

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

**Board of Directors
Meeting Minutes**

February 22, 2024

Present: April Hall, Ted Johnston, Farley McDonough, Anthony Mogck, Annie Schmitt, Denise Howell, Natalie Johnson

Absent: Kat Kilner, Lisa Quintana

Guests:

Staff: Jenna Gallas, Leslie Lewis

A regular meeting of the Manitou Springs Chamber of Commerce, Visitors Bureau, & Office of Economic Development (Visit Manitou Springs) Board of Directors was held on Thursday, February 22, 2024, in the upstairs conference room at 513 Manitou Avenue. The meeting was called to order at 8:35 a.m. by President Farley McDonough.

A. Special Events Update – Jenna Gallas

Jenna thanked the Board for supporting the Chamber subscribing to Eventeny as a registration program for events. She has been able to have vendors sign up and submit all their paperwork online through this system. They can also submit payment through this system. The Eventeny system can be used for all our events, and we will be able to allow other non-profit organizations access to use it if they would like. Eventeny will be an annual subscription fee that was 50% off for our first year.

We do have the National Day Calendar Proclamation for the Great Fruitcake Toss. Board members were invited to stop by and sign it prior to it being framed. The National Day Calendar founder came to the Great Fruitcake Toss to proclaim Manitou Springs as the official destination for National Fruitcake Toss Day. The PBS video was shown to the Board.

We have the Gumbo Cook-off and Carnivale coming up. There are 28 krewes signed up for the parade. There are two “craft” days scheduled to work on the puppets. Jenna has \$4,200 in sponsorship commitments and has also applied for a MACH grant to cover the costs of the parade.

The Wine Walk is scheduled for April 4. The Chamber is working with the Manitou Music Foundation to schedule the Friday concerts June through August.

Wine Festival tickets went on sale last week. 252 tickets have been sold so far.

She will be onboarding food trucks for the Silent Disco (Manipalooza) which is scheduled for August 10 in the next couple of weeks. The city has some other projects, so the Soda Springs Park project has been delayed to begin in October.

B. City Update

Denise Howell reported that Plan Manitou had been presented to Council on Tuesday. Staff submitted names of those they thought would be good for each of the work committees. The council wanted them to create an application to allow others that might be interested to submit for inclusions in the groups. They would like to get new people involved and get new ideas. The City Council will make the final decision as to who sits on the groups. The city will be asking the public to provide input as well. Unlike the previous version of Plan Manitou, the new plan will be more of a Strategic Planning

document with fewer goals that can be accomplished. Other organizations, such as the Chamber, may have goals but only one or two. The previous version had too many tasks to be accomplished. The final report will be expected in spring 2025.

There will be another Citizens Academy beginning in April. It will be a nine-week program. It may be open to business owners that don't live in Manitou Springs.

The city is hoping to have the trams running for two weeks of Spring Break.

The city has asbestos mitigation completed on the Dillon property before the buildings can be demolished.

Saturday is a work session for the City Council. The first hour will be an executive session and then the Water enterprise and Budget moving forward will be discussed.

Elena Krebs was just promoted to City Clerk.

The Police Department is currently down by four officers, and a new code enforcement officer was hired.

There is a resolution being worked on for the pollinator program, but Denise was unsure when that would be presented to the Council.

Denise will fill in as acting Planning Director when Hannah leaves on March 1. The city is in the process of interviewing candidates for that position. With Dole Grebenik leaving, John Chavez has been hired as a contractor to fill in part-time for about 25 hours per week. He has previous experience in storm water and project management. He previously worked with El Paso County. The water tank has been ordered and is hoped to be received by September.

Ted Johnston complimented city staff on the snow removal this year.

The clock portion of the Town Clock is working. They are still working on the fountain portion. The city is hoping that the repair will be completed by summer. The city is hiring seasonal staff to begin in March and April.

The city has hired two employees that have their Class C water certification.

The City Hall remodel is complete. The police department remodel is ahead of schedule.

C. CRANE Update

Crane is raising funds to purchase the Guitar (in front of Armadillo Ranch). The artist wants to sell it (\$6,000) or move it from Manitou Springs. They have raised \$3,800 so far so they have made the commitment to purchase the piece.

Manitou Made – Farley and Audrey met with Neon Pig to understand the back end of the web site. They will be holding a meeting with the merchants that have used the platform and will be coming forward with some recommendations in the not-too-distant future.

They will be holding “Cookies with CRANE”. It will be an opportunity to let people know what CRANE does. They will present their Annual Report.

