

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

**Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes**

August 28, 2014

Present: Justin Armour, Karen Cullen, Rochelle Cully, Gwenn David, Tim Haas, Ken Jaray, Marcy Morrison, Julie Vance

Absent: Amanda Galloway, Joy Vernon, Sarge Mac Donald

Guests: Wade Burkholder, Greg Wellens, Jason Wells

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, August 28, 2014 at Manitou Springs City Hall in City Council chambers. President Marcy Morrison called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m.

A. Information Update: West Avenue Project & URA

Wade Burkholder, Planning Director for Manitou Springs, was invited to provide information on the Westside Avenue Project. He attends the meetings on behalf of the City. Wade explained the City of Manitou Springs, the City of Colorado Springs, and El Paso County are partners in the Westside Avenue Action Plan. From 31st Street to Highway 24 crossing Manitou Avenue is going to undergo a complete redesign and reconstruction. It will become 3 lanes (one eastbound, one westbound and a center turn lane) like downtown Manitou Springs. The funding has been approved through many sources and the work is scheduled to begin late summer/early fall of 2015. There will have to be some property acquisitions, none of which are in Manitou Springs, which will have to be settled first. Following that, the utilities will be upgraded and undergrounded. That process will take approximately 8 months to a year to complete. The lane reconfiguration will follow that. There will be a new bridge at Adam's Crossing. It will be realigned slightly north and the creek walk trail will go under the bridge. The new bridge is a major component of the project. Wade is concerned about the project running out of money. El Paso County is the project manager. There will also be access changes to other individual businesses. Wade stated it would be important to get the word out to the businesses that there would be access changes and the Planning Department will be doing an outreach to businesses. There will be a public hearing process in about a month and include 30% design plans completed by that meeting. At that time, it will be critical that all businesses and citizens attend that meeting and voice their comments and questions. There will still be time, at that point, to make changes.

The URA has been in touch with the consultant working on the project and are proposing some initial changes. They have highlighted a list of items they would like to see incorporated in the plan. A lot of those are amenity zone and sidewalk projects. They would like to have the Manitou Springs section look different than the rest of the project. El Paso County will be taking over maintenance of the road from CDOT and then Colorado Springs will come in and annex their portion of the right of way. Manitou will have to either begin taking care of the maintenance of Manitou Avenue from the arch to the overpass or enter into an IGA with Colorado Springs to maintain that section. Ken Jaray asked if the City had to agree to CDOT giving up maintenance of Manitou Avenue and Wade explained that CDOT has paid El Paso County to take that

section of the road and provide maintenance. Ken then asked if El Paso County would pay Manitou for that maintenance. CDOT still holds the right of way on Manitou Avenue from the overpass through Manitou Springs. Julie Vance asked about the plans for the lane configuration and if the road would be three lane to the overpass and then back to four lane to downtown. Wade explained that eventually the whole street will be the three lane design. The estimated cost of the whole project is \$14 million dollars with approximately \$8 million for the bridge. Concern has been expressed that they will begin at 31st Street and run short on funds before completion. The project is split into 5 sections with 3 of those sections located in Manitou Springs. The City has requested a cost per mile breakdown but hasn't received that information. There are rumors that the project will stop at Beckers Lane but all plans show it going to the overpass. Marcy asked about the cost of the consultant. The money CDOT paid to El Paso County is going back into the project. Julie asked if there were grants that the City could apply for in case the project runs short so the project can be completed and Wade agreed that was a good idea. The URA is being looked at for funds particularly for the amenity zone items (sidewalks, landscaping). There will be more information available for the public meeting. Wade assured the Board he would make sure the Chamber received the information on the meeting to share it with the businesses. Wade reported the construction will last through 2017 for completion so there will be an impact on business for a portion of that time.

Staff asked if Wade had information on the status of Reserve 1's move to the Wild Ginger building that was available to share. Wade reported that Reserve 1 has had some internal issues and burglaries that have caused problems with their supply, which is why their current location is not open. City Council will be entertaining the change of ownership in the near future which includes a public hearing process and need to be approved by Council. Reserve 1 has been approved for a conditional use permit which lasts one year.

