

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

Board of Directors

March 31, 2016

Present: Justin Armour, Karen Cullen, Rachelle Cully, April Hall, Whitney Hedgpeth, Farley McDonough, Tony Mogck, Lisa Quintana, Jay Rohrer

Absent: Gwenn David, Annie Schmitt

Guests: Dave Watt (CDOT), Shelly Cobau (Interim Director – Manitou Springs Public Services), Jessie Cormaney, Chuck Englund, Tim Haas (BID Board of Directors) Chief Ribeiro, Natalie Johnson

Staff: Leslie Lewis

A regular meeting of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development Board of Directors was held on Thursday, March 31, 2016 in Manitou Springs City Hall City Council Chambers. Farley McDonough, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. Introductions were made.

A. CDOT Presentation and Update

Dave Watt came to give the Board an update on the Rainbow Falls Bridge repair project. He has been working with the City of Manitou Springs and El Paso County to create a map that shows all of the upcoming construction projects. The map is almost final but not quite. Dave reported that the Rainbow Falls Bridge was built in 1932. While they are working on a significant repair to the bridge, it is structurally safe. Dave talked about some of the flooding issues that had come off of Highway 24 following the Waldo Canyon fire and the impact they had on the Rainbow Falls Bridge and previous emergency repair work on the west-end ramp. Wildcat Construction does have the contract for this work. They will be running 2 crews, 10 hour shifts, when they get the project moving to accomplish the work as quickly as possible. Until they get into the bridge and have a better understanding of the extent of the repair, CDOT won't know what the completion date for this project will be.

There are several other CDOT projects that will also be taking place this year. They will be resurfacing Manitou Avenue from the roundabout on Serpentine to the Rainbow Falls Bridge as well as east of City Hall to the Highway 24 interchange on the east end of town after Labor Day. CDOT will also be installing ADA ramps at the intersections so they are compliant that is being designed currently. There is a similar bridge repair that will be done on Garden of the Gods Place and they will be doing storm drain work at the interchange of Highway 24 and Manitou Avenue area. The storm drain work will also be done after Labor Day.

Other projects that are on the map will be work that El Paso County is doing with the Westside Avenue Action Plan and work on Washington Avenue by Manitou Springs in response to the flooding in 2015. Shelley Cobau spoke about installing passive flood gates and low flood walls

on Canon Avenue to protect downtown. Shelley reported that the NRCS projects need to be completed by October 5 so the Washington Avenue work will begin as soon as the CDOT work on Rainbow Falls Bridge is complete.

Shelley reported the City is putting out an RFP for a single hauler trash proposal. The company will be required to include bear proof cans for municipal and possibly commercial with an option for residential as well. The City is also looking for a new contractor for the 94 planters in the City.

Dave Watt also reported that the Rainbow Falls Recreation area is closed while the repair work on the bridge is being done. CDOT has put closed signage on the highway signs for Rainbow Falls and will be adding signage on Highway 24 to alert traffic to detours into Manitou Springs and trying to direct large vehicles to the east end exit. Farley suggested that the businesses send the map to their suppliers to make them aware of the construction impacts. Leslie will send the map to the Board when final copy is received.

Dave and Shelley were thanked for their time.

B. Police Department Update

Chief Ribeiro is looking to have 2 interns working each shift so it would be 16 students through the program. The semester begins June 15 so that is when the students will start. He has been using his salary savings to add walking beats on Friday – Sunday. The police department call volume has gone up tremendously.

Tony Mogck stated in San Francisco the beat cops had cell phones that the merchants had numbers for. The merchants could then call the officers directly when issues arose. Chief Ribeiro would like his officers to all have cell phones but would not support merchants calling directly as he believes for safety the calls should be run through dispatch so everyone is aware of the situation and location of the officers. Lisa Quintana advised that the security officers had given merchants their numbers for direct contact. Lisa expressed concern about the time it takes to go through dispatch and feels there is no support of merchants by the police. Chief Ribeiro left the meeting to avoid saying something out of anger saying he would be back. He returned a few minutes later. He explained that El Paso Dispatch is nationally accredited. When they receive a call, it is prioritized and given to officers. He further stated that Manitou Springs' officers always respond to calls and asked that if businesses don't believe an officer has responded to let him know. Unless the caller requests contact from the officer, they may not see the officer when they respond. The interns that the City will be using this summer are not in town to be police officers, they are to be ambassadors to help the visitors with things like how to work the kiosks and give dining recommendations. They will also be asked to remind people of the rules. If they encounter issues, they will have a radio to be in direct contact with officers. Chief Ribeiro piloted the program with the security company last year but was not comfortable with them providing their direct contact information to merchants either. The police department did not always receive all of the information that merchants reported to the security company. With dispatch, everything is logged and both the Chief and City Council receive reports daily.

