

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

**Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes**

August 25, 2016

Present: Justin Armour, Rachelle Cully, Gwenn David, April Hall, Farley McDonough, Anthony Mogck, Annie Schmidt, Lisa Quintana, Jay Rohrer

Absent: Karen Cullen, Whitney Hedgpeth

Guests: Neale Minch, Joe Ribeiro

Staff: Leslie Lewis

A regular meeting of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development was held Thursday, August 25, 2016 in Manitou Springs City Hall, City Council Chambers. The meeting was called to order at 8:34 a.m.

A. Action Item: Approval of July Meeting Minutes

April Hall made a motion to approve the July Meeting Minutes as presented. Justin Armour seconded the motion and it was approved.

B. Action Item: Approval of July Financials

Leslie Lewis asked everyone to look at the financials sent on August 24, not the information sent in the original board packet. Karen Cullen called with questions and it was determined that in adding the "Creative District" line a formula had gotten off line so the last 4 lines had incorrect information.

In a meeting between Rachelle and Leslie, it was explained there is a lot of money in the marketing budget that has been committed but has not yet been paid out. Those commitments will be paid prior to the end of the year.

C. Board Retreat

Gwenn would like to set the next meeting as a longer meeting to review the financials in more detail and a proposed 2017 Marketing budget. Over the last several years, some of the marketing ads have been cut back (State vacation guide ad, Colorado Springs guide ad) because the funds were not available. Gwenn and Leslie have done preliminary work on a 2017 budget as a beginning. With the formula, the Chamber budget would be higher so there are proposed changes to be discussed. A meeting has been set for Gwenn and Leslie to meet with Jason Wells and Rebecca Davis to discuss the Chamber's proposed budget for the afternoon of September 22 so input from the Board can be incorporated. April will check availability of the Garden of the Gods Trading Post meeting space for the retreat.

Order of discussion was changed to save time while Neale was getting set on the screen for his presentation.

D. Police Department Update

The Sit Lie Ordinance (Pedestrian Access) has been in effect about 3 weeks. People are not allowed to sit or lay down in any areas not so designed (benches) in the downtown district. The Obstruction Ordinance went into effect the previous day and covers the entire City. That ordinance is to prevent dogs laying in sidewalks and shopping carts blocking the sidewalk.

In the mid-year budget, City Council approved hiring 3 additional officers. That has passed on first reading and is scheduled for second reading at the next Council meeting.

Annie Schmitt asked about the illegal camps. Chief Ribeiro reported the LEEP Project (locate, enforce, eradicate, prevent) located 20 camps. They have arranged with Keep Colorado Springs Beautiful to do the clean-up effort. Most of the camps are not active. The Police Department is arranging where to put the dumpsters for the clean-up efforts. The camps were on private property, City property, and Forest Service land. As part of the clean-up effort, everything must be documented with photographs and anything that may have value must be kept in the evidence system. The Police will continue to visit the locations once they are cleaned up to prevent them from becoming the problem they are now. Keep Colorado Springs Beautiful has estimated clean-up costs of \$850 per camp.

Chief Ribeiro asked about the response to the closing of Soda Springs Park. Leslie reported both of the groups that were playing regular concerts were very pleased with the change and hope a more permanent solution can be found. Councilman Rohrer reported Council would get some preliminary ideas and then ask for public input as there are so many design options.

There was additional discussion regarding the amenity zone and the possibility of “free speech zones” being created. Annie reported that while she was doing a clean-up with Kelly Snyder recently, one of the homeless kids helped with their effort which was encouraging.

Justin asked about the morale of the officers which Chief Ribeiro reported was down. Between all of the hours and the zero tolerance, it has been difficult. The money issue is also a challenge. Officers begin at about \$41,000 per year. The Compensation Study shows they should begin at about \$48,000. Councilman Rohrer reported that the last Council had the study done and began putting steps in place for the raises. It is not just police but all City employees that are below counterparts in other locations. Board members asked about the marijuana money. It was explained that some of those funds go to the URA and then so much has been used as the grant matches for the flood mitigation projects.

E. Sales Tax Analysis

Neale Minch came in earlier in the year and reviewed some of the analysis on Google Analytics and was asked to run an analysis on the sales tax information as well. He reviewed information on growth and trends as well as the actual dollars. Neale separated the “City Other” out as that is where the marijuana money is because the growth has been so tremendous and would shift the analysis. Neale looked at 2013 – 2015 and determined the Q1 actuals are a good predictor for the rest of the year. The trend in the first 2 quarters of 2016 is down for Retail – Gift Shops. Councilman Rohrer brought up the retail mix and that business may need to make changes in their product lines. Councilman Rohrer also suggested board members look around when they go on vacation and see if they can

come up with a new item or type of store that would work well in some of the locations in Manitou Springs. Farley suggested Leslie reach out to other towns, similar to Manitou Springs, and find out if this is an all over trend or specific to Manitou Springs.

In the “City Other” category, it is apparent that the second retail marijuana did not take away from Maggie’s Farm. Neale suggested that the stores may run into a capacity issue at some point because they are busy from the time they open until they close. They may not be able to service more people.

Neale reported that Bars and Restaurants seem to be going in different directions. The board discussed possible reasons the Bars seem to be declining in the winter months.