The City has placed the East Manitou Corridor Land Use model on their web site (Planning Department page). This plan came out of the February public meeting that the URA held. NES Consultants were hired to develop a plan of what the URA would look like. The report is a compilation of all of the comments received. Wade further reported that the URA is taking the next step with the plan and is looking at zoning code changes that will spur redevelopment and implementation of the plan.

Ken asked if there was further discussion of Serpentine Drive and the flood mitigation as there were rumors of the City putting in a catch basin in that area. Wade explained that was just rumor and the City has developed an extensive project wish list with about \$20 million in projects. That item is not on the wish list. With the current flood mitigation, Phase 1 is scheduled for completion around the end of October and hopefully the next phase will kick off seamlessly from that. That may not be possible and the crews may have to restage, depending on the weather. The next phase is funded already.

Ken asked if the new planner would be involved in some economic development efforts. Wade explained that the primary focus of the new planner will be long range planning, comprehensive planning for the City. He further explained that includes economic development to the degree that there will be specific business continuity plans, recommendations for retention and attraction of new business and that portion of the comprehensive plan will set the stage for an economic development plan. The City will be interviewing for the new planner next week. Wade thought the comprehensive plan would take approximately one year and will expand on the Vision Plan. He is hoping the new planner will be in place by the first of October. This position is a two year project position funded by DOLA.

Wade was thanked for coming and all of the information provided.

B. Presentation: Adventures Out West

Greg Wellens, Adventures Out West, had created a proposal for expansion of the activities offered at the west end of Manitou Springs. That proposal was not well received by the neighbors. To give the board background, Greg explained that he wanted to create Mount Manitou Adventure Park with synthetic ski hills and tubing runs, summer concerts on Wednesday evenings, a downhill mountain biking course, expanding the zip lines, off road segway tours, and horseback rides in the area. The neighbors were concerned about the traffic, parking and increased fire danger. The plan was presented to the Planning Commission but did not receive approval. Adventures Out West is scheduled to go before City Council on September 16 for appeal. The company has modified the plan since the meeting with the Planning Commission and now includes only the tubing runs and synthetic ski hill. Greg presented plans of the area and showed samples of the product to be used. They are proposing a couple of phases with the tubing hill first. It will be available year-round for outdoor activity. Phase 2 will be a beginners ski slope and will include a jump area with air bags for people to practice aerals. If all of that is successful, Phase 3 will be a little further up the hill and will include additional tubing run (synthetic surface) and additional jumps and rails. It can be used as an intro to skiing for locals and a place to practice. Julie pointed out the whole area would be a year round addition. The surface is permeable and would still allow for drainage. Adventures Out West also has a plan for additional parking with the expansion. Greg has not presented the modified plan to the neighbors.

Ken suggested Greg offer to hold neighborhood meetings to get neighbor feedback at specified times after opening. The board also asked if there would be reduced rates for locals or annual passes. Ken asked if there were economic impact figures available to provide to City Council. After discussion, the Board suggested Greg take the modified plan back to the Planning Commission instead of taking the plan to City Council on appeal. The Board also recommended that Greg talk with the neighbors about the modified plan and address any concerns they have to try to receive their support prior to going to the Planning Commission. Julie suggested putting down paper or something so people can see the course and know what the visual impact will be. Ken suggested Greg meet with the neighbors individually. Greg will talk with Wade Burkholder about the best next step and let Leslie know how he will be proceeding. By consensus, the board supports the project as a year round attraction.

C. Action Item: Approval of July Meeting Minutes

Tim Haas made a motion to approve the minutes of the July meeting as presented. Karen Cullen seconded the motion and the board voted in favor of approval.

D. Action Item: Approval of July Financials

Tim reported the organization is in a strong position from a Balance Sheet standpoint. On the Income Statement, Tim felt the Forecast column was the important area to focus on which predicts a \$14,000 balance at the end of the year. Tim prefers being conservative in the finances. The Visitors Guide expense was \$7,000 more than projected as we did have to pay an outside firm for work on the guide which was done in-house the previous year.