Karen Cullen asked what kind of accountability and expectations the business community could expect to see from the interns. The interns should radio the Chief/officers when they are seeing things and are contacting someone over quality of life issue or violation. The training is still being formed but the interns will have a couple of days of “ride along” with officers and a couple of days training in the visitor information center. The interns will be expected to speak with visitors, travelers, and business owners. The Chief is hoping the interns will also be able to share some of the current sociological and criminal justice practices that are being taught. She then asked about assigning the interns a schedule with specific businesses to visit each day and get feedback from the businesses that can be reported back. Chief Ribeiro wanted to flush out that idea a little more and will work with Karen on it. He also suggested that the interns’ first contact could be to drop off an emergency contact sheet for updating with a second visit to collect that sheet.

Staff asked about “aggressive panhandling” and Chief Ribeiro reported there is no such thing as “aggressive panhandling”. Leslie is waiting for a written report on an incident in downtown and will turn it in when received. Chief Ribeiro stated people need to call the police when incidents happen so officers can take a statement. They can still charge people with harassment, robbery, and theft so there are charges that can be filed but they have to receive a call from a victim. He asked Lisa about her frustration and was told she feels like there is no support in downtown. Chief Ribeiro strongly feels that Manitou Springs businesses and residents get much better service for less money than if Manitou Springs again had their own dispatch service. He again asked that if an officer doesn’t respond when they are called, he needs to be contacted so he can take care of the situation. Lisa pointed out that in speaking with officers about situations in downtown; many times she is told they cannot do anything because of Constitutional rights.

Tim Haas, as a member of the Business Improvement District Board of Directors, said that he was there as he feels panhandling is one of biggest concerns that he has as a business owner and hopes we (Manitou Springs) can come up with some positive solutions that are within the Constitution. Tim asked if Manitou Springs has considered the consequences of Colorado Springs implementing the “Sit Lie Ordinance” and if Manitou Springs should enact the same type of ordinance. He also brought up the signs the BID had purchased last summer and asked about getting more businesses to put those signs up. The signs say “It’s okay to say no”. Chief Ribeiro supports the signs in private businesses but the ordinance at the bottom does need to be covered as it is no longer valid. The Chief did not believe the City would be willing to put the sign on public property. City Council is looking at enacting a similar ordinance in Manitou Springs. The City has spoken with the prosecutor and gotten the opinion that accepting donations for wares is conducting business so that is an enforceable offense and speaking with the City Attorney to ask if putting out a display of the wares is advertising and therefore conducting business. Lisa asked if the planters could be included in the descriptions on the ordinance.

Chief Ribeiro needed to leave to go to a meeting on the Incline. The new rules are going into effect of April 4 and Manitou Springs will help enforce those as well. Shelley talked about a specific area in Santa Fe that people selling or displaying wares has to have an Itinerant

Vendors License and if they don't have one, it is a violation and ticket able offense. Mayor Nicoletta is aware of the issues at Cheyenne Spring pocket park and benches from the east side of that area were moved to the shuttle stop at Hiawatha Gardens. In the Garden RFP that was just sent out, Shelley is asking companies to include plantings that will discourage people from sitting around the planters. She is now rethinking the flood walls that were included in a grant application as with the current design, it will create new areas for additional sitting. Tim expressed concern about the City issuing temporary vendor licenses where people could come in and compete with businesses paying for buildings and property tax that would operate in high season and then leave.

Jay Rohrer said the laws that you can have in place are against behavior not speech. There is an ordinance against amplified music. People need to report and be willing to sign a complaint. City Council is struggling with the displaying wares portion as if someone is sitting knitting would it be the same as the person creating bracelets and placing finished pieces beside them on the bench. Jay wondered if the City should give money to Springs Rescue Mission, which offers services to help the homeless. The Board then discussed the Manitou Springs homeless are homeless by choice and not necessarily looking for assistance instead of the chronic homeless that you see in Colorado Springs.