“Stump” was installed at the west end in the roundabout. The city will be putting large rocks around it to protect it from traffic. In spring pollinator plants will be planted around that area as well.

The USA Today “Best Small Town Art Scene” poll has closed. The results will be released March 1. We were contacted about submitting a photo for the USA Today “Best Small Town in the West” but have not heard when that poll will begin.

D. URA Update

The URA Board has signed another contract with Mad Woman Marketing (Karole Campbell) for their communication strategy.

The meeting date has changed to the first Wednesday of the month at 9:30 a.m.

E. Action Items:

All these items were postponed to March due to the lack of a quorum.

F. Strategic Plan Update

Natalie has found a new graphic designer that she is working with for the MAC that will also work on the Chamber’s Annual Report and Strategic Plan as well.

Natalie does have people interested in the Social Media position that Amy has had. Tony suggested that Amy might just need a break and really doesn’t want to give up the position. Leslie will reconnect with Amy to see what her plans are.

G. Plastic Bag Ban Clarification

Councilman Shada told Leslie he was planning to send the brochure the Chamber initially put together, with the law that passed, with the updates that came into effect on January 1 to Jeff Parker. Denise asked him to keep her in the loop and she hasn’t received anything so is unsure Jeff Parker has been approached. When Leslie reached out to Marc Snyder, he said small businesses were no longer exempt from the requirements but there has been nothing published to say that. Denise requested Leslie send the questions we would like answered to her and she will reach out to CML to see if she can get answers.

H. Monument Sign Update

The Sign Shop is planning to install the new sign on March 25. They will need to pour concrete two weeks prior to that date. Leslie has reached out to the Garden Club about coming to remove the plants prior to the concrete being poured.

Leslie had Marcus Electric check the wiring to where the sign will be installed when they were at the Chamber installing a light above the door.

Denise mentioned how sad the gateway sign on Highway 24 looks. She will need to talk with the city council and will need to find funding and can’t do that now. Her goal is to include it in the 2025 Budget.

I. Goal Review

Leslie asked the Board to mark June 11 on their calendars to attend the City Council work session with the Chamber.

Increase Outreach & Communication:

Danu Fatt handed out the new “Chat with the Chamber” magnets on the north side of Manitou Avenue yesterday. Riverstone Bank does want to hold a spring get together at the bank as well.

The Tax District Funding conversation will continue. Hannah asked if Leslie would coordinate the next meeting with her leaving and Chelsea being out on leave. The consultants sent a first draft to the city staff for comment. Once those changes are incorporated into the report, it will be sent to Leslie to send to the steering committee and set up a meeting.

Destination Management and Marketing Plan – we will apply for the Destination Blueprint program when the applications become available in April as a first step in moving toward creating a Destination Management and Marketing Plan.

Gillian contacted Leslie about a speaker on EcoSystems as Models for Building a Sustainable Water Shed Economy on Thursday, March 14, 6 pm at City Hall. Leslie will share the information with the board and business community to attend.

Visit Colorado Springs is holding their Annual Business Meeting (luncheon) on March 13, 11:30 am – 1 pm at the Colorado Springs Marriott. Leslie asked if Board members would like to attend. The tickets are \$65 per person. There are eight seats at each table. Leslie will send the details to Natalie to share with the city council to see if anyone else on council would be interested, as well as sending them to the board.

Leslie will ask Monica to work on updating the contact list for the text notification system.

Increase Sustainability/Reduce use of Paper:

In reducing paper use, Leslie will send Visitors Guide advertising invoices by email. We can still give businesses the option of paying by checks. April asked about setting up ACH payments, so the fees won't be charged.

Expanding Manitou Cares education and promotion – The Manitou Art Center is launching their refillable stations under Manitou Cares. Chamber staff will work to update businesses that had committed to offering a discount for those committing to Manitou Cares sustainability. There is a page in the new Visitors Guide that says when you commit to the steps listed you can come by the Chamber for a sticker and reusable bag.

Visitor Information Center Building Improvement (Continued):

We will be working to get a railing around the patio fabricated. We hope to also get the concrete stained to match the rest of the concrete. We are waiting to hear if CRANE is awarded the Mach grant on the mural for the back of the building.

We will start looking for bids for building screens for the dumpsters. Leslie does not have an update on the restroom remodel currently. She has reached out to All Copy Products about the water fountain as they had said they have a division that can put in a water fountain but has not received a response yet.

Ryan Kost, Pikes Peak Region Attractions shot footage for a new video last week. Leslie will also reach out to local photographers about possible high-resolution shots they may have that we could use in Manitou Springs advertising.

Having no additional business, the meeting adjourned at 10:06 a.m.