

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

**Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes**

April 28, 2016

Present: Justin Armour, Karen Cullen, Rachelle Cully, Gwenn David, April Hall, Whitney Hedgpeth, Farley McDonough, Anthony Mogck, Annie Schmitt, Lisa Quintana

Absent: Jay Rohrer

Guests: Doug Haig, Carol and John O'Donnell, Spencer Wren

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, April 28, 2016 in Manitou Springs City Hall, City Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m. by President Gwenn David. Introductions were made.

A. Presentation: Christmas Parade

John O'Donnell gave the background of how he and Carol started in business 30+ years ago and created the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Old Colorado City in 1985. They also started the Parade of Lights in downtown Colorado Springs and Christmas parades in Pueblo and Boulder. John and Carol have done other special events including reviving Territory Days, the Veterans Day Parade, and the airshow. They also provide public relations and create holiday campaigns.

They would like to start a Christmas Parade in Manitou Springs. It would start at the Loop and go to Memorial Park. Their goal is to have 50 entries the first year, eventually going to 70 – 80 entries. They would like to get an early start on music and bands. The O'Donnell's would like to hold the event the Saturday of Thanksgiving weekend and begin the parade at 6 p.m. They would like to include a tree lighting event and Santa. John doesn't have a name but is looking at a theme of "Christmas starts in Manitou" if it is Thanksgiving weekend. John is speaking with one television station (KOAA) and will talk with one of the radio groups as well. John will raise all of the money for the parade.

John spoke with the group that does the "Toys for Tots" motorcycle run and they would like to work with this event to gather toys this year. Manitou Springs PD is also talking with the organizers of this run. John will be working with the Marine Corp. and the national organization instead of the motorcycle groups on the Toys for Tots program.

John, Carol and Doug were thanked for coming in. Leslie will contact them following the meeting.

B. Discussion: Cog Railway Conditional Use Permit

Spencer Wren was invited to give the Board information on the decision by the Planning Director, upheld by the Planning Commission, to require the Cog to apply for a new conditional use permit for the paid parking and a new conditional use permit for the operations of the Cog. Spencer gave the Board a brief summary of his history working for the Incline and Cog Railways as well as being a long-time

resident in Manitou Springs. He then gave a summary of the Conditional Use permit required to charge non-cog railway customers a fee for parking that the Cog received in 2012 with the opening of the Incline for hiking. There were 5 conditions put on the permit, two of which were unmet. Spencer took responsibility for not getting the parking plan (showing they would not be displacing Cog customers) in within 6 months in compliance with the conditions. The other unmet condition was a review by the Planning Commission in one year. Spencer hired Ensign to complete the plan and it was in place but never submitted to the City. Spencer received notice in October 2015 that they would need to resubmit for a new conditional use permit because those conditions were never met. Spencer hired another company, Martin and Martin, to create a new parking plan and submitted that as soon as it was complete. Mr. Burkholder rejected that plan saying it didn't address the traffic issues. There had not been anything said about requiring the plan to address the traffic issues previous to the rejection. Spencer explained that they feel the Cog is being held responsible for the traffic issues caused by the Incline which has been more successful than ever anticipated. The Cog is appealing the decision to City Council. The Cog Railway doesn't have any parking available for Incline hikers in the high season. Spencer also talked about the traffic backup that is caused by the crosswalks on Manitou Avenue being so close to the Ruxton and Manitou Avenue roundabout.

The other item that the Cog is appealing is the Planning Director's decision requiring the Cog Railway to get a conditional use permit because of the expansion of the business. Spencer reported that they have not added a new train since 1989 and have run the same schedule since 1976. The expansion of business has happened in the shoulder seasons which is a benefit to the City bringing people who then shop and dine as well. Spencer said he would appreciate letters of support from the board members when the issue is presented to Council but is unsure when that will be.

The Cog is able to charge hikers to park, which is revenue but not their core business, at least until the issue goes before City Council. Karen asked if there was an ordinance referenced in decisions by the Planning Director and Planning Commission which there were not. Spencer talked about some of the steps that the Railway has taken, particularly when the Incline was closed for medical reasons, to turn people around looking for parking.