The outside electrical outlets have been turned off to prevent the homeless from being able to charge cell phones. Homeless camps and the fire danger were discussed. Shelley reported a large homeless camp in the Rainbow Falls (Highway 67 outside of Woodland Park) that is creating problems for the forest service. She also reported 2 large camps in the Ruxton watershed area (Cog property) that are straddling the jurisdictional boundaries between Manitou Springs and El Paso County. The City has \$280,000 grant application in for wildfire threat mitigation in that area and are hoping the clearing and activity will drive some of them out of that area.

Tim asked about having the city lease the sidewalk in front of businesses to the businesses and possibly the BID could help with the additional liability insurance to cover that area. That way there would be no public space for homeless to occupy. Jay will check with the City Attorney.

C. Action Item: Approval of February Meeting Minutes

Rachelle Cully made a motion to approve the February Meeting Minutes as presented. Justin Armour seconded the motion and the minutes were approved.

D. Action Item: Approval of February Financial Statements

February is very early in the year from both a revenue and expense statement. Staff reported the Visitor Guide revenue may be a little lower than projected. Staff has removed the "forecast" column from the budget as it is early to begin changing from the budget amount too much. We did receive the \$3,000 balance from the 2015 OEDIT grant. With a lot of the expenses for that grant being tied to the holidays, we could not submit the final reimbursement request until February. Additionally, in the 1990s the Chamber received stock options on the disability insurance policy. Because the stock portion of Standard Insurance sold and the stocks are no

longer being publically traded, we received a check for \$14,000 in March. The disability insurance is still in place. Justin made a motion to approve the February financial statements. Lisa seconded the motion and the financials were accepted as presented.

E. Creative District Report

Natalie Johnson reported that the State has changed everything regarding Creative Districts in the last couple of weeks. The final report that was due June 28 is now due April 28. The State has also done away with “candidate” districts which is the process Manitou Springs has been in for the last year and a half. Natalie has not yet seen the final application but will watch a webinar. She reported the final application will be in the end of the month and the District will have a board in place by the first of May. The Colorado Creative Industries Conference will be May 2 – 4, the Community Build Association Conference is the end of April and the Art Business Luncheon is also in April. Natalie created a list of things that will be accomplished in April. She listed a number of community members interested in serving on the Creative District Board of Directors including Jason Wells, Farley McDonough, Ralph Routon, Priscilla Barsotti, Wendy Fay, and Julia Wright as well as others.

Natalie shared a draft of the new rack card for “Art Attack” which is what the artists have changed “Art Walk” to. Staff believes businesses downtown can be talked to about staying open late on those nights with advance notice. Natalie reported that Gwenn has agreed to have helium and balloons that any business participating in Art Attack with something special can pick up. Natalie also showed the Board a logo that was created for the Creative District and will get it out electronically.

F. Action Item: Finalize Creative District Agreement

The thought behind this agenda item was to get the expectations for the position finalized. As Natalie just reported that the board is not yet in place that can’t be done. Staff felt the list of goals for April addresses that issue until the Board can be seated and those expectations created. Leslie explained how the payroll issues will be worked out. Natalie will be on the Chamber payroll beginning April 1. Health insurance benefits are not part of the plan provided by the Chamber.

G. City Report

Jay reported a lot of what City Council has been working on has already been covered. They have been working on 4 ordinances.

H. URA Report

Farley and Jay both agreed that there was a very good work session between City Council and the URA Board to review the budget and discuss the West Side Avenue Action Plan. Previously the URA has not had a lot going on or a lot of money but now they do so they will be meeting with City Council four times per year. The URA has contacted with NES, the landscape architect firm working in the West Side Avenue Action Plan and is looking at the cost of the enhancements that they want in the URA area. They are currently getting a menu of options and will have another work session with Council for their thoughts. Natalie and the Arts Council will step in to “brand” the east end of Manitou Springs.

The Housing Task Force is also looking at the east end of Manitou for development and would like to work with the URA. The URA is limited by statute and because they operate with TIF money, they can only participate in projects that will include mixed use (to generate sales tax). Farley explained that projects have to pass the “But – For” test meaning the project could not happen but for the URA money.