Ken asked about the Marketing Committee revenue which was explained. The Pikes Peak Community Foundation Grant funds were discussed. Karen made a motion to approve the July financial statements. Gwenn David seconded the motion and it was approved.

E. Action Item: Approval of New Members

New member applications were received from Creekside Cabin and Rocky Mountain Way Mercantile. Gwenn made a motion to approve the new member applications. Julie seconded the motion and it was approved.

F. Marketing and Website Update

Karen reported the Marketing Task Force has had great meetings lately with really good statistics. The email recipient's newsletter is continuing to increase with good open/click through rates. The Task Force discussed the potential CTO grant coming up. Things they will be looking at are an increased digital marketing campaign throughout the year. They are starting a campaign for September through December. The website traffic is increasing. Karen believes we will go live with the new site next week. She showed the sight again. We have some new photography that Jack Elder shot for the site. There are only a few more things that need to be worked through and tweaks that need to be made before launch. Pikes Peak Country Attractions met with the Task Force at their last meeting and provided good information. The Task Force is trying to identify what is performing well and Pikes Peak Country Attractions is one of those areas.

Red Cross had contacted us asking for a plan on the \$25,000 held in reserve from their grant in case of additional weather related disasters this year. The Marketing Task Force decided on a 15 – 20 minute fireworks show the evening before the Coffin Races to boost overnight visits, facebook promotion for the Coffin Races and the holidays, Santa in downtown every weekend. Ken asked about using some of the funds for a video animation of where the water comes from (similar to what Yellowstone has). The group determined their next meeting is September 16 with someone that does video so that would be a conversation with them and consideration for the next CTO grant.

With the current CTO grant, we will be putting together 25 \$100 lodging certificates that people will have a chance to win. We will be increasing our newsletter email list through this promotion.

G. Special Event Committee Reports

Staff is working with Agave Underground to resolve their concerns of additional promotion to be the premier sponsor. Leslie and Brittany will be meeting Alex downtown tomorrow. There are two additional tequila companies that Amanda Galloway recommended who might be interested in sponsorship if Agave Underground decides not to. Wicked Hard is a vodka company that contacted us and is interested in participating as well. Staff will work on getting a beer sponsor in the park. Justin Armor will contact New Belgium and see if they are interested in participating as a sponsor with the Party in the Park after the coffin races. Leslie believes the Coffin Race will be on the September 16 City Council agenda.

The Craft Lager Festival was discussed. Karen felt we need Joy's expertise to do the Monster Brew Ball and Joy is busy with ManiFest currently. She suggested that we do a beer festival next year but not call it Craft Lager Fest to avoid any potential legal conflict with that event. The Board recommended we look at the weekend between Marathon and Labor Day.

Ken let everyone know the Kickstarter campaign to raise \$12,000 for the mineral springs signs will be going live soon. Staff will send the link on September 5 with a soft launch. Ken said we are asking people to donate if they are able, send an email to their contacts, and share the information on their facebook pages. There are great rewards for donation and you aren't charged unless the goal is reached.

H. City Update

Sarge Mac Donald was not available to give a City Update.

I. President's Report

Marcy reported there would be activity the second week of September as the Governor would be in town.

J. Executive Director Report

Leslie reported Karissa Ballard has been hired to come back to work for the Chamber. She is finishing her Event Planning Degree and has great ideas for events and fund raising. She will be working part-time and will begin the first week of September.

Leslie is working with United Way and the Governor's Office for events on Friday, September 12 and Saturday, September 13. We will host a reception to celebrate a year since the flooding on Friday and on Saturday, the Governor will kick-off United Way's Day of Service with volunteers from USAA painting the pavilion in Soda Springs Park. The Chamber coordinated getting the paint colors from the Park and Recreation Board to United Way. The reception is for the business community and those impacted by the flooding. Marcy reported that United Way awarded \$100,000 in grants to Manitou Springs businesses. They contacted Marcy for ideas for the United Way Day of Service and she suggested Soda Springs Pavilion. United Way is getting the paint donated for the project as well. Ken suggested the City clean the park area and remove the orange fencing by the restrooms prior to this event. The Governor and Lt. Governor will be staying in Manitou Springs on Friday evening. Staff is working with the Governor's Office on the invitation to the reception which will be held at Venue 515 and will contact restaurants for hors d'oeuvres.

