

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

**Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes**

October 27, 2016

Present: Justin Armour, Karen Cullen, Gwenn David, April Hall, Whitney Hedgpeth, Anthony Mogck, Annie Schmitt, Lisa Quintana, Jay Rohrer

Absent: Rachelle Cully, Farley McDonough

Guests: Natalie Johnson, Anna Mekeel

Staff: Leslie Lewis

A regular meeting of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau & Office of Economic Development was held Thursday, October 27, 2016 in the upstairs conference room of the Venue 515 building. The meeting was called to order at 8:37 a.m. by President Gwenn David.

A. Action Item: Approval of September Financials

Leslie Lewis reviewed the Balance Sheet with the Board. There is currently \$29,000 in 2017 dues that are shown as a liability. Those funds have been deposited but won't show as income until January 1.

On the Income and Expense statement, the special events revenue will continue to climb with coffin race t-shirt sales and sponsorship payments. The expenses for coffin races will take the balance available and may go over budget.

WaterFest was discussed. For the people who attended and were active participants, they had a great experience. The turnout was low for the event. The marketing for the event was confusing and the target not well enough defined.

Other expenses are in line and will be spent prior to the end of the year such as Marketing funds for the holidays and postage. Karen Cullen made a motion to approve the September Financials as presented. Justin Armour seconded the motion and it was approved.

B. Discussion: 2017 Budget

Leslie, Gwenn and Farley met with City Council in a work session to review our projected budget. Leslie asked Jay Rohrer for an update following the City meeting the night before. There had been discussion of moving Joy Williams', City Event Coordinator, salary to the Chamber budget. Jay and Councilman Randy Hodges argued that her position was more about coordination of events and not economic development and city promotion and trying to increase those. They were able to convince Council to put Joy's salary somewhere else. He did say that one of the conversations from the City Council retreat was to take some of the funds from both

the Economic Development/City Promotion budget and the URA budget to fund an Economic Development position. There will be a work session prior to the end of the year (November 29). The first reading of the budget is scheduled for November 15. We may need to shave our budget down following that meeting.

C. City Update

Hiawatha Gardens vote was delayed as far as putting it in the Historic District. A group is forming between HPC, PAB and Planning Dept. to answer questions that came up in City Council. That group will be back at Council on February 28. He believes the Mayor is going to PPRTA where there are funds available that can be used for the landscaping and restripe the parking lot. Until they know how much is still available in the PPRTA account, they aren't sure what can be done. Jay would like to see the wings taken off of the building as well. The City has 2 bridges to build next year, with only one having funding, the library expansion. Jay didn't anticipate a great deal of work, other than improving the exterior appearance, on Hiawatha Gardens for at least four years.

Natalie said the Creative District asked for \$10,000 to set up a fiscal sponsorship program for organizations in town because the Art Center had been doing that but the accountant became overwhelmed so some events were turned away. The Art Council is being given \$5,000 which will be used for Art on the Avenue. Jay was asked if these groups are doing the same thing but he explained the differences in their focus.

Manitou Avenue was discussed in terms of being taken over from CDOT. Jay thought that conversation would be one CDOT would want to have once they finish the work they are currently doing. Karen asked about possible annexation of properties in the Westside Avenue Action Plan. Manitou Springs has discussed the possibility of annexing properties to Columbia Road. There will be additional discussion early next year, probably January.

City Council is meeting with the School Board to discuss mental health. City Council is looking for more cooperation between the two elected bodies. The City would also like to look at projects they can partner on and having students shadow Council members.

D. Discussion: Small Business Saturday

Anna has set a goal of increasing participation in Small Business Saturday (November 26). She reviewed the history of Small Business Saturday. She will be doing a Social Media advertising and marketing campaign specific to businesses partnering with the Chamber and participating in Small Business Saturday. Her objectives are to increase revenues and economic benefit to the participating businesses and Manitou Springs as a whole and to create more regional awareness of Manitou Springs as a regional shopping destination for unique and local goods. She will also be cross marketing other events that happen year round such as a Santa hat, mardi gras beads, mineral springs cup and brochure, a ballot for the window decorating contest for the holidays and any discount coupons businesses want to provide. She will begin talking to businesses and taking photos of unique gift items as soon as coffin races are over. Businesses will be encouraged to stay open late for the parade that evening as well. Natalie will provide

information such as the artwalk map and a ballot for the Skeleton Craze voting for next year to put in the bags. If we receive approval for the Monarch BOGO promotion, we will print that information and include it in the bags as well.

E. Marketing Update

Gwenn reported the Marketing Task Force had determined the television advertising for the holidays. Those commercials will begin running around Thanksgiving. We are also working on a non-holiday, Manitou Springs specific, commercial that can be run in Denver in the spring or fall. SuperFine Design is working on that commercial. Jewels will begin working on the new logo design as part of next year's scope of work.

The stores are being encouraged to participate in a window decorating contest which we would like to have all decorated by Small Business Saturday.

The Skeleton Craze contest went well though Natalie reported some minor behind the scenes confusion. She thinks they will do it again next year and the Arts Council wants to be more involved with some painted skeletons around town. She thought there were 48 skeletons around town. Leslie gave the Chambers to two downtown businesses that wanted to participate.

The grant application was turned in. Karen requested a copy of the grant application be sent to the board. Instead of the two large giveaways that were done with the program last year, we included monthly giveaways of smaller prizes. Grant awards will be announced the middle of November.

