

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

**Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes**

June 23, 2016

Present: Karen Cullen, Gwenn David, April Hall, Whitney Hedgpeth, Farley McDonough, Lisa Quintana, Jay Rohrer

Absent: Justin Armour, Rachelle Cully, Tony Mogck, Annie Schmitt

Guests: Natalie Johnson, Sergeant Melissa Warden

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, June 23, 2016 in City Council Chambers of Manitou Springs City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 8:39 a.m. by President Gwenn David.

A. Action Item: Approval of May Meeting Minutes

Farley McDonough made a motion to approve the minutes of the May Board Meeting as presented. Whitney Hedgpeth seconded the motion and it was approved.

B. Action Item: Approval of May Financial Statements

Leslie Lewis has received the draft of the financials from the Auditors office. She will go through those with Rachelle Cully and then get them signed and into the City Finance Director. That information will be presented to the Board at the July meeting. The Balance Sheet was reviewed.

On the Income Statement, the Visitors Guide revenue will be a little down because of the loss of a full page ad. The expense for the Visitors Guide is down from the projection as well. Leslie reported that the Wine Festival was very successful which will show on the June Financials. Farley made a motion to approve the Financials as presented. April Hall seconded the motion and it was approved.

C. Action Item: Requests for Donations

Information from Molly Wingate on the Poetry and Pottery program request had been sent to the Board. She has received a commitment from the Planning Department for \$1,500. She is planning to go to the City Council and request sponsorship. She was requesting \$1,540 from both the Chamber and the City. Leslie explained that was over the total donation budget that the Chamber has. Molly believes she can go to other organizations (El Pomar for example) and request funding in the future with results from this year.

The total available donation budget is \$500 for 2016. The Fire Department is also requesting a donation for fireworks. Due to the fire on July 4 last year, the Fire Department was unable to raise as much as they typically do and are requesting additional funds for fireworks this year.

After a lot of discussion regarding both programs, the traditional donation to the Turkey Shoot later in the year, and the available budget, Leslie suggested that the Board could look at a donation to the

Turkey Shoot later in the year from the Special Events revenue as it is a Community Event and that the requests by Poetry and Pottery and Fireworks be the only items considered for the full budget. Lisa Quintana made a motion to give \$300 to the Fire Department for Fireworks and \$200 to Poetry and Pottery. April seconded the motion and it was approved.

D. Marketing Update

Ben, Xcite Media, came down to talk about social media and how some of the display ads with a simple question that Xcite has put out have generated a lot of responses. Anna then responded to each of the comments which has been wonderful for generating engagement. He also showed the results from Facebook ads and the analytics for the Texas campaign as well. There were 2,245 unduplicated entries in the contest. The names will be kept in the pool for the September drawing as well. Neale Minch is doing a lot of analytics work for the Chamber. In addition to the marketing information, Neale has done some analysis of sales tax information that we will be sharing the Rebecca Davis as well. Leslie suggested some of the funds from the contract labor budget be used to pay Neale for his assistance.

Leslie expressed concern for the statistics that were shown with the Retail – Gift stores. April shows an 8% increase in gift shops. In talking with one business who is not showing that increase, that person feels we are seeing a changing demographic in our visitor and that we are no longer attracting visitors shopping for higher end items. Jay Roher mentioned that younger people are looking for experiences not “things”. Jay suggested Leslie check with other communities to see if they are seeing the same trends as well as check with attractions to see if they are seeing an increase. The sales tax analysis show modest increase in attractions which could be year over year price increases. Natalie Johnson offered to check with other Creative Districts to see if they were showing the same trends.

Leslie reported that there have been problems with the lodging reports from the web site for a long time. Staff had been working with Brian, Xcite, to solve the issues but Brian has left the company. Any time we want to change the list of properties receiving lodging leads, that list is “hard coded” so that only Xcite can change the list. Xcite is also having problems in that they cannot get into the server to make changes. Mike, Xcite, also reported that the word press is not being updated and in talking with Jim Clemens, Electronic Stores, he thought we were doing the updates to word press. Karen Cullen will follow up with Xcite.

