridge. CDOT began looking at the bridge in 2005 and though it didn't look very good, the bridge was holding up structurally. There were some signs of deterioration. The bridge is on the National Historic Register of Bridges. In 2012, Gary Heller (had the CDOT position before Kenny Quintana) had previous experience with the Hayman Fire and anticipated problems and developed the first protocol for Highway 24. CDOT has spent a large amount of money stabilizing Fountain Creek below the Rainbow Falls Bridge. By combining several funds CDOT has been able earmark \$1.3 million for the repair project on the Rainbow Falls Bridge. That will replace the outer 8' of

the bridge deck on both sides and replace the bridge rail. There will also be some repair of some of the arch features underneath the bridge deck that are in disrepair. El Paso County refers to the Rainbow Falls area as a Recreation Area now. There will be trails built using the trailhead at Serpentine Drive extending west along Fountain Creek and try to introduce a better use at the Rainbow Falls area. The trail will be shut down during the bridge repair project as well. In order to complete the repairs as quickly as possible, the west end Highway 24 ramp will be closed. CDOT is going to set a goal of having the ramp reopened by Memorial Day but cannot guarantee that will happen. CDOT will place signage on the highway directing traffic into town via Serpentine Drive. Shelley made CDOT aware that Phase 2 of Williams Canyon is using Serpentine Drive to haul materials to the storage area at the top of that road. Ken made Shelley aware that the trucks had been dropping rocks along Serpentine.

Travis is working overlay projects for Manitou Springs which will begin next year. The areas covered will be the west end to Serpentine Drive and east of downtown from City Hall to the Highway 24 overpass. They are coordinating efforts with FHU (the company working on the Westside Avenue Project). Travis' group will also be responsible for overlaying Garden of the Gods Place and the on and off ramps to east bound Highway 24. FHU will be doing improvements to the area around the on and off ramps from west bound Highway 24 which will include better pedestrian access. CDOT will also be improving pedestrian access which is a new requirement for all highway projects when work is done. Travis has not worked out the details for the schedule completely yet. He is looking at begin April 1, 2016. He did state that there are areas that will have variable milling depths on the east end to bring the road back down to where it needs to be and re-establish the drainage flow. That is part of the design work that he is working on. Travis is looking at the parking, a bike lane, and three lanes on the east end with the changes in the FHU area keep the same configuration. Mayor Snyder stated there was a little time to discuss and determine the best configuration for that area. Travis did say that his intention was to not have road construction during the summer months but to pull off the project the end of May and resume in September. Julie Vance asked Mayor Snyder if there was any discussion of undergrounding utilities during the overlay project and at this time, there are not funds allocated for that purpose.

Ken asked how to get a crosswalk added on Colorado Avenue by Ridge Road to connect the Midland Trail. Travis suggested he contact Kathleen Creighter, the Director with FHU. Mayor Snyder explained the long term solution is the trail will go under Colorado Avenue. CDOT is in the final stages of devolution of Business 24 (from the interchange to 31<sup>st</sup> Street) being turned over to the County. Ken asked if someone from Manitou Springs could contact the appropriate person to ask about putting in a crosswalk in that location. Mayor Snyder explained he could not commit staff time to an area that was not in Manitou Springs' jurisdiction. Mayor Snyder said that area has been on everyone's radar as a concern.

Marcy expressed concern over the state of Manitou Avenue with all of the potholes which does not give a good impression of the community and may discourage visitors from coming into Manitou Springs. Mayor Snyder asked when Travis needed to know Manitou's desire for the

striping of Manitou Avenue and was told fall at the latest as Travis would be finalizing his design in September/October.

There was additional discussion of undergrounding the utilities from City Hall east to the Highway 24 overpass prior to the overlay of the road. Mayor Snyder has requested an accounting of the reduction in the franchise fee that helped pay for the undergrounding in the downtown. Once that is received there may be a possibility to extend that reduction to help with that area. Mayor Snyder also pointed out that the utilities are located in the amenity zone which that area does not have, so they might be installed under the bike lanes. Mayor Snyder agreed it would not make sense to have just that 4 block area with over head power lines and would look to see if there are any plans for that area.

Jon Hollman, NorthStar Bank, brought donuts to the group and stopped in to get signatures on the bank signature cards to update those accounts.

**B. ACTION ITEM: Interview Board Member Applicant – Christina Larsen**

Christina introduced herself to the Board. She came from the Wichita, Kansas area (Andover) and has a background in customer service. She has 20 years in community theatre. She first came to Manitou Springs as a student at Summit Ministries. She wants to join the board because she is a new business owner and is working to develop her business which helps other businesses. She sees a lack of understanding in Manitou Springs as to what the Chamber does for local businesses and she feels being on the board will help her better communicate to businesses how being a member will help them improve their business.

Ken asked if Christina had a vision for the next 3 – 5 years for the organization. She stated with Manitou Springs being a small town, there should not be any non-members. She also is a strong believer in collaboration between businesses.