Farley reported that the Education Foundation has been doing the banners for downtown. They would talk with the art teachers and have them pull their favorite pieces of art through the year, get parent releases, and the Education Foundation would then have banners made using photos of those art pieces. The Cog, in celebration of 125 years, wanted to have banners in downtown this summer. Because it was so late in the year when this project came up, the schools are fitting it in as they can with the elementary and middle schools able to work it in to curriculum but the high school doing it on a volunteer basis. It may be that there are only a small number of banners and they may have to be repeated. Next year, the schools will return to the previous program. Tony Mogck suggested that E11 (an art school at the MAC) be contacted and possibly involved. Jay suggested Farley also reach out to Steve Wood with FabLab for possible involvement.

Farley also reported that the Education Foundation has received \$4,000 for a 4 year scholarship and \$1,500 for the vocational program. The goals next year are to double these amounts. She believes there are 8 applications for the 4 year scholarship which are being reviewed. The Education Foundation (MSEF) is also working on their own web site.

I. Marketing Update

The Marketing Task Force is looking at the radio budget for 2016 and making a determination of staying with CPR or going to commercial radio. They are also working on the Colorado Fun Guide, being created by Karen Hazelhurst. The Task Force worked with Wendy Wilkinson last fall and one of the articles she began working on then will be a spa article in Encompass Magazine coming out in the May/June issue. That writer has come back and will include Manitou Springs in the Small Town issue in September/October. The task force will continue working with Wendy on a writer from New York. Wendy is also working on a blog and an article in Spring Style Magazine. The grant campaign that we launched in Texas is going well. There will be 2 drawings for that campaign. The first drawing will be in May and include a 2 night stay at the Cliff House. The September drawing included a two night stay at the Red Crag Estate properties. Those have recently been purchased by SunWater Spa and we are unsure of their plans so we are moving that to the Avenue Hotel. We received 4,470 leads for the program we did with Rocky Mountain National Park anniversary. Due to a problem with google analytics, we lost some of our tracking data from January 27 through February 17. Anna Mekeel has taken over the Social Media contract. She will be doing a social media roundtable on April 14.

J. Executive Director

Leslie is still working on the Operations Manual. Leslie believes March numbers will be down, especially the last week of Spring break. The weather has had an impact on business this year. Several members reported that Spring Break was good but only two weeks long instead of three weeks.

The Chamber is working on additional ideas to recruit volunteers for the Visitor Information Center. Judi Edman, who has been a volunteer for 10 years, is moving back to New York. Any ideas or suggestions are welcomed.

The Health Fair is April 9. Brittany is working on the map for the wine festival booths. Eventbrite is handling the on-line ticket sales again this year. After we receive City Council approval, hopefully the first Council meeting in April, we will have the Winery at Pikes Peak pull the Limited Winery Wine Festival Permit from the state. The wine festival is June 4. Staff is still looking for additional parking as not all of the high school parking is available this year.

Leslie is waiting to hear from our auditors following some initial information exchange. She thinks they got too busy with tax season and will follow up.

The BID just submitted their application for Exemption from Audit. They are requesting a walk thru downtown with public works. The BID is getting a large roll-off dumpster that will be placed in the Wichita Lot beginning April 22 for businesses to use for "spring cleaning". Jason Hernandez is working for the BID now picking up trash and sweeping the sidewalks. He will begin power washing the sidewalks as soon as the weather warms up. Jason is working 5 days per week so the BID is looking for someone to work the other 2 days. The snow removal has been done by All Seasons Landscaping. The BID is still looking for additional board members. Emails were sent to everyone in downtown that we had email addresses for and letters were sent to those businesses without email and building owners not occupying the building.

Staff is still trying to get the signage on Highway 24 changed and closed signs placed on the Rainbow Falls signs on Highway 24.

Coffee Quest is supposed to again be going into the Dulcimer Shop Building and staff has heard a Jerky store is going in the vacant space next to Homes of Manitou. We understand the old 7-Eleven building has been purchased by the firefighter from Manitou Springs. Leslie believes Bill Fee's family is going to try to lease out his space for a while at least.

Having no additional business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 10:52 a.m.