Bob Macdonald will be taking photos for us. We have talked with him about finding a model family that we can use. We will also be providing him with a parking pass for downtown so that he can shoot when he has time. We have received recent requests for photos of downtown with people in them which we don't currently have.

We will be receiving contracts soon for the 2017 State Vacation Guide and the Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region Guides. We will be trying to find great shots to use in those ads.

Brittany and Anna are working together and are talking about building a “snap event” with the Coffin Races. Anna is also trying to design hash tags for events.

Karen attended a luncheon this week on digital literacy. They gave her a lot of applications for cyber security (and passwords) that she feels we should look into. Leslie thought that might be a good educational meeting for the membership in the fall as well.

E. City Report

Jay reported that some of the trees in the Cheyenne Spring pocket park are being surrounded by deer fences for protection. The fencing does prevent people from sitting on the planters around the trees. The police department is at full strength. Council did not feel Dale Latty's application for the art market every weekend was complete enough. They have asked him for additional information. Jay felt all Council sees some positives in the art market but there is concern from the business community that it doesn't seem fair to them. Dale was requesting a lot of dates under one application and Jay believes each 3 day period needs to be under a separate application. Dale wants to create positive activity in the pocket park areas (Shoshone, Cheyenne Spring, Soda Springs Park) to replace the negative activity currently happening with the transient population hanging out in those locations. Jay suggested that Board members should be thinking about what a "transient business license" should look like to make suggestions to City Council. If there isn't something that makes sense, maybe the suggestion is to remove that section from the code.

Leslie thought everyone loved the idea of putting positive energy into those areas to displace the negative, but that a lot of business owners thought it was giving those businesses an unfair advantage of having the traffic with none of the costs.

Leslie asked about the ordinance to change the parking on Ruxton Avenue to only 2 hours. It will go to the agenda for July 19 for second reading. That issue is being fast tracked by putting it on the special meeting agenda coming up. This will be a test program with the Parking Authority Board tracking results. Additional parking thoughts were discussed including fees, availability and parking structures. Leslie will talk to other business owners about the time limits to see if others have changed their preference of 3 hours to allowing only 2 hours for parking.

The Mayor has put together a community working committee to work on ideas for the Tajine Alami/Hiawatha Gardens building and lot. The bridge on Old Man's Trail was discussed for traffic capacity related to the parking at the Tajine Alami/Hiawatha Gardens lot. Farley asked about the availability of RV parking in the Tajine Lot and was told there is space for them.

CDOT will be using part of the Tajine Lot when they are working on the overlay project for Manitou Avenue. CDOT will begin working on the sidewalk and ADA ramps along Manitou Avenue as those changes won't have an impact on traffic. The overlay project will begin after Labor Day. The work on Washington is on hold as the bids came in so much higher than expected. Karen reported that CDOT wants to spend \$180 million dollars on new buildings for their offices instead of roads.

F. Police Department Update

Chief Ribeiro was out of town so he asked Sergeant Melissa Warden to fill in. the Police Department is now fully staffed and they don't anticipate leaving any officers until December when Officer Williamson and his wife will be moving.

The Police Department has interns (Ambassadors) walking around downtown. They also now have El Paso County Deputies walking the downtown beat. Karen talked about the incident she witnessed and reported and the very quick response of the deputy. At least one business has reported a positive impact of having the deputies downtown.

Sergeant Warden reported there have been more assaults which has gotten some of the worst element to leave the area. They believe there is a warrant out for them. The person that assaulted the

person in Soda Springs Park has left the area. The Police believe they know what state he is in and a warrant has been issued for his arrest. Sergeant Warden also reported there have been a couple of robberies or attempted robberies. Lisa reported that shoplifting has become a major problem.

Staff asked if there were suspects identified and arrested in the other aggravated assaults. Sergeant Warden reported that they have received better leads in the Good Karma incident. The other one they do not have as much to go on so it has been more difficult. The victim gave a great description but a lot of people fit that description. The video quality in the break-in at Flying Eagle is grainy and the burglar did a great job of not showing his face. Sergeant Warden was not sure where that investigation is.