There are currently two openings on the Board of Directors, with one of the openings being the City Council appointment of a community representative. After discussion, Ken made a motion to appoint Christina Larsen to the Board of Directors. Julie seconded the motion and it was approved. Karen will schedule an orientation for Christina. Farley asked to be included in the orientation.

**C. ACTION ITEM: Approval of January Meeting Minutes**

Farley made a motion to approve the January meeting minutes as presented. Gwenn seconded the motion and it was approved.

**D. ACTION ITEM: Approval of January Financials**

In addition to the January Financials, an amended financial report was handed out for December that included some of the bills paid in January. There will be additional changes to December after Leslie meets with the accountants and the audit is completed.

In January, the revenue that have been coming in since September for 2015, both dues and visitors guide advertising, are moved from protected income accounts into the appropriate

revenue accounts. The January check from the City did not come in as Joyce Jones was out for medical reasons and no checks were written for two weeks. She returned the end of the month and mailed the check to the Chamber but it still had not been received. She will be reissuing a check for January as that check must have been lost in the mail. The City will call when checks are ready for pick-up. The February financials will reflect both the January and February City checks. Ken asked if staff believed the budgets for dues and visitors guide would be met in 2015 and was told yes. Having no other questions, Farley made a motion to approve the January Financials as presented. Julie seconded the motion and it was approved.

**E. ACTION ITEM: Approval of New, Renewing, & Non-Renewing Members**

The lists were reviewed and discussed. Both Farley and Leslie met with Sharon from Swirl. Julie made a motion to approve the New, Renewing, and non-renewing members as presented. Marcy seconded the motion and it was approved.

**F. Mineral Springs Experience Funding Request**

Amy Mogck introduced herself and will be speaking for Ken on the Mineral Springs Experience. Amy owns Theo's Toys with her husband, serves on the Marketing Task Force and has recently gotten involved with the Mineral Springs Experience group as well. The Mineral Springs are something that is unique to Manitou Springs. The group has set goals of working on the Mineral Springs Foundation's web site and creating marketing videos. Amy expressed her thoughts that a general video that encompasses everything historical and geological as well as a marketing tour video. Ken clarified that the video that is included in the funding request is more of a broad, introductory video. Amy explained the video is more expensive because of the animation required. The video will be available on the Foundation's web page, the Chamber web site and as a youtube video.

Karen asked if the Mineral Springs Foundation had agreed to fund these items as well. The Mineral Springs Foundation is meeting today. Ken thought the Mineral Springs Foundation was waiting to see what the cost they are going to need to cover on the aquifer study but thought they might be willing to match the money the Chamber is willing to put into the efforts. The Mineral Springs Foundation board was discussed.

There is \$5,000.00 in the marketing budget that is committed to the Mineral Springs Experience. Ken is requesting an additional \$5,000.00 for the Mineral Springs Experience for 2015. Prior to opening the toy store, Amy's background is in broadcast and she has written a draft of a narrative for the video. Marcy suggested the video be run on a screen in the Chamber which by consensus the Board was in favor of. Ken further suggested that some of the \$20,000.00 for the project be used to pay Amy to help coordinate the project, particularly the Mineral Springs web site, as it is a lot of work and time she would be putting in. He also feels that would be a way to get things done in a timely manner. After additional discussion, Marcy made a motion to approve an additional \$5,000.00, from the Economic Development line of the budget, for the Mineral Springs Experience, on the condition that the Mineral Springs Foundation matches the \$10,000.00 commitment to the Mineral Springs Experience. Farley seconded the motion and it was approved. Amy thought things could be done before the season begins.

### **G. Economic Development Discussion**

Karen suggested in light of time, the Economic Development Discussion be postponed until March.

### **H. Marketing Update**

The new visitors guide was passed around. Brittany created the look of the guide as well as working on the files. The guide is branded similar to the web site.

Brittany is working on remarketing ads that will be sent to Xcite Media. They are working on the reputation management which should be up to date next week. Xcite will be doing a conference call on the reputation management next week.

The Social Media roundtable was a huge success with 18 people attending. There was a variety of experience from beginner to very experienced users with great interaction. The next session will be in April.

### **I. Consolidation Discussion**

One of the requests in the consolidation was the free listing for everyone in Manitou Springs. Farley reminded everyone it was a free membership. The free listing has gone away over time. Karen and Leslie have discussed putting everyone on the web site through a business directory. The business directory link will be at the bottom of the page. The free listing will include only the business name, address and phone number.