Spencer was thanked for his time and information. The Board discussed the Cog being the largest draw to Manitou Springs and the benefit of using their unused parking for hikers. The Board directed staff to draft a letter in support of the Cog Railway and staff will notify Board members when the appeal is on City Council's agenda.

B. Action Item: Approval of March Meeting Minutes

Farley McDonough made a motion to approve the March Meeting Minutes as presented. Rachelle Cully seconded the motion and it was approved.

C. Action Item: Approval of March Financial Statements

The revenue shows the payment for the stock options received years ago with the disability insurance that are no longer being publically traded so we received the pay off. It also shows receiving the balance for the 2015 OEDIT Marketing Grant. The Special Event revenue is vendor fees with the majority of the Wine Festival revenue still to come from ticket sales. Last year we discontinued offering discounts through Living Social or Groupon for ticket sales and instead began using Event Brite for online sales. We receive the full ticket price instead of a discounted rate. With Military and First

Responder tickets, in addition to a \$5 discount, we pay the fees on their purchases. With general ticket sales, the purchaser is charged the fees.

In spite of Brittany's best efforts, we were unable to recruit the top level sponsor for the Wine Festival. We will be using all of the remaining glasses from previous wine festivals and have ordered only 1,000 glasses that will have the Wine Festival logo on one side and the Historic Manitou Springs logo on the other.

The Visitors Guide printing was paid in March. Advertisers will be billed for balances due on ads.

Leslie just received a list of items the CPA needs for the audit and is putting that together. As soon as the audit is complete, Leslie will organize a meeting with board members that expressed interest in serving on the audit committee to meet with the CPA as their first meeting.

Karen made a motion to approve the Financials as presented. Justin Armour seconded the motion and it was approved.

D. Action Item: Approval of New & Renewing Members

Serenity Springs was mistakenly left off of the New & Renewing Members list and should be included. Leslie talked about the new member application from Vacation Baby Gear. Chief Ribeiro, and then several board members, expressed concern regarding the liability with car seat rental and wondered if they give instruction on installation. Karen made a motion to approve the New & Renewing Members with the addition of Serenity Springs and with questions answered on Vacation Baby Gear. Rachelle seconded the motion.

E. Discussion: Business Update

Several board members stated business was down this year. There was discussion of the weather being a factor as well as the reduction in foot traffic. Several lodging properties are reporting strong reservations for the summer.

Sales tax numbers through February were discussed. A strong year is anticipated.

F. Discussion: Security

The Flying Eagle was broken into this week. Chief Ribeiro advised all businesses not to leave any cash in their locations overnight unless they have a safe. He also recommended that they have security systems and cameras. The break-in was coincidentally the same night as the first Panhandling discussion meeting. A list of the enforceable ordinances was given out at that meeting. Board members were encouraged to attend the second Panhandling discussion meeting being held if they had not been to the first meeting. Mayor Nicoletta is going to provide Leslie the electronic version of the ordinances that will then be given to businesses. The Chief also encouraged business owners to be willing to sign a complaint when they see people violating ordinances or laws in place. Karen asked about people displaying wares and accepting donations for or selling those wares. The City Attorney is investigating the ordinance to see if displaying wares constitutes "conducting business". Chief Ribeiro also said there are issues with a "Transient Dealers License" which were brought up in the first meeting. The City is looking at some possible environmental design issues to curb the transients hanging out at Cheyenne Spring. Gwenn stated that the transients are costing Manitou Springs business and has heard there are shoppers in Old Colorado City that won't come to Manitou Springs anymore. Karen mentioned the need for a regional approach to solving the problems.

Lisa Quintana asked if there was a heroin problem. Chief Ribeiro said heroin is a nationwide problem but that it is more indoors and harder to catch.

April Hall reported that they have seen counterfeit \$5s and \$100 bill. There have also been \$50s passed around. The \$100 passed the marker test. Chief Ribeiro advised the board about a gang of gypsy's going around the country and the "tapping" trick that they do.