Now that Manitou Springs PD is at full staffing, the officers do have time to volunteer for some of the overtime hours. Matt Fleming is one of the new officers. He was previously a police officer in Buffalo. Because of the previous experience, the training won't take as long. With the other two new officers beginning, one of them has previous experience and the other just graduated from the academy.

G. Creative District Update

The City Council passed a new Creative District resolution which updates the language to be Manitou Springs centric. The Independent and Gazette are doing stories on Manitou Springs not receiving the Creative District designation from the State and trying to get an explanation from the State as to why Manitou Springs was not chosen. When Manitou Springs received the information that it would not continue to the next round for the permanent designation, it was reported that the Boetcher Foundation had pulled out and that only 3 communities would be awarded the designation and that they weren't sure that there would be any funding for those communities. The announcement with the designation had the Boetcher Foundation logo and awarded Creative District status to 6 communities with \$40,000.00 funding each.

Natalie is working with the URA on the Westside Avenue Action Plan project. They are trying to find out how and where they fit in. The Arts Council is trying to fill the advisory role on recommendations on color choices and artistic aspects of the project. The Creative District is working to help create guidelines for the area, such as the "tree-bate" program to encourage landowners to plant specific types of trees and signage on the back of buildings. Natalie is working to get contacts for all of the groups potentially involved in that area such as the Creek Restoration committee, HPC, and the Garden Club so that when things happen, they can reach out immediately.

The Arts Council has agreed to continue to sponsor the Creative District. They requested the Creative District approach City Council for a line item on the budget to support the arts. Natalie thought it might be a request for Economic Development with some of it going to the arts. She will be doing research to put together a proposal for Council for the 2017 budget.

Karen asked about the Art Attack spray paint on the sidewalks. It is a chalk spray paint so it does come off with power washing. Leslie will contact the BID employee and ask that he focus on cleaning the chalk the days following Art Walk.

H. URA Update

They did not have a quorum for the meeting in June but did have several members, Shelley Cobau, DeLayne (Arts Council), Natalie (Creative District) and Tim Seibert (NES, the landscaping firm for the Westside Avenue Action Plan) to walk the avenue and narrow recommendations to present to City

Council. They don't have the update on the lighting yet from Colorado Springs or El Paso County but Manitou plans to move forward with the historic lighting. There is some confusion as to whether the water lines need to be replaced by Shelley is working that out.

The Business Networking Group that has been getting together is interested in getting a presentation on that area at a future meeting.

I. Events Update

The Wine Festival gate was \$82,235 which is \$24,000 higher than 2015. The check to the City for excise tax was \$3,915.95. Sales tax is still being reported. We allowed more wine vendors this year. Some of the wine vendors are down a little from last year but others are up. Karen had dinner with 2 of the vendors who really liked the assigned spaces and felt the disbursement of different vendors worked well. Jay had complaints about the limited number of food vendors. We will contact some of the food trucks next year to get a larger variety. The expenses for the event will be up as well. We increased the number of port-o-lets to accommodate the anticipated crowds.

The Ice Cream Social is July 11. The pie baking applications have been sent to previous competitors but we have not received any back yet. Colorado City Creamer will again provide the ice cream. One of the benefits of using Colorado City Creamery is they bring their freezer truck for the event. Colorado City Creamery does provide the ice cream for the cost of the mix. We give them their membership as part of the arrangement. The Gazette has run an article on the pie baking contest. Theresa Farney, Gazette, is one of the judges this year.

We are receiving entries into the Coffin Races. Leslie and Brittany will be meeting with Jim Weir on parking and transportation and then will put together the application for the City.

The Pikes Peak Hill Climb was discussed. There are still some race teams that stay in Manitou Springs but the organizers don't provide any information for us to share with visitors.

J. Events Committee

We are still trying to put together an events committee. Staff will set a date and send it to people that might be interested.

The Cog 125th Anniversary Celebration is next week.

K. Unscheduled Appearances

Karen reminded everyone that Leslie had some "deliverables" that are due and asked that it be placed on the upcoming agenda.

Having no further business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 10:49 a.m.