Lisa Quintana asked about parking changes and when they would take place. Leslie received a memo of the Parking Authority Board recommendations. She will be meeting with Susan Wolbrueck and Jay Rohrer to get additional information however, the recommendation is for consistent enforcement of 7 am – 8 pm year round and to no longer offer the 3 hour free parking since there is the free parking lot and free shuttle service that needs to be paid for. There will still be the 15 minute free option. The meeting is at 3:30 pm October 28 and all board members were invited to attend. Gwenn expressed that she would like to see the off season enforcement end at 6 pm to encourage local evening traffic. The Parking Authority Board is trying to get the recommendations to go to Council on November 1. Leslie assumes it will be a two reading process with that being the first reading.

F. Creative District Update

The skeletons and the Creative District's request for funding for the fiscal sponsorship were previously discussed. Jason Wells wants to meet with Natalie and more specifically define the roll of the Creative District in Plan Manitou in terms of how it works with the City and with the Chamber.

G. URA Update

The Board found out that the URA boundaries cover the creek and go into some of the parks so it is a little larger than they thought. Natalie thought the Board would be working with PARAB and OSAC to coordinate some strategic signage. In terms of Economic Development they

recognize the advantage of connecting trails to businesses through the strategic signage. The Parks Board has some ideas for a pocket park in the URA area.

Farley sent an email from the Education Foundation again requesting \$1,000 for the scholarship fund. This is a program we supported in 2015. There is still \$1,000 in the Economic Development line that could be used. They funded scholarships for traditional college as well as vocational schools. Leslie thought it would be important to support the program for four years believing the funds go to help the students through their college career. Justin made a motion to approve \$1,000 for the scholarship program through the Education Foundation. Lisa seconded the motion and it was approved.

H. Events Update

There are currently 68 teams registered for the Coffin Races on Saturday. The requirement for helmets and safety precautions were discussed. The start line is in front of the street vault in front of the Townhouse Lounge. We have ordered more barricades that will be in front of the Barker House and in the roundabout area at the request of the police dept. There are a total of 16 shuttles planned. The board expressed concern over the construction on Manitou Avenue and all of the sidewalk corners being torn up. Leslie has requested Manitou Avenue be opened to two lane traffic each way at Garden of the Gods Place and that the corners near Memorial Park be complete prior to the event. Gwenn asked if we needed additional people to help with people walking in the street to avoid the sidewalk construction zones.

Natalie asked if there was anyway the organizers would change the name of the “Christmas Begins in Manitou – a community parade”. Other board members mentioned that people crazy about the name and threatening to protest the event. Leslie has spoken to the organizers and let them know that there are people concerned about the name. The organizers are inviting people celebrating other events (Kwanza or Hanukkah) to put on a parade or participate in this parade. The organizers are going to City Council for approval on November 1 and the event will be November 26. We have organized Santa for both the daytime in the spa and the parade that evening. The plan is for Santa to arrive at the town clock on the antique fire truck to light the tree and then leave on the fire truck to be taken to get on the float for the parade. John O’Donnell has started several parades in past that they build over several years and then turn over to other organizations. If that happens, and we add the parade to our events, we can then change the name. The O’Donnells anticipate drawing 5,000 people to Manitou Springs for the parade.

Leslie met with Shelley Cobau, Brad Walters, Jason (Parks Dept head) to discuss Holiday decorations. The Chamber offered the \$5,000 for additional decorations. The City will be adding some banner hangers to the areas that don’t have them and blue “Welcome” banners with snowflakes for the entire downtown area. The City is purchasing additional lights for the trees as well. Each tree will have 4 strands of lights. The trees in downtown will all have white lights, the pocket parks will have different colors (one red and one green) and the bump-out trees will have blue lights. The trees in downtown will be lit prior to the parade with Santa lighting the tree at the town clock. As more of the URA and west end are redeveloped, we will expand the decorations to those areas. Gwenn asked about the arches and they will have new decorations as well.

We have mentioned the window decorating contest in a previous newsletter but will be sending that to all businesses. There will be prizes (\$500, \$250, and \$100). We would like to have a contest in the residential area as well but may not be able to get that map put together. We will use judges for the window lighting contest.

I. Board Positions

Justin Armour and Rachelle Cully's board terms are expiring. Leslie asked Justin if he would be willing to serve another term. He agreed to stay on the Board. Karen's term as past president is expiring at the end of 2016 as well. Leslie will email Rachelle and ask her if she would like to serve another term as well.

J. Executive Director's Review

It is time for the Executive Director Review. The form will be emailed to the Board. Members can fill it in and return the form to Gwenn.

K. Work Session with City Council

The work session with City Council to discuss their concept of Economic Development and ours and make sure we have the same ideas and expectations is set for Tuesday, November 29. Board members were asked to mark that date on their calendars and attend.

L. Unscheduled Appearances

Bud Ford has been in the hospital. He was originally diagnosed with Neurological Dementia (early stage Alzheimer's) but they have now changed the diagnosis to Viral Meningitis. The Fords (Bud and Donna) are getting ready to move into a one story house. There is a new lease on the old Dulcimer Shop building. Leslie will try to find out who the new tenant will be.

The building across the street from the Chamber (Nature of Things) has had quite a few people looking at it. Bill Fee is in a care center and is paralyzed on one side but Leslie has not seen any new information on his health recently and has not been to visit. There was an offer for \$200,000 that was rejected. Leslie was not sure about the status of the 7-Eleven building. The Manitou Jack's building was discussed. The La Chemere building is for sale for \$600,000. Several people have looked at the building but Albert has not been willing to reduce the price and the building needs work. Leslie has sent someone to talk to Bianca about leasing but that person reported Bianca is negotiating with someone interested in buying the building.

Natalie was thanked to allowing us to use her space for the meeting.

Having no additional business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 10:18 a.m.