G. City Report

The Police are still planning to have the walking beats this summer with the internship/ambassador program. Applications are due May 13. Chief Ribeiro has received 4 but will need to hire 8 to fill the schedule. They are still recruiting police officers and currently have 2 openings. They will be making a contingent job offer to 3 people so they can do the medical testing. They also have 3 other candidates that they are running background checks on. Officers, once hired, are in training for 3 to 6 months before they can operate by themselves on a shift.

The City is interviewing for the Special Events Coordinator position. They had almost 100 applicants and are interviewing 5 people for the position.

The Chamber receives periodic emails from visitors who will not come back to Manitou Springs because of the transient issues. Lisa asked if some of those could be shared with the board.

H. URA Update

The URA board is still waiting for the consultants to come back with the menu of options for the Westside Action Plan area. Once they have that information, they will set up a meeting with City Council with their recommendations.

I. Creative District

The Creative District has put together a board made up of Jason Wells, Ralph Routon, PK Knickerbocker, Delayne Bredvik, Maria Navaratna, Laurie Wood, Sharon Palmer and Fred Darpino. They won't have a meeting this month because many of them are going to the Colorado Creative Industries Summit in Carbondale.

J. Marketing Update

The Marketing Task Force put a full page ad in the Broadmoor Magazine. Brittany is working on the Summer Fun Guide ads. The radio advertising with CPR (Denver) is set. The sweepstakes contest is going well. The first drawing is scheduled for May 15 (will be held on Monday since it is on Sunday). We will eliminate all duplicates before doing that drawing and Leslie will have an actual count of entries following that.

Leslie spoke with Susan House this week. The Office of Economic Development and International Trade are still trying to get another round of funding that can be given out as marketing grants.

Karen asked about Sunwater's plans for the Onaledge, Rockledge, and Red Crags properties that they recently purchased. April reservations were cancelled but they have applied for their Bed & Breakfast licensing and their license to serve alcohol. Leslie is waiting for Sunwater to let staff know what they will be doing. The Marketing Task Force moved the second drawing stay from Red Crags to The Avenue Hotel Bed & Breakfast.

K. Executive Director Report

Leslie is working on providing information for the audit and completing the Workman's Comp audit. Quarterly tax reports have been filed. Chief Ribeiro sent information on an incident command training for executives that Leslie applied to attend.

The BID was planning to begin power washing but is waiting for the weather to clear. The stripes for parking have been painted in downtown and curbs have been painted throughout town.

Leslie has received a request for a donation to the Community Congregational Church. We just used their facilities for the Health Fair.

Lisa asked about the Coffin Race and is not in favor of changing dates. Leslie said the decision had been made not to adjust our date for the event. She will contact the school and ask for a meeting to talk about communication with people planning to attend the functions at the school. Staff still needs to meet with Jim Weir to discuss outside transportation for the coffin races.

The Board felt John O'Donnell bringing a Christmas Parade to Manitou Springs would be welcomed. There was discussion to see if they could look at a different weekend instead of on Small Business Saturday to give Manitou Springs two events instead of both on one day. The board also discussed the benefit of having participant families come early and use the parade as a kick-off for the shopping season.

Farley brought up the need for additional, updated Christmas decorations. She asked about the BID helping purchase new decorations. Karen mentioned that Nicole had suggested applying for help from the Community Fund last year. Leslie will set up a meeting with Shelley and Brad to discuss downtown decorations. Leslie suggested the Board come up with an idea for a prize and have a window decorating contest for businesses. Farley suggested we inventory what decorations we have and work to determine what needs to be done to increase those decorations.

The Education Foundation received 106 pieces of art (for the pole banner program) that are wonderful. Spencer Wren will be working with the Education Foundation and determining which pieces to use. There are 32 poles in downtown so they can use up to 64 designs.

Buildings currently vacant in downtown are the building next to Homes of Manitou which will be a jerky store and the Ford's buildings. Leslie will contact the Ford's for an update.

Staff passed around Encompass Magazine which has an article on springs and mentions Manitou Springs and Sunwater Spa. It began as a hot springs article but they did include Manitou. In the September/October issue, Manitou Springs will be featured as a town in their "Cool Small Towns" article. Staff is working with someone on "Charming Cities" that Manitou had been mentioned for. Brittany is sending photos.

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