### **J. Parking Discussion**

Leslie put together a meeting for businesses downtown, at the request of the Parking Authority Board, to discuss parking. Leslie was out sick that day so Gwenn facilitated the meeting. It was designed as a meeting for merchants to have a discussion and come up with proposed solutions to problems they see occurring with parking. There were approximately 20 merchants there. Gwenn reported the meeting was heated at times. The merchants want consistency in hours and the way the machines operate and better ambassadorship on the part of enforcement. The community would like to get back to "friendly, not free". John Conway, Vice President, attended the Parking Authority Board meeting and Gwenn felt that the merchants stirred the pot enough that there are some significant changes coming with Standard Parking. Farley reported that there is a group that is beginning to plan to de-fund the Parking Authority when the contract is over. Buying out Standard's contract was being looked out however; the buy-out would require immediate payment for the machine costs. The parking revenues are paying for the shuttle for 2015. Jay Rohrer has gone back on the Parking Authority Board and had a meeting with John Conway prior to the Parking Authority Board meeting. Mr. Conway had no idea of some of the things happening in Manitou Springs and felt as though he had let down the community. Karen recommended that the Chamber step back and not attempt to be a go between for the merchants and Parking Authority Board. The Board discussed that to serve on the Parking Authority Board; representatives must also be a resident of Manitou Springs. Most of the merchants in Manitou Springs don't live in town. It may be residency is a requirement based in the City Charter. Both Manny (Whickerbill) and John Shada were discussed as possible business owners that could be members of the Parking Authority Board.

## **K. City Report**

Nicole Nicoletta has been added to the Board email list. It was speculated that she was unavailable this morning because of the school snow delay.

## **L. Special Events Update**

The Gumbo Cook-off was very successful with more revenue than ever before. The tiger from Serenity Springs was a huge hit. Safe Place for Pets set up in Soda Springs Park as well. We had 16 competitors this year. All competitors provide 5 gallons of gumbo for the event. The stipend that we pay amateurs is \$25 and has been for at least 20 years. We don't provide a stipend to the professional competitors. Staff thinks the Board should consider increasing the stipend amount. Fox 21 featured 3 of the restaurants on television in the week before the event.

April 18 is the KOAA Southern Colorado Health Fair. Patti Clavier is taking care of the medical side of the health fair again this year. Karissa Ballard is now in charge of the publicity side of the event. She is also contacting restaurants for food donations for the volunteers. The health fair takes approximately 60 volunteers to put on.

The Wine Festival is June 6. We are now full on both wine and food vendors but do still have a few spaces for gift vendors. The final application for the event is being turned into the City following a meeting with a couple of members of the Parks Board and input from their board retreat. The Parks Board members do not want any vehicles in Memorial Park so we are moving the food vendors to the street. We will lose some parking spaces and will need to figure out how to fence those vendors inside the park boundaries. The Parks Board is working on a Strategic Plan. It will be critical to attend their public meetings and give input in the Strategic Plan process. There was a motion in their retreat to not allow the Wine Festival to be held in Memorial Park this year however the motion failed as many felt we should be given one year notice. City Council has the final say on any recommendations made by the Parks Board. Brittany and Karissa are still working on sponsorships for the wine festival. Mike Graham is matching the price for the wine glasses we have been buying so we will be ordering them through him.

## **M. Executive Director Report**

Leslie received a call from George Bistany, OEDIT, and he approved the requested changes to the marketing grant application.

In the BID, Hawk fell the end of January and had to have surgery and screws put in his hip. Leslie hired two people who had worked for the City (seasonally) to work on snow removal and keeping the sidewalks clean. They did not show up on Monday and did not call in to the Chamber. One was sick and the other had a family emergency. Another person has been hired and there has been a path shoveled through town. It will take several days to get everything caught up and the sidewalks completely cleared as they should be. The people filling in are being run through the Chamber's payroll expense and we will bill the BID for the total cost, including taxes and Workman's Comp, on a quarterly basis. Not knowing Hawk's physical capabilities, a longer term solution may be necessary for the BID board to discuss and Leslie to oversee.

## **N.     **Unscheduled Appearances****

A proposal from Amy Mogck to assist with member landing pages on web site was emailed to the board. Karen explained that neither Brittany nor Karissa have the time to create expanded landing pages. Karissa is just learning Word Press and Amy knows it well. Karen wants to have the best possible web site to put forward before the season. She asked Amy to put together a proposal and would contact all members to get additional information to include on those landing pages. Amy is charging \$20 per hour and has in the contract that it will be done by the first of April. Karen did not feel the target date was very realistic, but a target. She did say there are contract labor funds in budget that can be used to accomplish this task and asked the Board to consider the proposal. Gwenn suggested the recommendation be made that Amy begin with lodging properties so people know they can stay in Manitou Springs for their vacation. After additional discussion, Ken made a motion to approve Amy Mogck's proposal to create landing pages for the members with a \$4,000 cap on the amount to be spent from Contract Labor. Marcy seconded the motion. Gwenn suggested the board provide the priority order for the pages and Karen suggested it be lodging, attractions, dining, shopping, then services. The motion was approved.

Ken asked if Manitou Springs had a presence at the Go West Summit held the previous week at the Broadmoor and was told we did not. He then asked why not. Leslie had spoken with Floy Kennedy (CVB) in October about Go West being at the Broadmoor. We did not receive any information on the summit and Leslie did not think to follow-up without a reminder. Leslie will be attending a presentation of the Tourism Economics Study that the CVB commissioned and the City of Manitou Springs contributed to through our office on March 8 and will set up a meeting with Amy Long, Marketing Director for the CVB, about better partnering in the future.

Having no additional business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.