Leslie attended the Parking Authority Board meeting last week. By the time they were discussing the off-season parking, they did not have a quorum. They are suggesting the program begin November 3, with Monday – Thursday having the 3 hour free option, with enforcement from 8 am – 5 pm and will try to get email approval to send that recommendation to City Council. We will still talk with them about offering free days during the holiday season.

We received a request from the CVB for bronze sponsorship of "The Big Event" which is an awards program for young professionals. The sponsorship is \$100 and would allow us to send one attendee and have something in each bag. Leslie would recommend using the collapsible cups for the item in the bags. The event is October 30 and is being held in Old Colorado City.

Ken reported there would be an event at the Manitou Art Center during "Start-Up Week". "Start Up Week" is the week that begins September 21 and will include 30 – 40 events for entrepreneurs. Ken will get additional information to the Board.

Karen made a motion to approve the \$100 for bronze sponsorship of "The Big Event". Julie seconded the motion and it was approved.

The other request received is from the Southern Colorado Regional Business Alliance that we have a booth at their Business Expo on September 10 at the World Arena. The cost of the booth is \$200. Board members will check their schedules to see if anyone would be available to staff the booth. The Board discussed the value of a booth at this event. Staff will check with the Business Alliance and see what their attendance numbers are for the Expo. An email will be sent to the Board.

We have also received a request from ManiFest for volunteers for the registration table at the fitness area.

A press release has been written for the coffin race t-shirt design contest. After sending it to Blakely + Company for their suggestions, it has been sent to the Bulletin, Gazette and Indy and will be sent to the High School art department.

This afternoon is the memorial service for Dick Hocutt, Beverly Hills Motel owner, at 2 pm at the Garden of the Gods Trading Post.

September is the annual renewal for a majority of the membership. Those renewals and information updates for the 2015 Visitors Guide will go out next week.

September 9 Leslie will attend a meeting with the SBDC and the Office of Economic Development and September 11 is Pikes Peak Country Attractions Association Board meeting.

K. **Unscheduled Appearances**

Jason Wells, City Administrator, came to follow-up on the possible work session with City Council. He has discussed it with the Mayor who would like a draft agenda for a meeting. The Mayor suggested looking at September 23 or 30. Items for the work session would be the flood sirens and making sure everything works for the good of the businesses and the residents and parking issues. Marcy felt they should discuss Manitou Avenue right of way maintenance as well as weeds in the planted medians. Jason also suggested there have been discussions about a possible economic development plan or person and that Ken Charles, DOLA, has been in Manitou Springs recently and they have been discussing the next round of CDBG submissions and what they want to fund in terms of studies or planning efforts and capacity building. On September 9, City Council will have a work session to discuss prioritization of flood relief projects and receiving information on the Westside Avenue project.

The EDAT report still has not come in. Leslie will follow-up with Joshua and see if we can find out the status of the final report.

There were additional members from DOLA and FEMA in Manitou Springs who were in favor of building a comprehensive plan with economic development initiatives and affordable housing built into it.

Marcy suggested the Executive Session not be held with many of the board members not available and suggested in order to not put off the evaluation of the Executive Director, three of the board members or the Executive Committee review the year and bring a recommendation to the board. Marcy asked for suggestions for the evaluation. Karen thought, while it is difficult to get all of the board members together, everyone should provide input. The board should have a list of criteria that they are evaluating and providing input on. Marcy would like the board to develop the criteria. She had asked Leslie to provide a list of the things she does. Karen recommended a special meeting be held to come up with criteria for the evaluation. After discussion, it was recommended an Executive Session be held at the beginning of the next regularly scheduled board meeting. Leslie will email list of duties to the board and board members will be asked to attend the next meeting.

Having no other business before the board, the meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m.