Because of the lag time in sales tax reporting, Neale is also using other information such as parking revenue and shuttle ridership, to assist in predictions. Shuttle usage in July was +30% and Parking was +35%. Those numbers were very close in June as well. Another factor Neale has been looking at is the web site information and expressed that we are concerned that there is less traffic coming to the site. Based on what Neale is seeing with the analysis, and basing on the trends he is seeing so far, he believes July will be 10 – 12% up over last year.

The Marketing Task Force discussed the web site (google analytics information) and Karen Cullen is reaching out to Xcite Media to see if we can get some answers and some suggestions for improvement. Justin asked if some of the change could be the rise in Trip Advisor and Yelp services as well.

F. City Report

Jay reported the WAAP (Westside Avenue Action Project) is moving forward. He anticipates seeing some things happening on the ground in November/December. CDOT is going to be doing work between Loaf N Jug and the pool as their project. Jay has asked them to look at making it safer for people to cross over to the Maggie’s Farm and Loaf N Jug when they are going west bound.

There was no update on when the ADA ramps east of City Hall to Highway 24 will begin. The overlay project is still scheduled to begin in September. The plan is for the west end ramp to Highway 24 to open about September 15 but they will still be doing some work under the bridge. Opening that ramp will allow the City to begin the Washington By-pass project. The City has requested an extension on the time to complete that project due to the issues with engineering. The City is planning to keep one lane open for egress using a temporary construction light near SunWater Spa.

Leslie asked about the west end of Manitou. Jay is requesting an update from Shelley Cobau. He is unsure of the status at this point.

City Council reviewed the zero tolerance and has decided to continue that for now at least. Councilman Rohrer was asked about the City facility. City Council is waiting for additional options. He reported there is a new FEMA map out that changes the flood zone so City Hall’s risk on the new map is greatly reduced. He suggested everyone check the map if their properties are in the flood zone. City Council will have Hiawatha Gardens on an agenda in October to review all of the input the City has received as well as the Hazardous Materials study being done. A Code Enforcement officer has been

hired. The Space Needs Assessment that was done suggested the Police Dept should have 10,000 square feet.

Leslie reported that the Nature of Things building is on the market or going on the market soon. Cherokee's has added a Cheese shop in the gallery. Leslie has no information on anything happening with the old 7 Eleven building.

Jay said the mid-year City Budget is coming up and next year's Budget is looking very healthy. He suggested the Chamber be very thoughtful on how they present their needs. He further stated the tone of some emails aren't great toward the Chamber receiving all of the money and in fact, the Chamber doesn't have to get the City Promotion money. It could go to other groups that could do promotion. He suggested that the Board be creative and possibly look at pass-throughs to other groups.

G. Creative District

The Board has met over the summer. They have been working on By-Laws, Director expectations, and budget. They are working on what projects they want to work on as the WAAP is a long term project. Natalie has been speaking with Michelle Anthony about the Creative District working on guidelines for the signage on the back (creek side) of the buildings with Michelle's guidance. They are also talking about protection of the neon signs in the east end.

H. URA

The URA is focused on the WAAP. They are getting more communication from the County and are starting to see that they need more participation by the City of Manitou Springs in the WAAP meetings. The Mayor and Councilman Rohrer, in addition to Shelley and one other person, were at the last meeting. The county is putting out a bid for the Project Manager for the project. There is also property acquisition going on. Farley believes the City of Colorado Springs and CDOT see the WAAP as a road project whereas the County and Manitou Springs see it as an Economic Development project. Farley reported the project is \$8 – \$10 million over budget because of the delays.

I. Marketing

There has been work on the Marketing budget trying to come up with new ideas for 2017. One of the ideas has been to hire Super Fine Design (Jewels) who had worked with Old Colorado City is no longer working with them and wants to work with Manitou Springs. The Marketing Task Force would like to bring her on board to begin working on a campaign for the holidays. We would also like to implement a new logo design for the Chamber. It would be something new and fresh.

J. Special Events

Leslie is meeting with the City's Event Coordinator on the Coffin Races on September 1. There are currently 27 teams signed up. We lost the major sponsor. BooDad's or Borders Burgers is not going to do the major level this year. Maggie's Farm and Emerald Fields were discussed as options but their advertising opportunities are limited. Several bank options were mentioned. Gwenn had the idea of having skeletons around town which she shared with Natalie. Natalie ran with the idea and got the Creative District to agree to purchase 12. The idea went so well that they have offered to purchase more.

Leslie contacted O'Donnell's office. They have met with the Mayor but have not yet met with Joy (Events Coordinator). They plan to have the holiday parade on Saturday, November 27 with the theme of "Christmas begins in Manitou". Leslie is working on having Santa in the Rotunda of the Spa building again this year and will be speaking with the groups that have done the holiday music in previous years. She still needs to talk with Shelley about additional decorations.

Leslie will be attending the presentation the CVB is holding on the Destination Next on the survey that was done. The Governor's Conference on Tourism is September 14-16. Gwenn, Leslie and Brittany will be attending.

Leslie met with someone signing a lease for the space at 742 Manitou Avenue. Erin Ford also opened a new shop in that area. The Ford's are struggling to lease the Dulcimer Shop building as it still needs some significant repairs. There is a new owner of Gigi's as Jeri McGinnis sold.

There is a meeting for events this afternoon at 2 pm in our office. Anyone interested is welcome. Farley asked if Sharon, Swirl, was taking over Carnivale. Leslie will check and let everyone know the plan.

Having no other business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.